

EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE

1999—2000 Annual Report of Institutional Progress

Section A: Summary of Major Institutional Accomplishments

The major emphasis of the 1999-2000 academic year was the completion of a Self-Study for re-accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges. A major portion of the college community's time and energy was focused on the preparation and presentation of the Self-Study. The Visiting Committee finished its work in March 2000 and the response will be prepared for Fall 2000.

In addition to the Self-Study, the college's institutional accomplishments for 1999-2000 include those activities at the college that have ramifications across a wide spectrum of educational, business, and civic institutions. Indeed, the college must be seen as part of an interlocking system of regional and community organizations and groups that support the citizens of our service area. Two programs illustrate this interaction between East Georgia College and the community. The development of the Georgia Rural Development Center and the PREP college visitation activities highlight **the college's continuing efforts to be a focal point for regional advancement.**

During the past year the college continued its **cooperation with area business and industry organizations** through its ICAPP activities. The Georgia Rural Development Center, a public/private partnership, was developed to be located on the East Georgia College campus. The office received ICAPP funds totaling \$1,045,000 and \$300,000 from private donations. These funds will be used to respond to the unique development issues faced by rural areas. There will be a constant and interactive process between research, education and action to assess and improve the effectiveness of the collaborative efforts in Region 9, the seventeen counties surrounding East Georgia College, one of the most economically challenged regions of the state. The grant will provide opportunities for economic development projects and research in Region 9. The ICAPP funds made it possible to hire a Director and Programs Coordinator for the Center. The Center relates to **Goal 4** of Continuing Education and Institutional Advancement's Strategic Plan.

In addition, through the sponsorship of ICAPP and the Department for Economic Development, the Office of Economic Development conducted information technology classes. Twenty networked computers were installed on the East Georgia College campus for the training. The training center, jointly sponsored by East Georgia College and Georgia Tech, provided information technology courses to businesses in this region. Participants in the program received an Applied Information Technology Certificate. The center was an outgrowth of **Objectives 1 and 4** of Computer Services' Strategic Plan and **Goal 4** of Continuing Education and Institutional Advancement's Strategic Plan.

In January 2000 East Georgia College hosted the Second Annual Rural Georgia Economic Outlook Luncheon. Jointly sponsored by the East Georgia College Foundation, *Georgia Trend Magazine*, and the Swainsboro/Emanuel County Joint Development Authorities, the event presented participants with projections on economic growth in Georgia. The Rural Georgia Economic Outlook is presented annually by the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia.

Another college initiative that involves many groups across our service region is the **Postsecondary Readiness Enrichment Program (PREP)**. Mr. David Lamb, the PREP coordinator, visited public and private schools in Emanuel, Toombs, Jefferson, Candler, Johnson and Treutlen counties to deliver requested PREP activities. **Mr. Lamb brought over 1500 7th and 8th grade students to the East Georgia College campus during the academic year.** The East Georgia approach to middle school visitation differs significantly from the approach taken by other System institutions. The College believes that for visitations to have an impact on middle school students, they must be organized around small, class-size groups. In this format, the students can be addressed individually and directly. The evaluations, both formal and anecdotal, support this contention. Several notes were received from teachers indicating that their students are, for the first time, talking about college. In addition to the visitation effort, PREP activities included involving students in community service projects including a kite-flying project with middle school students working with elementary school students, a butterfly garden project on the East Georgia College Nature Trail, and the Dr. Seuss birthday party with middle school students working with kindergartners. A summer camp for seventh and eighth graders was held at East Georgia College and another summer PREP camp for ninth, tenth and eleventh graders was held in collaboration with Georgia Southern College. The PREP staff also worked hard to bring **in-class tutoring by East Georgia College students** to the participating middle schools. PREP activity is carried out through the Office of Academic Affairs and is linked to the community service function of East Georgia College.

Through the Vision Series, sponsored by the East Georgia College Foundation, students are given the opportunity to expand their knowledge of humanities beyond the classroom. A number of enrichment activities were presented this year, everything from “Sherman’s March: A Civil War Tour of East Central Georgia”; to presentations by authors Phillip Lee Williams and John Berendt; to mock interviews by CNN Senior Producer Ted Rubenstein and his crew; to tours of the Michael C. Carlos Museums at Emory University, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and the Morris Museum of Art in August; all designed to expose students to a variety of cultural activities.

East Georgia College, in association with Coastal Georgia Community College, hosted the Two-Year College English Association – Southeast Region meeting in Savannah. Two members of the Humanities Division were co-program chairs and various members of the East Georgia College faculty and staff assisted in the coordination of meeting activities and administration. Over 350 participants took part in the two-day meeting. The meeting received praise from Rheta Grimsley Johnson, columnist for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

A Learning Support Center at East Georgia College was opened in Fall 1998 and operated successfully into the 1999-2000 academic year. The Center was developed as a stand-alone facility specializing in supplemental instruction and staffed primarily by teaching faculty. The establishment of such a center has been an important goal of the faculty and college administration for several years. In Fall 1998, 1,194 student uses were recorded for the Center. This number rose to 1,436 in Fall 1999, **an increase of 20%**. While the emphasis was on English, reading, and mathematics, faculty also provided assistance in other disciplines. A total of twelve faculty assisted in the Center.

In addition to assisting students, Distinguished Professor Dr. Mary Nielsen and other faculty staffing the Center, assessed and categorized the types of learning problems for which students sought help in English, reading and mathematics. This information was provided to faculty in those disciplines so **instructional techniques could be strengthened to improve student performance in the identified problem areas**. These Learning Support Center activities are related to **Outcomes 3 and 4** of Learning Support's Strategic Plan which links to **Priority 1, Goals 2**, in the College Strategic Plan. After Dr. Nielsen left East Georgia College in December 1999, various full-time, with re-directed time, and part-time faculty staffed the Center.

Revision of the college's traditional developmental Learning Support courses was an important accomplishment of 1998-1999. The evaluation of the adjustments was carried out this year. During the semester conversion review, it was decided (based on retention and success rates, as well as faculty input) to make learning support English, reading, and mathematics a two-step course sequence with 0097 being a non-exit course and 0099 an exit course. Student classroom performance at Hinesville and Statesboro Center during the Fall 1998 quickly revealed that the College Placement Examination (CPE) was not precise enough to place students accurately into the two levels. Some students placed into 0097 courses remediated rapidly but were denied access to the appropriate core courses. As a result, ENGL 0098 and READ 0098 were designed and approved by the Academic Policies Committee and the faculty for the Spring 1999. In Learning Support, a 0098 course may be an exit course. The experience with these courses this year was positive, but the 0097 courses in English and reading will probably stay in the *Catalog* for the Liberty Center. The mathematics faculty has not adopted a similar 0098 course. These Learning Support activities are related to **Outcome 1** of Learning Support's Strategic Plan with linkages to **Priority 2, Goal 2** of the College Strategic Plan.

As with other institutions in the University System, East Georgia College saw the successful implementation of the semester calendar in Fall 1998. As part of the semester conversion, the three academic divisions of the college reworked all course syllabi, and designed new courses where needed. With Fall 1999, students and faculty were adjusting well to the change. Students were still hesitant to take a full load, but had slowly begun to increase the number of hours they are taking during a semester. Returning students are still completing programs under the quarter system but most are shifting to become graduates under a semester calendar. Although the semester system

allows for more flexibility in scheduling, the initial scheduling process was much more complex under the semester system both for students and faculty, as well as for schedule planners. **However, with the assistance of Computer Support Services, on-line academic advisement in faculty advisor offices was implemented.** This dramatically simplified the advisement and course scheduling process. Student and faculty complaints were minimal. This would not have been accomplished without the cooperation of division chairs and each faculty member. In addition, over the preceding year, faculty had been given several excellent courses in on-line registration using the Banner system. These courses were designed and taught by computer support staff, and greatly contributed to faculty acceptance of on-line registration.

In Fall 1998, East Georgia College's headcount had leveled and EFT's were down from the quarter system, while most all institutions in the University System experienced a drop in both areas. For Fall 1999, both the headcount and EFT had recovered to exceed those of the Fall Quarter 1997, with the EFT percent increase slightly exceeding the headcount percent increase. The headcount increase was 22.7%, while the EFT increase was 24.0%. The gap between headcount and EFT's at East Georgia widened to 46% for the Fall 1998 term when the semester conversion took place. However, the gap narrowed to 37% for Fall 1999. Prior to conversion, the gap was traditionally between 30 and 35%. Preliminary data for Fall 2000 indicates a continuation of the narrowing to approximately 30%. After examining these data, the college feels safe in stating that, **based on the continued narrowing of the gap between headcount and EFT's to almost pre-conversion levels,** that it has successfully completed the final phase of the semester conversion process.

The minority enrollment at East Georgia College has steadily increased the last five years, from 21.6% in Fall 1995, to 20.9%, to 23.2%, to 29.9% in subsequent fall semesters to 35.3% in Fall 1999. While the bulk of the increase could be tied to the enrollment growth at the Statesboro Center, it is notable that the main campus minority enrollment has also increased during the time since the Statesboro Center's opening in Fall 1997. The Swainsboro campus minority enrollment has increased from 18.9% in Fall 1997 to 25.4% in Fall 1999. All of this data points to an increase in the diversity of the student body of East Georgia College. A growth in minority enrollment is **Priority 2** of the College's Strategic Plan.

The college carried out several different activities to ensure *Year 2000* (Y2K) compliance during the 1999-2000 year. These activities were based on the college's Y2K Plan. Because of the Y2K issue, the Academic and Administrative Computing Units obtained various hardware and software items to replace non-Y2K compliant items. Items included personal computers, software utilized for network management, software used for academic purposes, and software (PCFIX2000) for correcting non-Y2K compliant personal computers. Also, as part of the college's Y2K plan, all computers were checked for Y2K readiness, and monitoring activities were implemented to ensure continued readiness. **Finally, in a report by auditors from the Board of Regents the College's Y2K contingency plan was complimented and the college was found to be in full compliance with Y2K regulations.**

The following hardware items were obtained this fiscal year: a new Novell Server; two new network servers to handle Web Mail and the College's intranet system; 10 new Gateway Pentium III personal computers for the Library; and 20 new Gateway Pentium III personal computers for faculty and staff members at the Statesboro and Swainsboro campuses. These activities are related to the Academic Computing Unit's **Goal 1**, with linkages to **Priority 4** of the College's Strategic Plan.

Due to the growth of the College in terms of the number of off-campus sites and personnel and students, an online email program, Web Mail, was obtained. A campus intranet, wwi.ega.peachnet.edu, was developed and tested for use by faculty and staff beginning in Fall 2000. The College web page was also evaluated and revised to include links to faculty web pages, the Department of Continuing Education, information for some of the off-campus sites, the PREP program and the Office of Economic Development. In addition, the campus upgraded the administrative software to Microsoft Office 2000. These activities are related to the Academic Computing Unit's **Goals 2, 3, and 4**.

Instructional Technology Support serves as a resource for the high growth area of interactive computer technology. The Instructional Technology Support Coordinator provides instruction to staff and student on uses of new interactive computer technology, assists faculty in developing interactive classes, helps faculty and staff prepare group presentations using software such as PowerPoint, and videotapes lectures, classes, and special events at the college. Instructional Technology Support has extended the Model Classroom multimedia system to every classroom on campus. The activities listed relate to **Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4** of the Instructional Technology Strategic Plan. The presence of the Instructional Technology Support Coordinator has made these resources and activities routine to faculty and has allowed them to take advantage of what is available. **The Technology Support Coordinator, along with selected faculty members who were trained under the *Connecting Teachers and Technology* initiative, works with other faculty and staff to enhance the incorporation of technology into lectures and presentations**, in support of **Outcome 12** of the Office of Academic Affairs' Strategic Plan, with linkages to **Priority 1, Goal 3** of the College's Strategic Plan. The College also purchased a Video-Library 200, a videotape distribution system housed in a central location in the academic building, to begin use beginning in Fall 2000.

Post-Tenure Review combined with tenure and promotion review and the annual review of faculty performance, has allowed the college to put in place multiple measures to **link faculty performance with the concept of continuous professional development and college/community service**. The use of the annual Faculty Performance Plan places specific emphasis on professional development at the time of the annual evaluation, and has improved the faculty understanding of the need for individual efforts to constantly update professional skills and achievements, supporting **Outcome 3** of the Office of Academic Affairs' Strategic Plan, with linkages to **Priority 7, Goal 2** of the College's Strategic Plan.

The College supports the professional development of staff and faculty by giving them the opportunity and funding to complete the development. Some funding was provided through the FY 2000 budget and some through funding by the Foundation. Funding was provided for study abroad, professional meetings, workshops and seminars. Professional development activities support **Outcomes 4 and 12** of the Office of Academic Affairs' Strategic Plan.

Over the past year, growth has continued in the physical facilities of the College. First, work on the long anticipated new Learning Resource Center and Classroom Building is continuing. The building was expected to be completed in the summer of 2000, but delays have moved the opening until Fall 2000. This building will add immeasurably to the resources the College can make available to our students, and to the regional communities the College serves. In addition, ground breaking for a new classroom building, with an art center and a gymnasium, is expected to take place in Fall 2000. This will be part of the current Physical Education Center and classroom building near the College pond. The expansion of necessary physical facilities is **Priority 11** of the College's Strategic Plan.

Growth at the East Georgia College Center at Statesboro has been greater than anticipated, exceeding projected enrollments by at least 10%. The growth is expected to continue and will, hopefully, offset the loss of enrollment from the last year of our Dublin Center. The enrollment at the Liberty Center is stable, but is expected to increase as the two-year colleges in the Center (East Georgia College and Coastal Georgia Community College) are assuming the instruction of the Area A courses in the Core along with the Learning Support courses.

Section B: Annual Progress in Strategic Planning

The College completely revamped its *1997 Institutional Strategic Plan* this past year. The number of Institutional Priorities has been increased to thirteen from eleven and the number of goals streamlined to fifty-four from fifty-seven. The adjustments were made to better reflect the mission of the College and to make the *2000 Institutional Strategic Plan* fit the general planning assumptions. As requested in the guidelines issued for this report, copies of the revised Planning Assumptions and Institutional Priorities and Goals will be sent under separate cover to the Office of Planning and Policy Analysis.

Institutional Priorities are over-arching, broad-based, and by design not usually achieved in any single planning cycle. They guide the present and future planning of the institution. Strategic Planning Goals, on the other hand, may be more precisely directed and may be attained either partially or completely during the course of a single planning cycle. Academic Year 1999-2000 began with units using the *1997 Institutional Strategic Plan*. The *2000 Institutional Strategic Plan* was developed during the spring. The focus of this progress report will be on the *2000 Institutional Strategic Plan*, with a revised set of planning assumptions and institutional priorities.

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Major Institutional Strategic Planning Goals Attained

During Academic Year 1999-2000 the following goals were either achieved or significant progress was made toward achievement. Changes in the goals under each priority will be noted.

Priority 1: All goals related to the comparability and transferability of courses were completed. The number of goals was reduced from six to four, but the reduced goals were shifted to produce another priority dealing exclusively with learning support, an area of significant growth because of the Statesboro Center. Continued effort was directed toward assessment and learning in individual classes and the application of results to improve classroom presentations and student learning. This was done through the active involvement of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. A form for submission of assessment activities was developed to facilitate faculty reporting of assessment activities. Goal 4, which deals with our study abroad activities, was especially notable. Ms. Martha Hughes was appointed to the assistant director's position at the System's Paris Summer Institute. No East Georgia College students took advantage of this opportunity in 1999, but two East Georgia students and one former student studied in Paris during the Summer Semester 2000.

Priority 2: This was a new institutional priority dealing with the assessment of student learning deficiencies and the placement of those students in appropriate learning support courses. Both goals under this priority were completed, thanks in part to the adjustment of learning support courses last year and increased usage of the Learning Support Center.

Priority 3: This was a new institutional priority dealing with the monitoring of the College's Mission statement relative to the System's mission and the changing needs of the service area. Thanks to the annual review of the Mission statement and the Strategic Plan by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and the Office of Institutional Research and the production of a three-year planning cycle that includes an in-depth revision of the Strategic Plan, all goals within this priority were completed. The Annual Reports of each of the units at the College show the incorporation of planning assumptions and institutional priorities.

Priority 4: Four of the five goals under the utilization of technology for instruction have been successfully completed with an increase in the number of on-line courses and courses offered via distance learning. An additional goal, which called for the development of a technology resource laboratory, was not completed because of delays in the opening of the new building. This was a new goal added during the revision of the goals. An area has been set aside for faculty technology activities and evaluation, but the laboratory has not been completed. The timeline for development was based on the availability of the new building.

Priority 5: The College's goals to increase enrollment of non-traditional students have partially been met. Flexible scheduling has been offered to the non-traditional

student, as well as on-line and distance education classes in the College's AAS programs. Adjustments in publications to reflect the interests of non-traditional students have been made, but the enrollment of non-traditional students has not increased as the College had anticipated. A leveling at 7.9% between Fall 1998 and Fall 1999 was experienced, with some growth from Spring 1999 (7.4%) to Spring 2000 (8.7%).

Priority 6: As noted in a previous section, minority enrollment at East Georgia College has increased to 35.3% in Fall 1999. While the bulk of the increase could be tied to the enrollment growth at the Statesboro Center, it is notable that the Swainsboro campus minority enrollment has also increased to 25.4% in Fall 1999. This data points to an increase in the diversity of the student body of East Georgia College.

Priority 7: Both goals dealing with the promotion of faculty and staff development were completed. The College continued the implementation of the "Connecting Teachers with Technology" initiative by providing funding through the budget and through funds from the Foundation. Over twenty-five thousand dollars were spent this year on professional development.

Priority 8: All goals associated with promoting cultural and diversity awareness were completed through the activities of the foundation, the Minority Advising Program, the Vision Series, the PREP Program and student services activities on campus.

Priority 9: All goals associated with the promotion and expansion of the AAS degree programs in collaboration with area technical institutes were successfully completed. The enrollment in the programs grew slightly, but not as much as was anticipated. Courses were delivered via the GSAMS network. While numbers are up slightly, this is a program that serves a small student population. In the College's service area, business and industry are reluctant to pay for the associate degree; and without the salary incentive, few students opt for general education courses beyond their technical diplomas.

Priority 10: All goals associated with establishing educational partnerships with area schools were completed. The Post-Secondary Options Program was promoted in all area high schools. The enrollment of those students at East Georgia College declined from Fall 1998 to Fall 1999, but showed an increase in the Spring 2000. Growth is predicted in the Fall 2000. In addition to meetings in Emanuel County, the PREP coordinator undertook outreach visits to interested citizens in Jefferson, Tattnall, and Washington counties. The College has been active in the P-16 initiative with attendance at meetings and special activities.

Priority 11: All goals relative to the on-campus facilities were met. As noted, work on the new Learning Resource Center and Classroom Building is continuing. The ground breaking for a new art center and a gymnasium is expected to take place in Fall 2000. This will be part of the current Physical Education Center and classroom building near the college pond. The current facilities at the Statesboro Center are another matter entirely. Because of the rapid growth at Statesboro, the College has stretched the instructional and administrative facilities. Efforts were made to improve the

communications capability of the Center. The East Georgia College Master Plan was submitted to the Board of Regents in June 2000 according to the template provided by the Board.

Priority 12: All goals relative to safety and security on campus were completed.

Priority 13: All goals relative to auxiliary enterprises were completed.

Section C: Annual Progress in Assessing Institutional Effectiveness

New or Revised Learning Outcomes, or Outcomes in Administrative and Support Areas

The focus of the work of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee this past year was not in the identification of new learning outcomes, but rather the linkage of the objectives of courses in the curriculum to the eleven general education learning outcomes already in place. A revision in the planning assumptions and institutional priorities and goals in the College's ***Strategic Plan*** has necessitated a new focus for the units. The ***2000 Institutional Strategic Plan*** included an assessment model adopted by the College to more effectively evaluate its educational and administrative functions. The eleven general education outcomes serve as a basis for assessing the education program.

During the year the following activities were carried out in response to recommendations from the Institutional Effectiveness Committee or from the Self-Study:

Recruitment brochures, along with other publications, were reviewed by the Publications Committee for accuracy and viability.

As part of the Learning Support Center, plans were developed to support the English and foreign language curricula with a laboratory to be housed in the old library.

A formal instrument to evaluate the Post-Secondary Options program is under development.

Orientations were expanded for spring and summer semesters to include both day and evening students.

A faculty-workload study was begun to develop a simple set of formal guidelines to ensure an equitable allocation of on-campus and off-campus assignments among faculty, as well as a system ensuring equity for those who teach GSAMS and WEB-based courses.

A committee was formed to evaluate the institutional research function on campus.

The Director of Institutional Research and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee worked to ensure that all assessment and evaluation procedures were identified and integrated into the planning process, and that they are included in the **Strategic Plan**.

New Methods for Assessing Learning and/or Non-Academic Outcomes

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT'S): Developed by Angelo and Cross in the early '90's, CAT's are a formative evaluation technique designed to assist faculty in carrying out classroom assessments in a manageable, yet systematic way. At East Georgia College these techniques are being used for this purpose, while, at the same time, they have been integrated into a programmatic reporting structure designed to link the assessment of course objectives found on class syllabi with the eleven general education learning outcomes adopted by the college. This assessment process was implemented during the 1999 Summer term. Faculty are asked to identify a course objective they wish to assess, and select one of the classroom assessment techniques developed by Angelo and Cross. All full-time faculty were given a copy of their **CAT** book. They then link the course objective selected to one of the eleven general education-learning outcomes. After completing the assessment for the class, the results are sent to the Director of Institutional Research, with a brief description of the results of the assessment. The data are then aggregated into a matrix that shows, for each of the eleven general education-learning outcomes, what course objectives have been linked to it, and what assessment techniques are in place for that outcome. This allows the college to make the curriculum visible by showing where assessments are taking place in relation to the general education learning outcomes. In addition, faculty can then discuss the relative merits of various assessment techniques, and see where assessments are taking place across all eleven general education-learning outcomes. As an example, a faculty member or division head could then look at one of the learning outcomes, Critical Thinking, number three, identify all the objectives associated with it that are being assessed, and see the various methods of assessment chosen by the faculty for that particular objective.

Ratio Analysis: Ratio analysis techniques are a method of summarizing financial data for evaluative purposes. Ratios relate different parts of the budget in a proportional way. This allows business officers to easily compare the various parts of the budget, and make judgements about allocation decisions. The Vice President for Fiscal Affairs and the Director of Institutional Research completed a ratio analysis for FY 1997 as part of the self-study process and have continued for additional FY analyses to give the college powerful comparative data about its budget allocation priorities over time.

Ratio analysis has also been adapted to link academic productivity to qualitative assessment indicators. All students assigned grades for a grading period have been aggregated into three groups. Students receiving A's, B's, or C's for course grades are labeled successful students (S). Students receiving D's, F's, and WF's are labeled unsuccessful students (U). Students who withdraw are a third group (W). These groups can then be sorted by course and discipline. A ratio (S)/(U), called the **Success Ratio**, was developed by course and discipline. A ratio (S)/(U+W), called the **Completion**

Ratio, was also developed by course and discipline. This technique summarizes large spreadsheets of course and credit awards information in a simple yet powerful way. Like the CAT process described above, this is another way of making the curriculum visible. Success ratios and completion ratios can be developed for all disciplines and within disciplines for all courses, and comparative data developed. Administrators can use the ratios to evaluate instructors and instruction. Faculty can use the ratios to do self-evaluations of instruction and to show effectiveness of teaching. For Fall Semester 1999 the success ratio was 3.0, while the completion ratio was 2.1.

Because of the increase in portable computing needs, especially at the Statesboro Center and for off-campus presentations, five additional laptop computers were obtained for use by faculty and staff. Laptops were also purchased for the PREP office and for the Office of Economic Development for mobility and for meeting the information technology needs for training and presentations.

Changes in Academic or Non-Academic Processes as a Result of Assessment Evidence

This past year general education outcomes were linked to individual courses as part of the assessment plan implemented by East Georgia College. The first step is the assessment of individual courses, followed by assessment at program level and finally by assessment of institutional outcomes. Institutional instructional outcomes were defined as transfer rates, retention rates and graduation rates as good or better than transfer rates, retention rates and graduation rates at two-year colleges; Regents' Test as good as or better than those at two-year colleges; and success of students at receiving institutions.

Because of the growth at the Statesboro Center, a full-time financial aid person was added to the staff. Coordination of the financial aid program stills resides on the Swainsboro campus, however. An additional clerical staff person was added to the Center also.

The process of data gathering was begun to achieve greater coordination of LS English and Reading and LS Mathematics with credit-level courses.

The curriculum was adjusted to require all students needing at least two LS courses take EGAC 1000: Basic College Skills.

A Problem Solving course in the sciences was added to the curriculum to give science and mathematics students the opportunity to experience research first hand. In addition, the course would satisfy the 2-hour credit needed to complete Area F in certain science and mathematics programs of study.

The number of on-line course offerings has increased to include Soci 1101, Soci 2293, Soci 1160 and Sped 2130. A special form is in the process of being developed to evaluate these courses.

As part of the self-study process, the college conducted two student opinion surveys. The surveys revealed that levels of student satisfaction were lower than the college had

expected in some areas. As a follow-up to these findings, a **Focus Group** of students was organized by the Director of Admissions to probe issues concerning admissions, registration, financial aid, the use of the business office and satisfaction with student life. A panel composed of administrative staff met with the Focus Group to ascertain reasons for dissatisfaction. The Focus Group Panel made a number of recommendations after meeting with the Focus Group, including improvement of advisement about the core curriculum, standardization of advertising, the designation of a College webmaster, promotion of club and student activities and the adoption of school colors. As a way to facilitate smooth interaction between students and the College, the panel recommended the development of color-coded "**HOW TO**" sheets to show step-by-step procedures for students to follow when engaged in any important College activities including admissions, registration, financial aid, advising, and fee payment. The sheets could be disseminated at key times by college staff when informing potential students of what is required to complete various activities at the college.

As one of the first activities in the new strategic planning process, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee completed an extensive review of the College's Planning Assumptions and Institutional Priorities and Goals. The list of **General Planning Assumptions** was shortened from 16 to 10 assumptions. The Committee felt that a shorter list would help focus the college's planning efforts. It also felt that several of the old planning assumptions were out-dated. Two new assumptions were added, one dealing with continued development of off-campus sites, and the second dealing with the need to provide regional businesses with technology training and support. Changes in the Institutional Priorities were made to reflect the college's growing awareness of serving regional needs, the increased demands of rapid technology growth and change, and the need to plan academic programs around the revised core curriculum and the semester calendar.

The Regents' Test has always provided a measure of the writing and reading skills of students. East Georgia College students fall significantly behind the students at other two-year colleges in reading. This has sparked a renewed interest in reading across the curriculum on campus. The students appear to be better prepared for the essay portion of the Test since they perform at approximately the two-year college and System average. The overall effect has been to lower the first-time pass rate on the Test substantially from previous years. A committee, headed by the Distinguished Professor, was formed to study the falling trend on the Regents' Test and how it could be reversed. Several new activities were put in place to address the issue on campus. Other activities will be forthcoming in 2000-2001 since improvement in scores was not noted. The fall in the Regents' Test passing rate has occurred at the same time as the average incoming student SAT verbal scores have fallen. The System has studied the relationship/correlation between the Regents' Reading score and the SAT verbal score.

Evidence of Specific Improvements in Effectiveness

The Distinguished Professor completed an extensive analysis of types of assistance required by learning support students in 1999. One part of this process was the

development of an English Usage Item Analysis to be used in the Learning Support Center to analyze weaknesses in writing skills. An extensive list of writing topics for correct usage was developed. Student requests for assistance were then tracked by course and topics where assistance was requested. It then became possible to identify areas of concern in writing, by course and by type of assistance needed, and to make specific recommendations for increased emphasis during classroom instruction.

One of the desired outcomes from improving the registration process was to ensure that student contact with faculty advisors was trouble free, so that faculty could devote quality time to advising students and dealing with their concerns. On-line registration takes place with the student present in the faculty advisor’s office. The faculty advisor can not only examine the student’s academic schedule, but can register the student for upcoming courses. The interaction between advisor and student helps develop the on-going relationship between advisor and student that the college wishes to promote.

In an informal survey, former students were asked to identify three goals where they felt they had made the most progress toward achievement after attending East Georgia College. The top three goals identified were transfer to a four-year institution, completion of a two year associate degree and advancement of a career.

These goals are also the three major goals most often advanced by the College when talking to students about reasons to attend East Georgia. In addition, former students were given a list of skills, and then asked two questions: “How essential is this skill in your working environment?” and “How well did the college prepare you in this area?” The three most common skills as listed by students are as follows:

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Average Score and Rank for Importance in Workplace</u> 3.00 = Very Important	<u>Average Score and Rank for College Preparation</u> 3.00 = Excellent
Ability to Write Effectively	2.88	2.86
Ability to Acquire new knowledge and skills on my own	2.86	2.78
Ability to communicate well orally	2.85	2.72

Section D: Retention Rates (and Graduation Rates where applicable)

This past year the University System of Georgia embarked upon a benchmarking study to compare the institutions in the System to peer institutions in Georgia and outside of Georgia. The retention rate at East Georgia College was reported as 50.6%, compared to a normative range of 53.5%-75.8% for all peers and 56.6% average for Georgia colleges.

Researchers have shown that students who take learning support courses are less likely to be retained and to graduate. This is a result from national data studies supported by local studies showing the same result. Given that East Georgia College places 55.0% of new freshmen in math learning support, 43.3% in English learning support and 45.5%

in reading learning support, it is no surprise that the retention rate is low. Not only were all three of these percentages above the peer normative range, but were the highest in Georgia.

In the past East Georgia College made several adjustments in its learning support program. An analysis of the learning support courses showed there was a need to more carefully discriminate among students in the program. Many students, particularly those students who had been away from mathematics for some time, and/or who had not completed the college preparatory sequence in high school, needed more time in learning support math. In response, a second (lower level) course was added to the learning support math program. Students who test with low scores can now be given more time to make the transition to college credit level courses in mathematics. Faculty concern over students' inability to exit a single reading learning support class and a single writing learning support class also called for an additional lower level learning support course in both areas. Because some of the students in English and reading showed exit-level skills, the lower-level course was changed from 0097 to 0098 to allow for that possibility.

A Learning Support Center was established and staffed primarily with full time teaching faculty to help students in learning support and the credit courses in English and mathematics. The Center has been well received by students and is discussed in Section A.

Success ratios and completion ratios were analyzed by area, discipline and course this year to identify the areas in the curriculum where the greatest percentage of non-successes occurred. Specific methods can then be developed to concentrate on these problem areas. Preliminary results indicate that the learning support courses have success ratios and completion ratios much lower than college-credit courses. Once students exit to the higher-level courses, the success ratios and completion ratios go up dramatically. As would be expected, success ratios and completion ratios in some college-credit classes, such as mathematics, are still low but not as low as in learning support classes.

An on-going analysis of retention and graduation rates at East Georgia in relation to area high schools attended is being conducted by the Office of Institutional Research to be used by the Director of Admissions when planning recruitment visits. Using the SIRS database, a cohort of students is created by graduating year, high school code, and entering East Georgia first time/full time in the fall immediately after high school graduation. The cohort can then be tracked by terms enrolled. The results can then be displayed by all high schools in the college service area. The analysis clearly shows that while retention may vary slightly by high school, most students who enroll at East Georgia are no longer enrolled after two years.

During the quarter-to-semester conversion, faculty advisors discussed how to make students realize the need to take a full load of courses under the new semester system. The continued improvement in the EFT/Headcount ratio is evidence that this situation has continued to improve.

Studies of the 1997 and 1999 Student Opinion Surveys have identified several areas of college performance that might be improved. Some were dealt with in other sections of this report. The work of the Focus Group, initiated by findings from the Student Opinion Surveys, and the recommendations made for improving staff performance made by the Focus Group Panel were implemented.

East Georgia College requires instructors to provide a mid-semester report of all students who are not making at least a “C” in their course. The expected outcome of this report is to encourage faculty to follow-up on those students not passing and for those students to be informed about their potential failure.

During the submission of mid-semester reports, it was found that a higher percentage of students at the Statesboro Center were sent deficiency letters when compared to those on the Swainsboro campus. Contact was made between East Georgia College staff and Georgia Southern University to clarify the support to be provided by Georgia Southern as part of the agreement between the two institutions. Tutoring and other services were available to East Georgia College students, but the students were not taking advantage of the support. In addition, students taking Georgia Southern classes as transient students had a very poor attendance record in those classes. The orientation course was revised to acquaint incoming students with attendance policies and advisors were encouraged to advise students on class attendance.

As part of the 1997 and 1999 Student Opinion Surveys for the Self-Study, students were given a list of reasons for attending East Georgia College and were then asked to indicate if the reason was a **major** reason for attending, a **minor** reason for attending, or **not a reason** for attending. The list included such items as the influence of advisors or parents, ability of the student to work while attending, low cost, size of college and so forth. When the responses to these questions were tabulated, the results were not surprising. Based on the number of students who selected that question as a major reason, the top four questions were: 1) Liked the size of the college; 2) Could work while attending; 3) Convenient location; and 4) Low cost. This data was then analyzed to identify characteristics of the student giving a particular answer. By selecting students who chose a particular question as a **major** reason for attending, those students could be identified with that characteristic. Profiles of students who chose different reasons for attending East Georgia could then be developed. As an example, students who indicated that “Offered the Courses I Wanted” and “Good Academic Reputation” were “Major” reasons for attending East Georgia College also were the most positive in areas dealing with “levels of satisfaction.” It was then possible to ask other questions about this selected group of students, and compare their responses to the overall response rate. Some findings proved more significant than others, but the results were used by the College for recruitment and retention purposes. Using profiles of students based on this kind of approach, the Focus Group Panel developed student focus group interviews that can then quickly place students being interviewed into a “profile category.” This enabled the interviewers to then discuss certain problem areas with students in order to see if other issues unique to each category might develop. A profile such as this also allows

faculty and staff participating in Focus Group interviews to identify students in a meaningful way, and to probe more deeply into their opinions and beliefs about East Georgia College.

The Student Opinion Survey information has also been used to develop comparisons across campuses for certain major categories of questions within the survey. Summaries of responses for questions of satisfaction about academic services have shown that for all campuses, students are most satisfied with the quality of instruction. In addition, while students at the Swainsboro campus are very satisfied with the availability of their counselors, students at the Statesboro Center and Liberty Center are less satisfied in this area. This led the Counselor to schedule times at the other campus sites. Finally, comparisons of student satisfaction across campuses for student relations and services show that the area receiving the highest level of satisfaction is “Learning Support.” The time, effort, and money spent in the development of the new Learning Support Center on the Swainsboro campus, and the effort spent in Statesboro to get students involved in the services provided by Georgia Southern seem to have been well spent.

The graduation/transferring rate of East Georgia College students as reported in the benchmarking study is 45.1%, better than the 11.5%-25.2% normative range for the peers and above the Georgia college average of 36.5%. This is surprising considering high placement in learning support usually points to a low graduation rate. This is likely because the ease of transfer by students at the Statesboro and Liberty Centers is greatly facilitated by the agreement between East Georgia College and Georgia Southern University and the members of the Liberty Center Consortium.

Section E: Overall Institutional Health

The overall health of the institution is excellent. Student enrollment is growing. The diversity of the College is increasing. New space is under construction, more is coming. Significant gifts to the Foundation for student scholarships, cultural programming and economic development have been given.

Community and political support for East Georgia College and the University System is high. The attention given by the Chancellor and Board of Regents to East Georgia College is greatly appreciated.

The College is continually upgrading and installing new hardware and software to ensure that the information technology needs of the campus are met. When the new building is completed, the upgrades on the Swainsboro campus will make the campus function at maximum capacity. Strides are being made at the Statesboro site, but the technology availability has to be fortified. The facilities provided by Georgia Southern are much appreciated, but in terms of space and condition leave something to be desired.

The College was able to fill some of the full-time instructional needs by hiring some temporary full-time instructors to handle the current enrollment levels and the projected growth in headcount and EFT.

Challenges face East Georgia College. Departing the Dublin Center is a loss, measured not only in the two-hundred plus student headcount for the College at a critical time, but also in the historical perspective of over sixteen years of service at that site. The limitations of the curriculum to learning support and Area A courses for East Georgia College and Coastal Georgia Community College at the Liberty Center appear to be short sighted and contrary to the principle that the two year college will be the point of access in the University System. The growth of the Statesboro Center manifests somewhat as a drain of the resources of the Swainsboro campus. It provides unique challenges when pointing to Fall 2001. Permanent space in Statesboro is an area of concern.

The future of area technical institutes may have a profound effect on the size of the College. When the five area technical institutes in the surrounding counties become technical colleges and COC accredited and HOPE is administered as it currently is administered, we will have to work harder to convince students to opt for East Georgia College.