

State of the College Address
East Georgia State College
Bob Boehmer
September 24, 2019, 11:00 – 11:45am
Luck Flanders Gambrell Building

Good morning,

The first chair of the East Georgia State College Foundation was the woman after whom our student center was named, Jean Anderson Morgan. Jean resided in Swainsboro for over 40 years with her husband, Jimmy Morgan. After Jimmy's death and shortly before her recent death, Jean moved to Tennessee to be with her family. Recently, a large part of our community came to this auditorium for an amazing celebration of Jean's life.

Today, we are sitting in the auditorium of the Luck Flanders Gambrell Building. Luck Gambrell, who was married to Senator David Gambrell, donated the land on which this college sits. Recently, the Gambrell family donated an additional 138 acres of land adjoining the college to our foundation.

Some of the students here today are Correll Scholars. The scholarships available to these Correll Scholars were possible because of a donation by Pete and Ada Lee Correll. Also, the Fulford Community Learning Center, which many of you passed as you entered campus this morning, was donated by Pete and Ada Lee.

This morning, we discuss the state of the college. The state of the college is good, in significant part, because of the generosity

of people like the Morgans, the Gambrells and the Corrells. However, higher education in the United States is currently undergoing a period of rapid transformation and change and today we need to have a serious discussion about how to respond to that change.

Across the United States, **students in rural high schools are doing quite well. Following high school, however, far fewer rural high school students are choosing college than urban and suburban students. Those who are going to college are graduating from college at lower rates than urban students.**

It is East Georgia State College's mission to understand why this is happening, provide college access for more students in our region and then graduate them at higher rates.

Let's talk about that today. This is a complex and difficult question. However, it is critical to the economic and social viability of our region and to the life success of our amazing students.

My challenge to you today: *As a community, are we willing to do the hard work necessary to build on and retain our culture of providing high quality education with a personal touch while, simultaneously, changing dramatically to become a nationwide leader in meeting the unique and emerging needs of students in rural America for access to an affordable college education which prepares them for a digitized, automated future workplace?*

Before we begin discussing this question, **I extend my sincere thanks** to each of you for choosing to be part of the East Georgia State College family.

Being part of this family requires passion for providing access to an affordable, high quality college education and passion for changing the lives of our amazing students.

Every day, **I deeply appreciate the choice all of you have made to be part of this family.** The work you are doing each day is critical to the future of this region. It dramatically improves the lives of our students you serve.

- **So, let's begin with the unique mission of EGSC as an access institution.** We all know that mission well.

Nonetheless, it is critical for us to continually remind ourselves about that mission. This assures that our mission continues to guide us as we make important decisions each day.

- **MISSION:** “East Georgia State College is an associate degree granting, liberal arts institution of the University System of Georgia **providing its students access to both academically transferable pathways and collaborative programs in occupation related fields.** The College also offers targeted baccalaureate level degrees that support the University System's initiative to expand educational opportunities. The College prepares traditional and nontraditional students for success in the global 21st century through a technologically advanced teaching and learning environment that fosters personal growth by utilizing

an expanding range of resources and amenities, including an on-campus student residential option. The College also continuously engages the communities it serves through public service and cultural enrichment.”

- We are part of a university system. **Each institution in that system has a unique mission.** The 26 members range from large research-intensive universities in urban areas to comprehensive regional universities to state universities to smaller state colleges like East Georgia State College in rural regions of the state.
- **I am deeply proud that we are a state college in this system with the mission of providing access to an affordable high-quality college education to anyone with a high school diploma and the willingness to do the hard work necessary to earn a college degree.**
- Although I spent almost a quarter of a century of my professional life at a large research university and have great respect for all of our sister institutions, **I simply cannot imagine any role in higher education today which is more important to the future of this country and this region than the role of a rural access institution like East Georgia.**

- **Think for a moment about the myriad of challenges faced by our nation and this region at this time:**
 - a dramatically changing workplace for which recent high school graduates need to be prepared at a time when the **careers for which they are preparing may not have even been invented yet;**
 - a workplace in which **older employees often face the reality of reinventing themselves due to robotics, artificial intelligence and technology changing at warp speed;**
 - climate change; and
 - increasing levels of violence in our society.
 - The list goes on and on.

- How is our society and, specifically, our region, going to meet these workforce and societal challenges unless **more of our citizens make a choice to pursue a lifetime of education?**
- This is our unique niche at East Georgia State College. We are **not here to be highly selective** in our admissions process.
- We are **not here to provide a comprehensive range of degree from associates degrees through graduate degrees.**
- We are **here to provide access** to a nationwide system of higher education by being the first, most convenient and most affordable point of access to that system for anyone who earns a high school diploma and is ready for

- a high-quality college experience to prepare themselves for this challenging future.
- We are here to **be a leader increasing college enrollment and graduation in rural America.**
 - **Not every student from this rural area needs to choose college.** Some should pursue a military career. Some should go directly into the workforce. However, we need to dramatically improve the number choosing college and, even more importantly, we need to dramatically improve the number who are academically successful, earn a college degree and use that degree to become contributing members of our workforce.
 - Our **continued success depends on our laser-like focus on this mission.** If we lose sight of this mission, if we lose our passion for this mission, we will not thrive and survive in the future.
- **Unique challenges EGSC faces due to this mission and the demographics of the 27 counties surrounding our three campuses – Swainsboro, Statesboro and Augusta.**
 - **Computer and internet use by residents of our region** provides a good first window on our region because access to the opportunities of the modern world is severely limited if a computer and internet access is not available.
 - In the U.S., **over 87% of households have a computer and over 78% have a broadband internet subscription.**

- In Georgia the percentages are similar with 87% of households having a computer and over 76% having a broadband internet subscription.
 - In our 27-county region, by contrast, just over 77% of households have a computer and just over 63% have a broadband internet subscription. In one county in our region, these rates are 62% and 40%.

- Next, let's look at **educational attainment**.
 - In the U.S., over 87% of the population over 25 are high school graduates or higher. Almost 31% have a bachelors degree or higher.
 - In Georgia, the comparable percentages are just over 86% and just under 30%.
 - By way of contrast, in our 27 county region the comparable percentages are over 81% for high school graduates and just under 17% for bachelors degrees and higher.
 - In one county in this region, these rates are under 12% holding a bachelors degree and over 75% graduating from high school.

- Consider data from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement about the choices being made by students in Georgia after high school.
 - This data looks at the number of students enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 16 months of

graduation and who have completed at least one year of credits within the first two years of enrollment.

- In the state of Georgia as a whole, total graduates were about 90,500 for the latest year examined.
 - The number that completed one year of post-secondary education credit within two years of enrollment was about 39,000. This is 43%. The rate is substantially lower in our region – around 40%.
- As I have said earlier, **something is disconnected at the time of graduation from high school when decisions are made about going to college.**
- This is having real economic consequences. Although there are many factors contributing to low income and high poverty, education is clearly a key to raising income and reducing poverty.
- In the U.S., median household income is over \$57,000 and the percent of persons in poverty is just under 12%.
 - In Georgia, the comparable numbers are just over \$52,000 and just under 15%.
 - By way of contrast, in our 27 county region, the median household income is just over \$41,000 and the percent of persons in poverty is about 22%.
 - In one county in our region, the median household income is just over \$27,000 and the percent of persons in poverty is almost one third - just under 33%.

- All of us need to take these numbers into account as we work each day to accomplish our mission.
 - Our students, in significant part, come from families with less financial resources, less access to information and a far less extensive family history of college success than their counterparts at other, more selective institutions.
 - This is the **group we have chosen to serve**. This is the group that it is our mission to serve. They are every bit as bright and motivated as their counterparts at more selective institutions.
 - Our mission is to find a way to assist them in overcoming these challenges in order that they may attain their full potential and, ultimately, serve their community.
- As we carry out this mission, we **need to recognize that we serve a diverse population of students reflective in many ways of the diversity within our great region**.
 - In fall of 2018:
 - 44.7% of our student body was Caucasian,
 - 43.4% of our student body was African American,
 - .8% was Hispanic.
 - This **diversity is one of our great strengths**. This **strength could be enhanced further if our efforts to reach Hispanic students** in our region intensified and our Hispanic student population increased to a level reflective of the number of Hispanic students in our region.

- **EGSC’s Economic Impact**

- In addition to providing a supply of graduates in order to improve the economic and social health of our region, we need to bear in mind at all time that our decisions about our direction have a **direct impact on our region by the impact of jobs provided and money spent and the resulting multiplier effect as those wages and contract proceeds are spent in our region.**
- In the most recent year measured by the University of Georgia, 2018, East Georgia State College had an **economic impact of almost \$81** million in Emanuel, Candler, Bulloch, Johnson, Jefferson, Toombs, Treutlen, and Jenkins counties combined (our service area as defined by the Selig Center).

Year	Output Impact	Jobs
FY 2018	\$80,952,494	969
FY 2017	\$82,831,552	987
FY 2016	\$80,140,200	991
FY 2015	\$70,849,180	905
FY 2014	\$60,856,225	829
FY 2013	\$58,679,138	760
FY 2012	\$69,690,604	858
FY 2011	\$63,282,323	834
FY 2010	\$59,376,326	770
FY 2009	\$59,941,799	668

- Source: Selig Center for Economic Growth, Terry College of Business, The University of Georgia

- **Enrollment**
 - If all of this positive impact is going to continue, it **becomes evident that we need to continue to increase the number of students.**
 - Remaining small does have its evident virtues. However, it doesn't enable us to produce enough graduates, it doesn't allow us to continue increasing our economic impact on the region and it doesn't produce the revenue we need to remain viable.
 - In order for the region to survive and thrive, a higher percentage of students in the region need to make the choice to attend college and graduate.

- **So, enrollment pressure is a fact of life in our world. Let's talk enrollment for a couple of minutes.**
 - First, **enrollment is a challenge because we live in a region served by several outstanding USG institutions and technical colleges.**
 - Consider that students in this region, in addition to the many University System of Georgia choices available to them around the state, such as Georgia State University and Kennesaw State University, have a **broad range to choices within the region: Georgia Southern University, Augusta University, Savannah State University, and College of Coastal Georgia. And the total population in the region, as we discussed, has been relatively flat for quite some time.**

- These educational choices are an asset of our region. These choices, however, present the colleges in the region with enrollment challenges.
 - According to U.S Census Department numbers, **population growth in our area has been flat** during the period from 2010 to 2018.
 - Consider that the **US population has grown 6% from 2010 to 2018, while Georgia has grown 8.6%.**
 - In contrast, in the 27-county region we are evaluating today, **population growth has been relatively flat – 2.84% growth. In fact, in 15 counties in this region, population has declined during this period.**

- You can see the impact of these population trends in our area on the **University System of Georgia colleges and universities in our area** when you look at fall 2018 enrollment numbers.
 - Consider that in fall 2018, **four out of six of those institutions experienced enrollment declines. At one institution, the decline was almost 8%.**
 - Consider that EGSC’s total enrollment was 2751 in fall 2009 and was 2941 in Fall 2018. Although fall 2019 enrollment numbers are not yet final, we are **now preparing for a possible decline of about 5% from fall 2018 to fall 2019. If that occurs, this will leave us at about fall 2009 levels.**

- In addition to the impact of the impact of low population growth in our region, **consider also that patterns in enrollment across the state have an impact on East Georgia State College's enrollment.**
 - Overall, for the 26 institutions of the USG, there was a **1.1% increase in total enrollment from fall 2017 to fall 2018.** Much of this growth took place at research institutions.
 - During that same period, **enrollment grew by 4.6% at research universities.**
 - By way of comparison, **enrollment grew only .6% at state universities, decreased by 1.6% at comprehensive universities and decreased 3.1% at state colleges.**
 - By way of comparison, **EGSC's decrease of 2% was less than the decrease for the overall state college sector.**

- As larger institutions across the state have grown quite dramatically, **the impact of this enrollment growth by the larger institutions has trickled down and resulted in enrollment decreases at institutions similar to East Georgia State College across the state.**
 - Consider that **among 8 University System of Georgia in the "access sector" in fall 2018, 6 of those institutions experienced enrollment declines At one institution, this decline was over 12%.**
 - **Consider what East Georgia State College's enrollment numbers would likely be if we had not made dual enrollment, online education, external campuses and residence halls a focus.**

- ✓ Dual enrollment grew from 0 in fall 2009 to 408 in fall 2018.
 - ✓ In fall 2009, online enrollment was 64 and had grown to 317 by fall 2018.
 - ✓ In fall 2012, our first residence hall opened. Our two residence halls now have 433 beds and are fully occupied.
- There is an obvious lesson here. **As the external environment changes, our enrollment management approach must also change.**
 - **Imagine the fall of 2024.**
 - ✓ What might our enrollment be if we begin, in addition to our traditional market, to focus more intensively on non-traditionally aged students, Hispanic students, military personnel?
 - ✓ What might our enrollment be if we fail to change as needed to respond to our external environment?
- **This enrollment history, of course, makes me worry. However, it also makes me see more clearly the solution for the future.**
 - **Our strategy, quite simply, must first and foremost, be to increase expectations in the region about high school graduates making the choice to attend college. This is the sweet spot for East Georgia State College.**
 - **Our strategy must also be to concurrently reach out far more aggressively to adult learners who have completed some but not all of a college degree and adult**

- learners who must reinvent themselves to survive in their workplace.
- Our strategy **must also be to reach out far more aggressively to Hispanics and the large number of military personnel in our region** seeking to prepare themselves for the modern workplace following their military service.
 - **These enrollment trends, of course, lead directly to a discussion of the budget for the current fiscal year, FY 2020.**
 - Let's go first to the conclusion and then discuss that conclusion in some more detail. The bottom line is that, despite a potential enrollment decline this fall, our FY 2020 budget is sound.
 - Now, let's talk about that conclusion in a bit more detail.
 - The two key components of EGSC's annual budget are our state allocation and our tuition and fee revenue.
 - Despite the **potential for an enrollment drop of about 5% this year and the resulting potential decrease in tuition and fees**, the fact that the college's budget has been managed prudently in the past and the fact that we have made difficult budgetary decisions in the past have put us in a **position to survive and thrive even as enrollment fluctuates**.
 - As an example, we implemented a plan of internal reorganization in early 2018. The very difficult

implementation of that plan reduced the college's ongoing annual expenditures by about \$850,000.

- In addition to this sound past budget management, our state appropriation for the current year, increased modestly from \$9,866,396 in FY 2019 to \$10,125,579 for the current year.
 - This increase in state funds, in combination with past prudent budget management, will enable us to meet increasing expenses such as the increased compensation costs due to raises which recently went into effect; and will enable us to absorb the impact of decreased tuition and fee revenue likely as a result of the potential enrollment drop this semester.
- However, we do have recognize the realities of the state funding model in Georgia and think well beyond the current year. The state of Georgia, as you know well, uses an enrollment-based funding formula to guide state allocations.
- First, it is a reality that formula funding does not fund state colleges like EGSC at the same level as our sister institutions in other sectors.
 - For example, our state allocation for FY 2020 amount to \$3,071 for each full time equivalent student.
 - By way of contrast, the average funding level in Georgia for all USG institutions is \$6536 for that same year.
 - Also, you know that all state agencies directed all state agencies to plan for possible cuts to this current year

budget. We do not know yet whether USG institutions will be required to make these cuts. However, we must plan for that possibility.

- Another reality is that there is a two year lag in the funding model.
 - Under that formula, our fall 2018 enrollment decrease will be used as a key factor in determining our FY 2021 budget.
 - That means that we can anticipate a decrease next year in our base budget, perhaps \$200,000, due to fall 2018 enrollment declines.
 - The point is painfully obvious. **Although our total overall budget this year is a bit higher than FY 2019, we must be extremely careful in managing our budget this year as we plan for a possible drop in next year's budget.**

- **Major challenges facing higher education in the United States**

As we consider together these state and regional trends, challenges and opportunities, I ask you to think about the challenging environment in which virtually all institutions of higher education across the United States are now facing.

- **Consolidations.**
 - At one point in the not too distant past, there were 36 institutions of higher education in the University System of Georgia.

- There are **now 26**. This is a growing trend across the United States.
- **Public skepticism about higher education.**
 - There is increasingly widespread skepticism about the value of higher education.
 - **Successful institutions counter that skepticism by developing innovative new programs which continue to prepare students in the areas in which higher education has traditionally excelled – critical thinking, math, social sciences, humanities, writing, and oral communication – while simultaneously developing innovative new degree programs which build on those traditional areas of excellence while responding to the specific challenges of the modern workplace. “Liberal arts plus”**
- **A coming decline in high school graduates in the U.S.**

As we approach the middle of the 2020’s, the number of high school graduates nationwide will begin to decline.
- **The new ways Gen Z learns.** We need to understand the new ways which students learn and respond to those new ways of learning with adaptive learning technology, distance education programs and new classroom teaching strategies.
- **The changed funding model for higher education.**
 - **Decreased funding for public higher education as a share of the total cost of higher education will continue.**

- Students and their families will no longer allow higher education to make up the difference by tuition and fee increases.
- **Failure to change in response to these trends would, quite simply, allow EGSC to become irrelevant. None of us will allow that to happen.**
- **EGSC's Successes in FY 2019**
 - In the challenging environment we are discussing today, we have had many successes. I have time to address only a precious few of these successes today.
 - As I told our faculty and staff at our annual fall workshop recently, there is no accomplishment which I will mention today which is the accomplishment of any one person and there is no challenge which I will mention today which can be addressed by any one of us. At EGSC, all of these achievements and challenges are shared.
- We are now **adding space to the the JAM Center.**
 - That project will **add about 15,000 square feet** of badly needed space to the JAM.
 - It will allow us increase student engagement and, I believe, will ultimately contribute to student recruiting, retention and graduation.
 - It will be **available early in 2020.**

- We will soon **move from our current location in Statesboro to a location on the Georgia Southern University Campus in Statesboro.**
 - Funding will be used primarily to renovate the Nesmith Lane Building on the Georgia Southern University campus for EGSC.
 - This will eliminate the need for the time and expense of students and faculty travelling from our current location to the Georgia Southern University campus for classes and essential student services.
 - It will, I believe, entice more potential students to consider EGSC Statesboro as their point of access to college.
 - Perhaps most importantly, it will put our students closer to essential resources like the library and acclimate those students to the academic and co-curricular environment of Georgia Southern University promoting their long-term academic success.
 - The process of designing this renovation is now underway.
 - **Early in 2021, the college will move** from its current location in Statesboro to this new location on the Georgia Southern University campus.

- The college **entered into a long-needed comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding with Georgia Southern University.**

- EGSC has been working in partnership with Georgia Southern University in Statesboro since 1996 without such a formal MOU in place.
 - The college has been working with Georgia Southern University since 2012 to put an agreement of this type in place. It was signed in 2019.
 - This comprehensive MOU is designed to promote student success and will pay many long-term dividends.
- Another facilities project is now underway on our Augusta campus.
 - The college opened a location in Augusta on the Augusta University campus in 2013.
 - We immediately entered into a comprehensive long-term Memorandum of Understanding with Augusta University.
 - We have gone from zero to over 400 students in Augusta since then.
 - From the beginning and despite a high level of cooperation from our partner, Augusta University, facilities for EGSC in Augusta have been and continue to be a major challenge.
 - **We have taken a major step forward by moving all of our Augusta faculty and staff into renovated space on the second floor of Galloway Hall on the AU Summerville campus.**
 - EGSC Augusta students, who previously took classes in the Galloway Hall space, will now take their classes

on various locations throughout the Summerville Campus. This will both provide our faculty and staff with a better working environment while more fully acclimating our students to the AU campus.

- As EGSC's facilities have expanded, our **IT infrastructure and systems have similarly expanded.**
 - Two IT projects which are truly daunting in scope and which have been successfully completed are:
 - ✓ the **move to a hosted Banner environment**, and
 - ✓ the **complete implementation of Microsoft 365.**

- **Two internal leadership development programs were implemented** during the last year
 - a student leadership development program and
 - a staff leadership development program.
 - Both are continuing and improving in the coming year.

- Our **Comprehensive Administrative Review was completed.**
 - In this era of enhanced public accountability for colleges and universities across the county, the University System of Georgia required each institution to complete an exhaustive efficiency review.
 - This CAR process was and remains a top priority for the USG Chancellor.

- Our academic programs continue to evolve and improve.
 - If you look back to the time of our last SACSCOC accreditation process, the college offered one academic program --- an associate of arts degree.
 - The college had just introduced a second academic program – a bachelors degree in biology.
 - We now offer one certificate, a full range of associates degrees with disciplinary distinction and three bachelors degree programs – biology, fire and emergency services and nursing (an RN to BSN program).
 - Our biology program has grown dramatically at both the associates and bachelors level and now hosts a chapter of the Beta, Beta, Beta honor society,
 - Our accredited FESA program is ranked as the most affordable in the nation and
 - Our nursing program was just accredited by ACEN (the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing) and was ranked as the most affordable in the nation.
 - All three programs respond to specific needs of this region.

- So, what are the big projects on our plates for the coming year? **(1) SACSCOC Reaffirmation; (2) Increase Enrollment and Rates of Academic Success; and (3) Increasing Funds Raised from Private Dollars and External Grants**

- **SACSCOC Reaffirmation.** The importance of the decennial reaffirmation process to institutions of higher education is extremely high. It **determines our reputation.** It **determines the value of the degrees we grant** to our students. It is **essential to our ability to grow and thrive as a member of a group of respected institutions** which has imposed upon itself the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation* as our collective standards of quality.
 - **Select a QEP Topic and Write a QEP plan**
 - Complete SACSCOC Compliance Certification
 - In addition to the QEP, **our compliance certification is in draft form and must now be finalized for submission to SACSCOC in March of 2020.**
 - The **SACSCOC reaffirmation committee will be here in just over a year** to review both the QEP and our compliance certification.

East Georgia State College

SACSCOC Reaffirmation Timeline

Estimated Date

Early Fall Semester 2018

Activity

Develop SACSCOC Reaffirmation Organizational Structure

- Steering Committee
- Compliance Committee
- Quality Enhancement Plan Committee (QEP)

December 18, 2019

Orientation of SACSCOC Leadership Team at SACSCOC Annual Meeting

Academic Year 2018-2019	Obtain broad input about possible QEP topics
Academic Year 2018-2019	Complete draft compliance certification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address each principle • Collect/organize documentation in electronic form for each principle
Summer 2019	Conduct Practice SACSCOC Reaffirmation Committee Visit
Early Fall Semester 2019	Select QEP including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Assessment Plan • Implementation Plan
March 20, 2020	Submit Compliance Certification to SACSCOC
April 20, 2020	Off-Site Review by SACSCOC
Four to Six Weeks before on-site visit (8/24-9/7/2020)	Focused Report by EGSC concerning any principles (if needed) not addressed by Compliance Certification
Four to Six Weeks before on-site visit (8/24-9/7/2020)	Submit QEP to SACSCOC
October 6 – 8, 2020	On-Site Committee Visit by SACSCOC
March 2021	Response to SACSCOC On-Site Report and Revised QEP (if required)
June 21, 2020	SACSCOC Trustees make decision about EGSC Reaffirmation *at summer SACSCOC Meeting

* It is possible that monitoring reports will be required if SCASCOC determines that additional evidence pf compliance with the Principles is requires (monitoring cannot exceed 2 years).

- **Increasing Enrollment and Increasing Rates of Academic Success**

While completing this extensive SACSCOC process, our **long-term viability makes it essential that we walk and chew gum at the same time. We must simultaneously continue to aggressively move ahead in our initiatives to increase enrollment and academic success.**

- **Our move in Statesboro discussed earlier is an unusual opportunity for a surge in enrollment in Statesboro.**

- ✓ Simply constructing the space will, of course, not accomplish this.
- ✓ **We must develop and make available to students written educational pathways from degrees at East Georgia to degrees at Georgia Southern University.**
- ✓ **We must prepare a detailed plan and timetable to maximize the potential of our move. We cannot miss this opportunity.**

- **Increase Enrollment by Increasing On-Line Enrollment, Enrollment by Adult Learners, Enrollment of Military Students and Enrollment of Hispanic Students.**

- ✓ Our community has many adult learners with some college but no degree.
- ✓ **It is a high priority to reach out this critical part of our community with degree programs which**

our scheduled in a way that enables them to complete degrees at times and places which are consistent with their work schedules and which enables them to complete a degree rapidly.

- It is a **high priority to obtain approval for a new bachelors degree program for implementation in Fall 2020.**
 - ✓ A degree in health care administration should be proposed and develop for delivery in fall 2020.
 - ✓ Following that, we should **immediately begin to plan to develop an innovative bachelors of business administration** for delivery in fall 2021.

- While these initiatives designed to bring new students to EGSC are critical, retention of students is, of course, even more important in increasing enrollment than the recruiting of new students. Ultimately, we must improve the number of our students who either transfer successfully or graduate – i.e., **increase overall academic success rates.**
 - ✓ Accordingly, we **must take another step forward this year in increasing our academic success rates.** Our rates have improved. For example, our **six year graduation rate improved from 11.7% for the 2007 cohort to 17.3% to the 2012 cohort.** This is an area in which **we have both a communication challenge and a substantive challenge.**

IPEDS Fall Cohort 3 Year Rates	2012 Cohort	2011 Cohort	2010 Cohort	2009 Cohort	2008 Cohort	2007 Cohort
Number	1,171	1,541	1,074	990	979	725
Number Graduated	126	96	70	56	55	61
3 Year Graduation Rate	11%	6%	7%	6%	6%	8%
Number Transferred	773	470	334	351	342	261
3 Year Transfer Rate	66%	30%	31%	35%	35%	36%
3 Year Success Rate	77%	37%	38%	41%	41%	44%

USG Fall Cohort 6 Year Grad Rates	2012 Cohort	2011 Cohort	2010 Cohort	2009 Cohort	2008 Cohort	2007 Cohort
Number	1,171	1,541	1,074	990	979	725
Number Graduated from EGSC	203	176	111	85	80	85
Number Graduated from USG	221	198	126	100	89	96
EGSC 6 Year Graduation Rate	17.3%	11.4%	10.3%	8.6%	8.2%	11.7%
USG 6 Year Graduation Rate	18.9%	12.8%	11.7%	10.1%	9.1%	13.2%

- ✓ Most of the national discussion focuses on graduation rates. However, we are an institution which has since its inception been built upon successful transfer of many of our students to our sister institutions to earn bachelors degree.
- ✓ **We need to do a far better job communicating to the USG, to accreditors and the public that the overall success rate – graduation plus transfer – is the best measure of what we do.**
- ✓ That, however, is **not enough**. The fact remains that overall academic success rates are not high enough.
- ✓ We must also continue to improve that overall academic success rate in the coming year.

- As we create these new degree programs such as health care administration, consider that **these programs must not simply be mirrors of programs which have been traditionally available at colleges across the United States in these areas.** Instead, these programs must contain the following key elements:
 - ✓ Create **partnerships with employers** in the region to extend coursework beyond the classroom.
 - ✓ Use these partnership **to integrate more career development opportunities and internships** into the curriculum.
 - ✓ Employers are asking what applicants can do, not what their degree are in. **Employers are integrating skills-based assessment into the hiring process.** This reality, i.e., students will be facing skills based assessments after they earn their degree, should be **built into the curriculum** so that are students are prepared for it.
 - ✓ Create programs which give students the opportunities to **stack credentials** as they progress towards a bachelors degree.
 - ✓ Integrate the hard skills (e.g., major software platforms used in the careers for which students are preparing) into the fundamentals of traditional courses (“**liberal arts plus**”).
 - ✓ **Schedule Courses in these programs to meet student needs.** Schedule in a Manner that Enables Students to Take Courses at Convenient Times or Online; and in a Manner that Makes it Realistic for

Non-traditional learners to Earn a Bachelors Degree in No More Than Four Years.

○ **Obtain Giving From Sources Other Than State Allocation and Tuition and Fees**

- Increase Gifts from Private Donors
- Increase Proposals for Grant Funding Based on the College's Unique Status as an Access Institution in a Rural Region with Minority Serving Institution Status and Formal Transfer Partnerships with Two Large Public Universities.
- As we think about accomplishing these priority items in the coming year, it quickly becomes obvious that **additional funding will be needed for long term success.**
- We cannot rely on traditional sources alone – tuition and state funds – to get us to the goal line.
- This, of course, means that **the Office of Institutional Advancement's top priority must be to work with the EGSC Foundation to even further enhance our private fundraising efforts.**
 - You will recall that I mentioned the first chair of our foundation at the beginning of this presentation, Jean Anderson Morgan.
 - **At the time that Jean took on the role of the chair of the foundation, the assets of the foundation were zero.** At that time, most state colleges like EGSC did not consider private fundraising to be part of their

normal activities. Reliance was primarily on state allocations, tuition revenue and student fees.

- **By the end of FY 2012, the East Georgia State College foundation assets had risen to about \$987,000.**
 - **At the end of FY 2019, these assets had grown further to around \$3,000,000.**
 - This increase in foundation assets has been made possible by the generosity of many donors such as Jean Morgan, Pete and Ada Lee Correll who created the Correll Scholars Program, and the Gambrell family who recently gave the college a large tract of timber land adjacent to the college. A managed harvest of some of that timber enabled the foundation to recently generate timber sale proceeds which will significantly enhance the foundations ability to support the college's mission in the long run.
- This growth in foundation assets has, of course, had a substantial and immediate impact on the college's ability to achieve its mission. The primary result of this increase in assets to date has been a **much needed increase in the college's ability to provide scholarships for our amazing students, particularly needs based scholarships.**
- As you can see clearly from the above discussion about budget, **lack of attention to private fundraising is clearly a thing of the past for state colleges.** If we are to survive and thrive in the long run, we must build on Jean's legacy

and supplement state dollars and tuition even more with private gifts and external grants.

- In addition to simply increasing donations and external grants, another key element of this fundraising strategy must be to raise more unrestricted funds for the benefit of the college.
- Almost all of the foundation's assets are now restricted. In other words, the donors have given those funds for a specific purpose such as a scholarship. The foundation, of course, has a fiduciary duty to use those funds only for those restricted purposes.
- As we grow, the foundation must raise more unrestricted funds to meet unanticipated needs.

• **Conclusion**

At the beginning of this presentation, I asked you this question: *As a community, are we willing to do the hard work necessary to build on and retain our culture of providing high quality education with a personal touch while, simultaneously, changing dramatically to become a nationwide leader in meeting the unique and emerging needs of students in rural America for access to an affordable college education which prepares them for a digitized, automated future workplace?*

After spending almost 8 years in this community, I believe that upon reflection your answer will be a resounding yes.

Thank you for all you do for our amazing students and for your thoughtful consideration of the ideas I have shared with you this morning.

You are deeply appreciated.

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