

## Strategic Enrollment Planning Undergraduate Student Experience Sub-Committee

### Introduction

The student experience at the College of Coastal Georgia is critical for recruitment, retention, and building a strong alumni base. Vincent Tinto (1993), whose work focuses on the student experience, stated that overall student success is an institutional commitment to students and it needs to be based on the character of the institution's educational mission. The Undergraduate Student Experience Sub-Committee was focused on completing its charge based on these philosophical underpinnings.

### Committee Membership and Charge:

The committee was composed of members from:

Dr. Michael Butcher (chair), Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, and Title IX Coordinator

Dr. William Carlton, Director of Athletics

Debbie Holmes, Dean of Library Services

Allison Lyon, Assistant Dean of Student Life

Dr. Courtenay Miller, Assistant Professor of Mathematics

Patricia Morris, Lead Academic Advisor

Niki Schmauch, Coordinator of Academic Services

Brian Weese, Director of Career Development

The sub-committee was charged with reviewing and analyzing the current undergraduate student experience at the College. In addition, the final outcome of our discussions was to provide three recommended action plans that the sub-committee felt would positively impact the undergraduate student experience at the College.

### Process:

#### ***Step One: Open Discussion and SWOT Analysis***

During the initial sub-committee meeting, the members engaged in an open discussion about the undergraduate student experience. At this point, no limitations were put in place about the content of the discussion. Ideas and proposals could include: additional support for the expansion of existing programs, modifying programs, or creating new programs. At the conclusion of the meeting, the members were asked to think about items that would fit into a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the undergraduate student experience.

For the subsequent meeting, a SWOT analysis was completed. The discussion provided rich information in each of the four quadrants to help further our charge. This analysis ended with 10 items that warranted further discussion as we progressed toward our action plan strategies. The members were asked to think about the following as we narrowed our areas for the action plans:

- How much does this initiative or focus area impact the larger campus community?
- How much does this initiative improve multiple areas of the student experience?
- Are we able to demonstrate the potential for improvement of enrollment, retention, and graduation along with improving alumni pride?
- What is the financial impact to the institution and what is the return on investment?
- Does this proposal allow the institution and the students to be more efficient and productive?

The sub-committee was focused on identifying both short- and long-term high-impact strategies to improve the experience of students at the College.

**Step Two: Determining the Actions Plans from the SWOT Analysis and Developing the Proposals**

For our next meeting, we discussed the items from the SWOT analysis and the members decided on the following three action plans: the Student Success Experience, the Town/Gown Experience, and the Camden Center Experience. The committee also agreed that there was a need for a next phase of student housing, but they understood that the proposal was already in process. The sub-committee began to develop the specific items for these action plans, which are listed in the table below:

Table 1. The strategic enrollment proposals by the Undergraduate Student Experience Sub-Committee.

Proposal Name	Description
Student Success Experience	<p>The purpose of the Student Success Experience is to provide first-year and second-year students the academic and social resources to help them transition, progress, and graduate.</p> <p>This action plan focused on developing a committee to review, centralize, expand, and assess the student success efforts, which were typical of the First Year Experience and the Second Year Experience.</p>
Town/Gown Experience	<p>The purpose of the town/gown experience is to enhance the campus and community relationship for the Golden Isles and Camden County by targeted interactions and strategic communications.</p> <p>This action plan would recommend meeting with representatives from the Office of Advancement, Human Resources, and Student Affairs to subsequently develop a task force to plan, implement, and assess this strategy.</p>
Camden Center Experience	<p>The purpose of the Camden Center Experience is to enhance and directly target the Camden Center population through programming and support services.</p> <p>This action plan would develop a taskforce to develop goals for improving the student experience at this Center. The action plans also implements pilot activities along with assessing the activities.</p>

Return on investment (ROI) methodologies were used estimate the expected return on the investment in the proposed programs. Table 2 summarizes these estimates for each of the proposed programs.

Table 2. Return on Investment

Program Name and College	Cost	Return on Investment (4 Years)		
		Enrollment	Retention	ROI
Student Success Experience	Approximately \$3,000 for the first year for office supplies and travel,	Approximately 241 more students by 2021.	Assume 2.0% increase in overall	Approximately a cumulative net revenue of \$1,420,844 in 2021.

	\$45,500 for the second year for part-time staff, and \$118,000 for the third year to add additional staff.		enrollment each year.	
Town/Gown Experience	Approximately \$37,000 for the first year for office supplies, travel, and hospitality expenses. Approximately \$53,000 beginning in 2020 to add one staff member.	Approximately 252 more students by 2021.	Assume 2.0% increase in overall enrollment each year.	Approximately a cumulative net revenue of \$2,268,325 in 2021.
Camden Center Experience	Approximately \$1,500 for the first two years for office supplies and travel. Approximately \$48,750 in 2021 to add additional staff.	Approximately 54 more students by 2021.	Assume 2.0% increase in overall enrollment each year.	Approximately a cumulative net revenue of \$318,750 in 2021.

### Step Three: Ranking of the Action Plans

The final discussion with the sub-committee was to determine the ranking of the initiatives by level of priority. The sub-committee believed that the Student Success Experience would have a high impact effect on the internal functioning of campus, increase customer service, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness. The members felt that the Town/Gown Experience would have a high impact on the relationship between the College and the local and regional community. This experience would increase both the formal and informal partnerships that would benefit the students, faculty, and staff. The members felt that the Camden Center Experience was important to provide additional services and customer support to our students at the Center, however, the members felt that it was important that the institution continues to review the mission and vision of the Camden Center so that the Camden Center Experience committee can be most impactful in its efforts. Therefore, the ranking of priorities is as follows:

1. Student Success Experience
2. Town/Gown Experience
3. Camden Center Experience

### Recommendations

Based on the Strategic Enrollment Proposals (Table 1), Return on Investment Analysis (Table 2), and the Executive Enrollment Committee's related KPIs (Enrollment, Student Progress, Graduation Rate, Diversity Enrollment, and Fiscal Health), the following are recommended for implementation:

1. Develop the committee for the Student Success Experience to begin initial discussions for possible future planning and recommendations.

2. Start the initial conversation to determine the taskforce members for the Town/Gown Experience with the Offices of Advancement, Human Resources, and Student Affairs.
3. Continue the dialogue about the undergraduate student experience at the Camden Center. When the mission and vision of the Camden Center continue to be developed, begin to constitute the Camden Center Experience committee.

The sub-committee discussed that each of these action plans are important for the College to review. With support from the institution, enrollment and retention can be increased by these action plans which will subsequently impact our students; the effectiveness, efficiency, and customer service from our faculty and staff; the growth of the relationship with our local and regional community; and increase the commitment to the Camden Center.

**References:**

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition* (2nd Edition). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.