

Georgia State University
College of Education Strategic Plan (2013-2020)
April 10, 2013

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Over 45 years, the College of Education (COE) has experienced significant student and resource growth, been recognized for its development of effective teachers, increased external funding, and assembled an internationally recognized faculty. The COE has made great strides since its founding, and our future is even brighter. For the COE to reach its potential in impacting change on local, state, national, and international levels, a clear and articulated vision is necessary. With this spirit, we created this Strategic Plan.

Georgia State University's College of Education is committed to high quality instruction, high-impact research, and equitable, excellent service to our students. The COE seeks to create an inclusive environment that fosters, embraces, and protects the free exchange of ideas. Academic freedom is a central tenet of the COE. Faculty should be free and encouraged to follow their intellectual interests. The COE will support academic scholarship and research that deepens scholarly inquiry and our understanding of a range of educational professions and issues. Our student population reflects the diverse composition of our state and nation. This diversity is a valued asset essential to the College's success. We value groups with diverse gender, racial, ethnic, religious, nationality, veteran, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socio-economic statuses and backgrounds.

Further collaborations within the College and across the University, as well as strong partnerships with community resources, will be critical in achieving the objectives in this document. The COE is located in an urban metropolitan area that is a leading hub for business, culture, transportation, sports, and politics in the Southeastern US. The College recognizes and seeks to enhance its international role in developing future leaders and practitioners in the fields of education, human development, and health-related fields. Future efforts to address the needs of our cities and their citizens will require that faculty and students understand complex systems and identities and integrate advanced learning technologies.

Understanding, embracing, and addressing the multifaceted needs of today's and tomorrow's learners, while offering effective and accommodating programming, are essential to the College's continued success. The COE has been and will remain steadfast in its commitment to developing professional educators to meet student needs. In addition, the COE is well positioned to build on its accomplishments in advancing the fields of mental and physical wellness. Future success for the College is contingent on strengthening both components and not to the detriment of either.

Goal #1: The COE will develop and research strategies, policies, and practices to develop and support professional educators to ensure success for *all* learners.

The COE will continue to build upon its legacy of preparing accomplished professional educators for careers that focus on teaching students and/or supporting student learning in ways that impact practices in 21st century schooling. The COE currently offers successful undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree programs for professional educators, including early childhood education, middle-secondary education, special education, school psychology, health and physical education, and educational leadership. The COE will continue to provide preparation of professional educators in these disciplines while also exploring interdisciplinary collaborations within and outside the University that extend the appeal and reach of our professional education programs. All professional education programs will maintain a high level of personal contact with students, including high quality field, practicum, and clinical experiences in a wide range of educational settings.

Initiative #1. Recruitment and Retention

The COE will recruit, retain, and graduate high-achieving students via undergraduate, graduate, and non-degree professional education programs. The COE will enhance efforts such as: (a) recruitment through improved marketing and communications, (b) communication among the Office of Academic Assistance (OAA), students, staff, and faculty, (c) outreach and advisement to prospective students in other colleges across the University, (d) merit-based scholarship programs for all students, inclusive of students with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds, and (e) student financial support (e.g., internal and external funding of GRAs and GTAs). Additionally, we will enhance our communications with students about the availability of student financial support (e.g., external scholarships, financial aid, loan forgiveness programs) through improved website resources and financial counseling.

Initiative #2. Integration of Learning Technologies

The COE will enhance the integration of learning technologies in all professional educator programs. The learning environments of the 21st century require that our professional educators are well-prepared to design, use, and teach about learning technologies. Therefore, the COE will augment the diversity of its pedagogical platforms to accommodate the needs of professional educators.

Initiative #3: Educational Research

The COE, as part of a research intensive university, will support the involvement of professional educators in conducting basic and applied research. In particular, this research will be performed by faculty members, doctoral students, and teachers across various learning environments, including but not limited to classrooms, schools, and educational systems.

Initiative #4. Coordination of Field/Practicum/Clinical Experiences

The COE will strengthen its commitment to preparing professional educators by making the process of locating field, practicum, and clinical experiences more efficient and better organized across programs. We will create a well-trained, centralized entity that is responsible for maintaining and enhancing positive relationships with current school and community partners, managing field placements, and administering clinical-related contracts and other agreements.

Goal # 2 The COE will prepare practitioners, leaders, and scholars who are committed to the advancement of individuals' mental, intellectual, and physical well-being across the lifespan.

The COE recognizes the importance of working to strengthen mental and physical well-being and human development as well as to advance societal organizations and structures that support this work. We will strive to recruit and prepare outstanding students to be successful practitioners, leaders, and scholars in their chosen fields. Building upon and enhancing collaborations within and outside the university will strengthen existing programs and promote the reputation of the College.

Initiative #1: Recruitment and Retention

The COE will remain committed to the national recruitment and retention of high-achieving undergraduate and graduate students dedicated to the advancement of mental and physical well-being of individuals across the lifespan. Essential plans to enhance recruitment include strengthening intra-disciplinary communications through more closely coordinated, collaborations and enhancing marketing efforts and advisement to prospective students in other colleges across the University about programs and opportunities in the COE. Financial support will be sought for: (a) increasing accessibility to and the number of merit-based scholarships for all students inclusive of persons with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds; (b) expanding student financial support so that graduate students can pursue their chosen degree programs with minimal student loans and can enroll full-time to pursue graduate programs; and (c) improving financial support via internal/external scholarships and fellowships, GRAs and GTAs through an increase in external funding for masters and doctoral students. These efforts will allow the COE to be nationally and globally competitive in the recruitment of high-quality scholars, especially graduate students.

Initiative #2: Interdisciplinary Programs

The COE will create and implement further innovative and interdisciplinary programs that address emerging fields and societal needs. The COE is well suited to build and sustain collaborations between departments, colleges and community agencies. For example, current programs between Exercise Science and the College of Nursing and Health Professions, and Rehabilitation Counseling and the Institute of Public Health. Opportunities for collaborations between the College and other agencies (through research and internships) include, but are not limited to, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hospitals, business, and professional sports organizations.

Initiative #3. Instructional Innovations

The COE will implement innovative instructional delivery options which are responsive to the needs of today's and tomorrow's learners. Learner needs include access to a variety of learning tools, cooperative learning, internship opportunities, research and field experiences, and increased flexibility of schedules. It is acknowledged that a robust technology infrastructure must be in place and maintained to make possible various delivery modes.

Goal #3: The COE will sustain and enhance its presence as a leading public research institution that addresses the critical issues of the 21st century.

Scholarly inquiry is central to the COE's activities, inspiring teaching and enabling service. The COE has a vigorous and high-caliber community of scholars dedicated to improving human conditions, by addressing real-world problems and by critical investigations. The College will work to further inculcate a systemic focus on excellence and create an environment and culture optimized to encourage world-class inquiry to thrive.

Initiative #1: Professional Development

The COE will enhance its culture of life-long learning by supporting professional development through research. Advances in research methodologies, new modes of communication and information technologies, changing social mores and cultural conventions, and ethical obligations all have an impact on our research. To participate as leaders in our respective fields, COE faculty must remain current in multiple fields of study. We will expand our ability to support and train investigators in advanced research. We will seek to support systematically professional development for faculty and staff through the use of targeted webinars and real time trainings.

Initiative #2: Funded Research Infrastructure

The COE will optimize funded research support infrastructure both within and outside of the College. The COE will continue to provide external funding support services to research active faculty while seeking to enhance and identify potential emerging services. The ERB and COE grant administrators will work collaboratively with the University Research Services and Administration (URSA) to provide quality grant implementation from inception to close-out. The COE will also seek to provide a more centralized methodological component such as providing consultation in research methodologies. The ERB will seek to support COE project investigators in seamless implementation of complex business processes requiring multiple levels of coordination and collaboration. We seek to increase the efficiency of the IRB process through professional development opportunities for researchers and by examining the submission process to create more efficient procedures.

Initiative #3: Research Impact and Dissemination

The COE is in a position to inform lasting and real impacts through scholarly inquiry, research, and dissemination. The COE will increase its dissemination of and recognition for problem-based, high impact research conducted through the College. Academic excellence is continuously established through publication in prestigious, peer-reviewed national and international journals and books. Distribution efforts for faculty and student scholarly research will be supported through a multi-modal public relations effort targeted at disseminating our research activities for a broad audience.

Initiative #4: Recognition Systems

The COE will institute a systemic environment that rewards high-quality research as indicated via awards, leadership roles within national/international organizations, funded grants, and academic editorships. We will find and implement mechanisms to recognize faculty and staff in their research activities, increase internal seed funding availability for all faculty, create a transparent policy regarding use of indirect cost funds, and ensure that funded-project investigators are given use of a percentage of indirect cost funds obtained through their sponsored projects.

Goal 4: The COE will strengthen its leadership in recognizing and responding to the complexities of cities and in modeling successful collaborative processes between universities and urban communities.

Building upon the strengths of faculty, staff, and students, the College will be a leading college of education committed to understanding the unique assets and challenges of metropolitan and urban communities. The College will collaborate with stakeholders in the development of effective education and health solutions that meet the needs of cities and their residents. The COE will remain dedicated to recognizing successes within our communities; and actively engaging with organizations and communities through service, research, and teaching.

Initiative #1: Needs Analysis and Responsive Feedback Loop(s)

We will develop a strategy for ongoing understanding of the working needs of our urban stakeholders through the extension of community advisory groups and increased participation in civic-related, community-based entities such as schools systems, agencies, and professional and non-professional organizations. Information gathered through these efforts will augment the College's response to the community's needs and encourage networking.

Initiative #2: Coordination of City Partnerships

The College will establish a system of coordination to identify those faculty and groups serving city-based communities. Establishing such a structure will enable the COE to coordinate projects that can converge thematically or geographically around larger issues germane to cities.

Initiative #3: Continuing Education Program

The COE will develop and support continuing education (CE) offerings. In recognition of the importance of ongoing education for communities in Atlanta and beyond, we will create and make accessible high-quality CE courses—face-to-face, online, and hybrid—across departments.

Initiative #4: Centers for research and service

The COE will continue to cultivate research centers and service centers and clinics. Research Centers, such as the Center for School Safety, School Climate, and Classroom Management, provide a disciplinary or interdisciplinary opportunity for the generation, application and/or testing of knowledge that informs discussions of issues of importance to the prosperity of cities and its citizens. Service Centers and clinics, such as the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence, the Principals Center, the Center for Reading Recovery, and the Urban Literacy Clinic provide important resources to the college and to the wider Atlanta community.

Goal 5: The COE will become a leader in globalized perspectives related to research, education, and teaching.

The COE recognizes that the scope of our work and the students we serve extend beyond our borders. The College is committed to building on the existing infrastructure that supports our students, faculty, and college community as we engage with global exchanges and perspectives. In order to meet this goal, the COE supports the integration of globalized perspectives in curricula and other related pedagogical experiences.

Initiative #1: International Engagements

The COE will promote globalized perspectives in teaching, learning, and research endeavors. The COE embraces a mission that considers our multiple roles in local and international communities. Our faculty, staff, and students acknowledge the importance of global citizenship and intercultural sensitivity. Increased future internal and external funding will allow the COE Office of International Initiatives to enhance its support for and serve effectively the growing and diverse needs of the College. The following are some of the activities that can assist the College in achieving its goal: (a) establishing student and faculty awards for excellence in international teaching, learning, and research; (b) developing international teaching and research related fellowships for graduate level international students; (c) offering and marketing courses that lead to an international certificate in education; and (d) encouraging study abroad and signature experiences for students.

Initiative #2: Global Collaborations in Research, Teaching, and Service

The College has begun initiatives that allow faculty and students to develop knowledge and understanding of educational systems across international communities, provide educational and research services, foster collaborations, serve communities in need, and conduct research. Diverse faculty and student populations are assets to the development of international partnerships. Collaborations with universities, international organizations, companies, and governments that work on a global scale and/or work within inter-cultural communities will provide vehicles for the global scope of our work. Toward that end we will explore opportunities in the countries identified by the university for special focus and relationship building. These opportunities include the development of joint programs and degrees, the conduct of research, and student and faculty exchanges for the sharing of information. We will also continue to encourage faculty to make individual international relationships to further their scholarship and program development.

Initiative #3: Infrastructure to Support Global Initiatives

The COE will expand its infrastructure related to international initiatives. The development of this goal depends on resources and specifically infrastructure that will allow for the two-way flow that successful implementation of internationalization demands. Therefore, there is a need to address issues that hamper international student admission and enrollment, retention of faculty and students, and exchange programs. These issues include: (a) university support for exchange housing; (b) use of technology to enhance international efforts; (c) balance among faculty and student exchanges to/from GSU; (d) leverage of funding sources; and (e) expansion of the capacity of the COE International office to be generative and responsive to the research, travel, and teaching needs of the college community.

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