

GASTON COLLEGE'S TITLE III GRANT
YEAR-THREE ANNUAL REPORT
10/01/2011 - 9/30/2012

The U. S. Department of Education awarded Gaston College a five-year Strengthening Institutions Title III grant for \$1,592,228 in 2009 to help at-risk students. The overall objectives of Title III are to significantly increase the success and retention of at-risk (on financial aid) and highly at-risk (on financial aid and enrolled in at least one developmental course) students by improving academic advising services, data tracking, and outcomes analysis.

The two Title III Success Counselors provide comprehensive and intentional holistic advising interventions to students enrolled in selected sections of ACA 118 (College Study Skills). These interventions are focused on providing personalized academic advising and career planning services in both group and individual settings. At-risk (AR) students must receive the first two of the prescribed four interventions to be considered holistically advised, and highly at-risk students (HAR) must receive all four interventions.

A total of 106 at-risk students were holistically advised during the 2011-2012 academic year. Since Title III began in January 2010, a total of 345 at-risk students have been holistically advised—greatly exceeding the Year 3 goal of 201 students (actually exceeding the five-year goal!). Grant objectives were met, and all prescribed tasks were successfully completed, including launching a new faculty orientation and mentoring program, expanding the Student Academic Assistance Program, implementing a new Retention Alert tracking software (for SPSP referrals), and providing professional development opportunities for over 200 faculty and staff.

Under the division of Student Services and Enrollment Management, led by Vice President Dr. Silvia Patricia Rios-Husain, Title III staff members are located within the Office of Persistence and Retention:

- John Erickson, *Director of Title III and Persistence and Retention*
- Dr. Kimberly Van Wie, *Title III Coordinator/Assistant Director*
- Joyce Crumpton, *Student Success Counselor*
- Adele Earls, *Student Success Counselor*
- Caroline Noor, *Data/Outcome Analyst*

THE COLLEGE'S STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2009-2013

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	GOALS
Serve the Lifelong Learning Needs of a Diverse Population and Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase accessibility, availability, and delivery of educational programs to meet the diverse needs of our students, businesses, and industries • Develop new programs to meet the changing employment needs of the region • Increase student enrollment and retention to meet the growing needs of our community • Proactively increase, understand, and celebrate diversity of our region, students, faculty, and staff • Promote the development of “soft skills” necessary for students to function successfully in the workplace and community
Provide Seamless and Effective Student-Focused Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure advising and registration processes are effective and student focused • Ensure continuous review of a comprehensive enrollment management plan • Increase campus activities and services to improve student life and community connections
Ensure Quality Educational Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide faculty and staff opportunities for professional development • Ensure excellence in teaching and learning • Develop strategies to ensure quality staff and faculty for the future • Comply with all standards of regulatory bodies that govern the quality of educational programs at GC
Provide the Essential Resources to Support Quality Educational Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure the financial, facility, material, and personnel resources needed to sustain support services, educational needs, and training requirements of the community • Upgrade technology to provide quality academic experiences and efficient administrative and student support services • Foster innovation throughout the institution

Items in bold are directly aligned with Title III goals and objectives.

TITLE III FIVE-YEAR GOALS

KEY GOALS	MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES <i>By September 30, 2014:</i>
1) Increase the success and retention rate of at-risk students	<p>1.1) Increase by 20% the retention rate of at-risk (AR)* students.</p> <p>1.2) Increase by 50% the retention rate of highly at-risk (HAR)** students.</p> <p>1.3) Decrease the number of students in repayment by 20%.</p> <p>1.4) Increase by 10% the passing rate of students in developmental courses from 77% in 2003 to 87%.</p> <p>1.5) 80% of faculty teaching developmental and gatekeeper courses will have received training on best practices, teaching techniques, and process education.</p> <p>1.6) Curriculum changes will require 100% of at-risk students to enroll in an ACA course.</p>
2) Improve the academic advising process for at-risk students	<p>2.1) At least 50% of at-risk students will receive holistic advising.</p> <p>2.2) 90% of counseling and advising staff will receive appropriate training in holistic advising techniques, including customer service, financial aid, career development, decision-making, individual student education plan (ISEP), and group advising.</p> <p>2.3) A comprehensive career development virtual office will be available to GC students and community members.</p>
3) Consolidate data tracking and outcome analysis related to retention, persistence, and academic success in order to make timely managerial decisions based on concrete and easily accessible data	<p>3.1) A permanent data tracking system is in place and data are routinely used for decision making and program improvement.</p> <p>3.2) 50% of the Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) will be proficient in retrieving, analyzing, and incorporating tracked data into their daily practices.</p>

For the purposes of this grant:

* *At-risk students are defined as those who are receiving financial aid*

** *Highly at-risk students are financial aid recipients who are enrolled in at least one developmental course*

YEAR-THREE OBJECTIVES

By September 30, 2012:	RESULTS
1.1 Increase the retention rate of at-risk students from 48% (Fall 2006) to 60%.	62.7% (37/59) of the holistically advised at-risk (AR) students who enrolled in Fall 2011 and/or Spring 2012 registered for the Fall 2012 term (three graduated).
1.2 Increase the retention rate of <i>highly</i> at-risk students from 34% (Fall 2006) to 64%.	61.4% (27/44) of the holistically advised <i>highly</i> at-risk (HAR) students who enrolled in Fall 2011 and/or Spring 2012 registered for the Fall 2012 term.
1.3 The number of students in repayment will have decreased by 12% from Fall 2006 rates.	The number of students in repayment decreased from almost 10% in 2006-2007 (205/2073) to 7.5% in 2011-12 (322/4273).
1.4 Increase the passing rate of students in developmental courses from 77% (in 2003) to 83%.	83.7% (98/117) of the highly at-risk students who earned a letter grade in their developmental courses during 2011-12 received a passing grade (A, B, C or P).
1.5 38 faculty members will have received training on best practices and teaching techniques, and in process education.	119 faculty members participated in Title III-sponsored professional development activities: <i>Understanding Economic Diversity</i> (18), <i>My Comp Lab/Norming Sessions</i> (39), and <i>New Faculty Orientation</i> (62).
1.6 70% of the students in ACA courses will earn a grade of C or better.	82% (298/363) of at-risk students who earned a letter grade in ACA 118 had a grade of "C" or higher.
2.1 At least 201 at-risk and highly-at-risk students will have received holistic advising.	345 (252 at-risk/AR & 93 highly at-risk/HAR) students have received holistic advising: 105 students (100 AR & 5 HAR) in 2009-10; 134 (90 AR & 44 HAR) students in 2010-11; and 106 students (62 AR & 44 HAR) this year.
2.2 59 staff members will have received training in holistic advising techniques.	86 staff members participated in Title III-sponsored training this year: <i>Exceptional Customer Service</i> (64) and <i>Understanding Economic Diversity</i> (22).
2.3 Career development information will be available on the college website.	The Career Development Committee expanded the <i>Virtual Career Center</i> , launched by Title III in September, 2011, including listing it under "Quick Links" on the GC homepage.
3.1 Tracked data is disseminated routinely; assessment of whether more data is needed will be conducted among stakeholders.	Data from Colleague and Informer are regularly incorporated into the daily practices of all members of Title III and the Student Affairs Leadership Team.
3.2 Six members of SALT will be trained in retrieving, analyzing, and incorporating tracked data into their daily practices.	All members of the Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) have participated in training on using data tracking software. The new Retention Alert early warning system was rolled out to Student Services staff and faculty in January 2012.

YEAR-THREE TASKS

SPECIFIC TASKS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
1. Holistic Advising is required for at-risk students	A total of 345 at-risk & highly at-risk students have received holistic advising. The Electronic Holistic Advising Manual (E-HAM) is complete and on-line.
2. Enroll highly at-risk students in ACA 118. Arts and Sciences majors will have the option of ACA 118 or ACA 122	Overall ACA enrollment increased from 391 students in 2009-2010 to 1085 students in 2011-12.
3. Provide personal assistance to students completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)	The Title III Director and Data/Outcome Analyst serve on the review panel for the Student Academic Assistance Program (SAAP); Success Counselors assist with STARS (Scholarship Tracking and Review System) and provide individual assistance with FAFSA and satisfactory academic progress (SAP) appeals for financial aid.
4. Welcome to GC program offered to at-risk students	103 at-risk and highly at-risk students participated in a <i>Welcome to GC</i> session in Fall 2011; 92 at-risk and highly at-risk students participated in Spring 2012. A total of 675 students have attended <i>Welcome to GC</i> since January 2010.
5. Develop Individual Student Education Plans (ISEPs) for highly at-risk students	51 at-risk and highly at-risk students developed ISEPs by becoming registered users in Web Advisor in Fall 2011; 70 at-risk and highly at-risk students completed ISEPs in Spring 2012. A total of 399 students have completed ISEPs to date.
6. Web interface for the career development page will be in place for use by Student Success Counselors	A new, college-wide Career Development Committee was formed in 2011. The <i>Virtual Career Center (VCC)</i> , launched in September 2011, provides expanded academic and career links and is listed under "Quick Links" on the GC homepage.
7. Assist at-risk and highly at-risk students in developing a career development portfolio	132 at-risk students completed Intervention 1/DISCOVER online career assessment program in Fall 2011; 116 at-risk students participated in DISCOVER in Spring 2012. A total of 584 students have completed the DISCOVER program to date.
8. Offer student workshops on transitioning to college, student success, and decision-making	759 students participated in Title III workshops this year: 567 students for TEAS/ACT preparation, 78 for test-taking, 83 for note-taking, 12 for time management, and 19 for Nursing Math. Over 90% of the participants reported being "very satisfied" with both the format and content of the sessions. To date, 1168 (duplicated headcount) students have attended a Title III retention workshop.

SPECIFIC TASKS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
9. Attend/participate in professional development for retention	A total of 682 (duplicated headcount) faculty and staff have participated in Title III-sponsored professional development activities since the grant began in 2009. Success Counselors attended the regional NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) conference in Charlotte this Spring.
10. Send congratulations cards to students that have met goals or are continuing in their program	Title III Success Counselors sent custom-designed and personalized individual congratulations cards to 79 highly at-risk students.
11. Require highly at-risk students to meet with a counselor prior to withdrawing from a course	Success Counselors review withdrawal processes during each holistic advising intervention. New college outreach initiatives requiring that all students on Academic Alert (below 2.0 GPA) meet with a Counselor began this Summer. Success Counselors met with 108 financial aid students who were placed on Academic Alert after the Spring semester.
12. Provide Professional Development Workshops at varied times	18 faculty members attended "Understanding Economic Diversity" and 39 English faculty attended "My Comp Lab" training; 86 staff members participated in Title III-sponsored training this year: Exceptional Customer Service (64) and Understanding Economic Diversity (22). Over 90% of the participants reported being "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the content and format of the workshops.
13. Plan part-time faculty orientation and faculty mentoring	14 new full-time and 37 new part-time faculty members participated in New Faculty Orientation sessions on August 15, 2102; 98% reported being "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the event. A new mentoring program is being piloted this Fall with the 14 new full-time faculty members.
14. Training in new tracking system is set	The new Retention Alert student tracking system was launched in January 2012. Training presentations are made at departmental and divisional meetings at the beginning of each semester.

Student Persistence and Success Plan (SPSP): Spring 2012



- Introduced Datatel Retention Alert system campus-wide; integrated into WebAdvisor
- Strengths of the Retention Alert system for SPSP cases:
 - More faculty use system and increase the number of referrals submitted
 - Staff members can submit cases
 - Very quick process for employees to submit cases
 - Ability to reassign cases as needs are better understood
 - Easier data tracking
 - Easier for coordinators
 - Communication is available within the system
 - Campus resources can access and work the cases, such as counseling center

www.gaston.edu

SPSP: Cases Submitted



Division	Spring 2012 Semester		Summer 2012 Semester		August-September 2012	
	# Submitted	% of All Cases	# Submitted	% of All Cases	# Submitted	% of All Cases
Arts and Sciences	170	30.41%	17	33.33%	195	34.45%
A&S: ACA Classes	115	20.57%	0	0.00%	69	12.19%
A&S: Developmental	123	22.00%	17	33.33%	154	27.21%
Bus. and Info. Tech.	63	11.27%	5	9.80%	75	13.25%
Health Education	78	13.95%	7	13.73%	67	11.84%
Eng. and Indus. Tech.	2	0.36%	1	1.96%	1	0.18%
Public Safety	8	1.43%	4	7.84%	5	0.88%
Total	559		51		566	

www.gaston.edu

Retention Alert: SPSP Cases Submitted								
Spring 2012 to Fall 2012 Retention and Success Rates								
	Spring 2012 SPSPs	Graduated		Eligible Fall 2012	Enrolled 2012FA		Overall Success	
		#	%	#	#	%	#	%
Total SPSP Cases	494	13	2.63%	481	219	45.53%	232	46.96%

Student Academic Assistance Program



- Student Academic Assistance Program (SAAP) provides up to \$250 per student for an immediate, unmet academic need
- Program is funded by Gaston College Foundation through private donations
- Provides assistance up to \$250 for:
 - Book Assistance
 - Academic Supplies
 - Tuition Assistance
- Eligibility Requirements:
 - Currently enrolled, full-time or part-time in a degree or curriculum program
 - Requesting assistance for current academic semester
 - Can only receive once an academic year

www.gaston.edu

SAAP: 2011—2012 Graduation & Enrollment



Graduation and Enrollment Information						
	# Approved SAAP	Graduated	% Graduated	# Eligible to Enroll	# Enrolled Next Semester	Percentage
All Students	83	18	21.69%	65	50	76.92%
Type of Assistance						
Tuition Assistance	38	15	39.47%	23	19	82.61%
Book Assistance	27	2	7.41%	25	18	72.00%
Academic Supplies	18	1	5.56%	17	13	76.47%

www.gaston.edu

TITLE III HOLISTIC ADVISING MODEL

The holistic advising process at Gaston College consists of two prescribed interventions for the at-risk (on financial aid) students and four prescribed interventions for the highly at-risk (on financial aid and enrolled in at least one developmental course) student population. “The first intervention is geared toward initial academic advising and the administration of a career assessment inventory. The second intervention consists of personalized advising, outline of available academic resources, and discussion of advising results. The third intervention may deal with any issues that have been identified by the early alert system and will further discuss career planning and develop an individual student education plan. The fourth intervention will finalize the education plan and solidify advising and registration for the second semester” (Gaston College Title III Grant, p. 20).

FIRST CONTACT: WELCOME TO GC

The grant requires that Title III staff make contact with at-risk and highly at-risk Gaston College students within the first two weeks of the semester. The overall purpose of this initial contact is to make the students enrolled in ACA 118 (Academic Development) feel welcome at the College and to emphasize a team approach between the Success Counselors and the ACA Instructor in helping students become successful and achieve their goals. Title III Success Counselors work with the ACA Instructor prior to the beginning of each term to arrange an appropriate time to visit the class, preferably the first class session. Although approximately 70% of the students enrolled in the ACA courses each semester receive financial aid, the entire class benefits from the contacts and content of the presentations. A script has been developed and is followed for every class. Students are informed of the resources available through the grant, including: assistance with completing the FAFSA, career planning, workshops, individualized academic advising, and transfer planning. A Student Profile form is distributed and completed by each student. The form captures the students’ contact information, educational and career goals, employment status, interests, and skills. This information is used by the Success Counselors to develop a holistic advising plan best suited to each student’s individual needs and goals. The first contact class visit typically lasts 15 minutes and reaches between 20-30 students per class.

INTERVENTION #1: CAREER ASSESSMENT

Success Counselors have developed a script for providing information about DISCOVER, an online career planning tool, to targeted Title III grant students enrolled in selected course sections of ACA 118. Title III Success Counselors coordinate with the ACA Instructor prior to the beginning of each term to arrange an appropriate time to visit the class, preferably the second or third week of class. DISCOVER log-in “tokens” are pre-assigned prior to the class session by the Title III Success Counselor and distributed to each student at the beginning of the class session along with a written set of instructions for navigating through the DISCOVER program. After introducing herself, the Success Counselor assists students with logging onto the computers and into the DISCOVER program. Students begin by completing a series of three self-assessments: Abilities, Interests and Values, which takes a minimum of 30 minutes. Students then review their results by clicking on the Inventory Summaries link, which takes approximately ten (10) minutes. The Success Counselor concludes by discussing the remaining DISCOVER tabs (Occupations, Majors, Schools, Job Search, Portfolio, Discovery Wheel, etc.) where students are able to review salaries, educational levels, degree offerings, and other characteristics related to their search. Once students have completed exploring DISCOVER, ten (10) minutes is spent to wrap-up and answer any questions. Intervention #1 typically lasts one hour.

INTERVENTION #2: FINANCIAL AID & PRE-ADVISING

Success Counselors have developed a script to assess student comprehension regarding information about financial aid and advising and present this information to targeted Title III grant students each semester. Ideally, the presentation is facilitated approximately two weeks before the advising and registration sessions for returning students begin. This way, students receiving the intervention have time to meet with the Success Counselor in follow-up appointments if needed.

At the beginning of the presentation, the Success Counselor shares the purpose of the presentation. The Success Counselor begins by sharing information about Financial Aid, including application dates and processes, location of the Financial Aid office, and a timeline for awards. Additionally, information about the STARS (Scholarship Review and Tracking System) online scholarship application program is shared. Next, the Success Counselor discusses academic advising, and introduces students to the nuances of course planning and registration. Detailed explanations of the course schedule, commonly used abbreviations, types of courses (e.g., seated, online, hybrid), ways to develop a schedule, and descriptions

of the courses are highlighted. A Pre-Advising Worksheet is distributed to the students along with a list of student responsibilities and expectations during the advising and registration process. Lastly, the student is informed of the various ways to register for classes including meeting with an advisor, phone registration, and Web Advisor. Intervention #2 lasts approximately 45 minutes.

INTERVENTION #3: PROGRAM EVALUATION IN WEB ADVISOR

Success Counselors have developed a script for providing information about Program Evaluation, an online degree audit program in Web Advisor, to targeted Title III Grant students. Title III Success Counselors arrange with the ACA instructor an appropriate time to visit the class, preferably the 9th or 10th week of class. Each Counselor facilitates her assigned ACA class with a developed script, sample academic evaluation, and log on instructions. Students are first informed of the purpose of Intervention #3 (to learn how to complete an online degree audit in Web Advisor) and reminded about financial aid deadlines and advising/registration periods. Log-in instructions and sample academic evaluation handouts are prepared prior to the class session and administered at the beginning of each class. Students are introduced to the six component areas (Student Information, Credits/GPA, Statuses, Education Requirements, Placement Scores, Student Notes) of the academic evaluation. Detailed explanations of the six areas are highlighted and illustrated by the Success Counselor. The program evaluation print-out identifies each component area in an easy-to-read format. While the Success Counselor is available and able to review this document and assist the student in understanding his or her success plan and plan of study, it is critical that the student defer to their assigned faculty advisor (if applicable) for final advising and registration. Intervention #3 typically lasts 30 minutes.

INTERVENTION #4: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT EDUCATIONAL PLANS (ISEP)

Success Counselors meet individually with Title III Grant students for the purpose of developing an individual student educational plan (ISEP) that includes academic and career goals. Students discuss with the Success Counselor their Web Advisor Program Evaluation/degree audit and then select courses for the next semester. Success Counselors make appointments to meet with the students in their offices on an individual basis. Counselors also contact students via email and/or phone to follow up after Intervention #3 is administered. Ideally, these meetings will occur near the Advising and Registration period so that the student is best able to implement his or her academic plan for the upcoming semester.

Most individual meetings with students last between 30 minutes to an hour. Students are free to meet with a Success Counselor more than once when needed. In fact, this is strongly encouraged.

The Success Counselor reviews the printout of student's Program Evaluation, as instructed during Intervention #3. As needed, the Counselor will refer to the Gaston College Catalog, website, and/or curriculum sheet to determine the best and most accurate academic plan for that student—based on his or her individual test scores, academic background, work/family commitments, etc. While the Success Counselor is available and able to review this document and assist students in understanding their success plan and plan of study, it is critical that students meet with their assigned faculty advisor (if applicable) for final advising and registration. Students will then be instructed to register online using Web Advisor. This may be completed during the advising session, or the student may register from home at a later time. Advisors will follow up with the students and document all successful online registrations on each student's individual Advising Record sheet and also the Excel tracking sheet.

Intervention #4 is indicated on tracking sheets provided by the Data/Outcome Analyst who compiles, analyzes, and reports summary results from these sheets after the semester ends and provides the report on the shared departmental S: drive.

