



**BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 23, 2020

Randy Gardner  
Chancellor  
Ohio Department of Higher Education  
25 South Front Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chancellor Gardner:

Bowling Green State University has completed an update of our plan designed to increase the number of degrees and certificates earned by its students. Consistent with our mission and the strategic plan for BGSU, the attached report, approved by the BGSU Board of Trustees on December 11, 2020, describes our progress and efforts since our last report as well as new initiatives underway.

Should you have any questions regarding the report, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rodney K. Rogers".

Rodney K. Rogers, Ph.D.  
President

Enclosure

Chancellor Gardner  
Thank you for your  
leadership during the  
past year —

**BGSU**  
**BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**COMPLETION PLAN UPDATE**  
**2020-2022**

## **I. UNIVERSITY MISSION**

Bowling Green State University provides holistic and comprehensive educational experiences inside and outside the classroom that enhance the lives of our students, stakeholders, and the many publics we serve. BGSU graduates are prepared for lifelong career growth and for engaged citizenship, and leadership in a global society. Through our excellence in teaching, research, and outreach, BGSU builds a collaborative, diverse, and inclusive community where creative ideas, new knowledge, and entrepreneurial achievement can benefit others in our region, the state of Ohio, the nation, and the world.

### **A. Campus Student Body Profile**

- Main campus in Bowling Green and a regional campus, BGSU Firelands, in Huron
- Approximately 20,232 students, including 2,085 at Firelands (headcount, BGSU Institutional Research Fall 2020 Census)
- More than 800 full-time faculty, nearly 80% with terminal degrees in their fields
- 17.5:1 student to faculty ratio (Main campus, 2018, BGSU Institutional Research)
- 200+ undergraduate majors and programs in eight undergraduate colleges
- Average ACT for entering freshmen Fall 2019 was 23, average high school GPA was 3.45
- 20.8% first-generation college students (Fall 2018 HEI data)
- 20.4% of the entering Fall 2018 class identified themselves as members of ethnic and racial minority groups (Fall 2018 HEI data)
- 8.9% students  $\geq$  25 years old, N=1,355 (2018 HEI)
- 97% of the Fall 2020 entering freshman cohort received some form of financial aid
- Students from all 50 states and 75 countries outside the USA
- During the 2019-2020 academic year, close to 6,000 students resided in 10 residential communities. With the global pandemic, BGSU pivoted to offer single rooms for students for Fall 2020, which resulted in 3,704 students residing in nine residential communities.
- More than \$33 million in scholarships disbursed to undergraduates in 2019-2020
- 17 NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletic teams (men and women)
- Nearly 350 student organizations
- Approximately 3,550 students work on campus annually

### **B. How the Student Body Profile and Mission Influence Completion Strategies**

The BGSU student population has historically been made up of traditional-aged students who live on campus for their first two years. Up until COVID-19, most undergraduate students attended full-time and were taught in person by instructors in classroom or laboratory settings. Due to a declining pool of high school graduates in Ohio, BGSU continues to implement short- and long-term strategic recruitment and retention plans to grow enrollment from other student populations including post-traditional, online, transfer, international, and graduate. This broader portfolio has led to a diversification of BGSU's student body and fiscal model. Plans for recruitment efforts also take into consideration the need for adequate student support, faculty in critical areas with demonstrated

need, new academic programs that meet the demand for jobs in the region and around the country, and infrastructure to support a future population of 25,000 students.

## II. BARRIERS TO PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION

### Major Student Profile

- Traditional first-time, full-time (residential and commuter)
- Transfer students (from community colleges and four-year institutions)
- Post-traditional students (>=25 years old), veterans (prior service), and active duty military
- eCampus students who complete totally online programs in seven-week terms
- College Credit Plus students
- Graduate students
- International students

### Campus Context Factors that Impede Persistence and Completion

- Cost of attendance
- Need to improve foundational skills in Math and English
- Completing fewer than 15 credit hours per semester
- Changing majors or colleges and/or entering as undecided
- Incoming transfer students without associate degrees

## III. PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION GOALS

Each completion strategy or initiative has been developed with consideration as to the evaluation and assessment of its intended purpose, goal, or outcome.

Main Campus	2014-2016	2016-2018	2018-2020	2020-2022	Goals
Fall-to-Fall Retention First-Time/Full-Time Freshmen	70.12% 2012 to 2013	77.51% 2014 to 2015	76.97% 2016 to 2017	79.4% 2019 to 2020	83% by 2022
4-year full-time graduation Rate	35.91% (2006 cohort)	34.07% (2009 cohort)	41.68% (2013 cohort)	48.6% (2016 cohort)	60% by 2026
6-year full-time graduation Rate	57.54% (2006 cohort)	55.62% (2009 cohort)	52.27% (2011 cohort)	60.5% (2014 cohort)	75% by 2028
Average number of credit hours earned upon completion of bachelor's degree	2012-2013 132.4 credits	2014-2015 130.7 credits	2016-2017 131.1 credits	2019-2020 136 credits	128 credits
100% Online Programs	May 2014	May 2016	May 2018	May 2020	Goal
Bachelor's	5	7	6	5	6
Master's	9	11	13	21	23
Certificates	5	8	10	22	24

Retention and graduation rates provided by BGSU's Office of Institutional Research, based on Census Data.  
HEI Data Provided by ODHE.

### A. Quantitative Metrics

- Fall-to-Fall retention rate of the first-time, full-time cohort.
- Fall-to-Spring persistence of the first-time, full-time cohort.
- Average number of credit hours students earned vs. minimum hours required for the degree (by

- major and college) to determine if institutional efforts are having an impact on excess hours.
- Average of credit hours completed each term/year; advance in class standing (progress towards degree).
- Tracking activity related to major and college changes. Students who change majors take longer to graduate.
- Number, type, and timing of retention and persistence-related communications to students; EAB's Navigate platform has provided opportunities for better communication flow among students, advisors and faculty, increasing the efficiency and capability of early alerts, attendance, and mid-term progress reporting.
- Certain metrics of students who utilize the Learning Commons and change over time, including GPA, course completion, and degree completion as compared to the general student population.
- Percentage of first-time, full-time students in residential learning or themed communities.
- Percentage of students in the Deciding Students Program who declare a major prior to the beginning of their sophomore year.
- Percentage of students who complete an experiential learning activity, project, clinical, program, etc.
- Number of Prior Learning Assessments/courses completed/credit hours awarded each semester.
- Number of totally online programs (associate, bachelor, graduate, and certificate programs) added each year and enrollment growth in eCampus programs.
- Student participation and involvement. The number and types of selected co-curricular activities outside the classroom can affect time-to-degree and support retention.
- Number of new internships/co-ops developed, and new employers identified.

## **B. Qualitative Metrics**

- In 2016, the Office of Academic Assessment developed a program in which a team of undergraduate students investigate issues pertaining to learning environments and student success. These student learning analysts conduct a variety of assessment initiatives, such as focus groups and surveys, and share the information gained with various campus constituents and have discussions about enhancing students' learning experiences at BGSU (i.e., to inform practice). The student learning analysts also examine factors that impede and/or enhance persistence and completion and provide an enhanced context of understanding on first-year student experiences, life design, decision-making processes, and student experiences during COVID-19.
- BGSU has a variety of processes in place to understand and assess student attrition and improve student support. For example, advising and support staff routinely solicit and document reasons students do not return, and the Office of Residence Life conducts a "check-out survey" each semester, which includes students' intentions to return to BGSU in the subsequent semester, and feedback about their experience at the University. Data gathered from these interviews, focus groups, and surveys are categorized by theme, shared across departments, and further investigated.
- During Fall 2020, the President has sent a weekly message of encouragement to students, which has included a short survey about their learning experience and an invitation to submit questions and concerns directly to Office of the President. ([president@bgsu.edu](mailto:president@bgsu.edu))

#### IV. INSTITUTIONAL GOALS FOR 2020-2022

BGSU's strategies to support degree completion are aligned with one or more specific goals and objectives of the University's strategic plan, *Focus on the Future*. The following are select institutional goals and objectives from FOF that reflect BGSU's commitment to student success; promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the University community; the persistence and retention of the first-year cohort; and degree completion of undergraduate students.

##### A. Redefining Student Success

- We will ensure that each traditional undergraduate student has been intentionally prepared for lifelong personal and career growth, engaged citizenship, and leadership. We will redefine student success to make BGSU a stand-out university of first choice. We will achieve this by transforming what we are teaching and how we are teaching. At the center of this work is Life Design, which is characterized by a transformative, university-wide commitment intended to empower each student to intentionally design their college experience and to be life and career-ready upon graduation. Life Design provides a foundation, framework, and set of tools and mindsets that help students design academic, career and life experiences that align with who they are now and who they want to become. Life Design also encourages students to see and seek out connections among different elements of their undergraduate experience, in and out of the classroom.
- We will review all programs to ensure that we are intentionally preparing students to achieve competencies appropriate for personal and career success. We will ensure that our learning outcomes are focused on both the mastery (knowing) and competencies (doing) of content knowledge. To underscore the importance of "doing," we will further leverage BGSU's strength in providing high-impact, experiential practices, such as study abroad, internships and co-ops, undergraduate research, service-learning and learning communities. Additionally, we will expand experiential education by requiring every student to complete an interdisciplinary signature work project that addresses an important societal issue, as part of BGSU's commitment to AAC&U's LEAP initiative. This focus builds on the work of BGSU's Center for Civic and Community Engagement and the Vital Communities Initiative and aligns with our mission to create public good through our students, faculty, staff, and graduates. We will integrate academic and career advising to provide undergraduate students with a holistic approach to their education. Recognizing that degree completion is not sufficient preparation for life after college, we will ensure that students consider what is needed to live meaningful and productive lives by requiring them to periodically review and update their life/career plan as part of the advising process.
- We will leverage BGSU's historic strength of providing an immersive, residential student transformative experience by aligning student life programs (e.g., clubs, organizations, activities, residential programming, athletics, etc.) with Life Design and other key student success frameworks.
- We will broaden BGSU's reach to new student populations, which will allow our university to expand where we teach. We will leverage the strengths of Firelands College and existing programs that address the needs of adult and part-time students to develop and support an ecosystem focused on enhancing the success of post-traditional students (e.g., support services, academic policies, advising roles, mobile technology, and hours of operation). We will identify and grow or maintain robust enrollments in 25–30 online/hybrid programs (both undergraduate and graduate) that meet the career needs of large numbers of post-traditional students.

- We will add or enhance academic programs in areas of growing workforce demand, such as in health care (e.g., Nursing and Physical Therapy), applied STEM (e.g., Data Science, Software Engineering), and hospitality (e.g., Recreation and Attraction Management).
- We will provide additional support to those undergraduate and graduate programs that have the potential to become nationally and/or internationally ranked, have strong enrollments, build BGSU's reputation, and inform the public debate around important societal issues.
- We will implement a comprehensive enrollment plan that is focused on recruiting and enrolling multiple subpopulations of traditional and post-traditional undergraduate and graduate students (e.g., domestic and international, out of state, underrepresented, first generation). This will include employing the strengths of Firelands College, Honors College, and eCampus programs. We will review current academic scholarships, waivers, and stipends to determine what is needed to attract and support a talented and diverse student body.

#### **B. Increasing and Connecting Our Research and Creative Activities for Public Good**

- We will develop the ability of faculty and students to articulate the value and relevance of their research and creative activities and how their work contributes to the public good. BGSU will continue to leverage faculty and grant resources to engage in COVID-19 research in the fields of data science, the impact of social distancing, and the chemistry of the coronavirus.

#### **C. Empowering and Supporting Our People to Achieve Excellence**

- We will enhance and support a culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion by developing and implementing a comprehensive and outcomes-oriented strategic diversity plan that increases the recruitment, retention, and success of a diverse student body, faculty, staff, and administration.
- We will significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning by implementing student-centered initiatives that ensure our learning environment sets clear expectations, supports one another, intellectually engages and involves students, and provides feedback and assessment.
- We will coordinate and enhance systems and programs that support mental and physical health and well-being for all members of the BGSU community.

#### **D. Advancing Our Impact Through Engagement**

- We will develop and implement a strategy to creatively engage alumni and friends to increase annual giving, connect them to other alumni and friends, and provide them opportunities to support current students' life and career success. We will promote programs, including intercollegiate athletics and the arts, to serve as an ongoing connection with our alumni throughout the world. The pandemic has created a need for additional emergency support to students and staff, alumni, and friends have responded positively to ongoing requests for contributions to the Student Emergency Fund. Since March, 854 students received funds totaling just over \$316,000.

#### **E. Aligning for Excellence and Value**

- We will refocus and reconfigure academic and non-academic programs to improve effectiveness and enhance collaboration and innovation. We will consider program elimination and alternative organizational structures to reallocate resources to enhance overall quality.

- We will design and implement academic affordability initiatives to address the cost of a BGSU education (e.g., textbook costs, fees).
- We will develop and implement a technology plan that includes learning space enhancements, emerging technologies, mobile learning, and technology-enhanced pedagogy in the classroom.

#### **F. Telling Our Story**

- We will develop and implement comprehensive and strategic marketing and communication plans at the university and unit levels to ensure consistent branding and more effectively articulate the quality and value of BGSU to alumni, friends, and prospective students. We will create strategies that support messaging around research, creative activity, service, diversity, inclusion, and engagement to demonstrate to the public BGSU's importance and relevance.
- We will leverage external-facing programs, including intercollegiate athletics and the arts, to promote the University's focus on excellence and to further the reputation of the University.
- We will stay true to our mission as a public university. We will intentionally define public good, and plan, measure, and champion our university's impact by connecting purposeful messaging and branding.

### **V. COMPLETION STRATEGIES**

BGSU has developed a variety of strategies, actions, and activities to promote and support student success. Since the first report on degree completion, BGSU has made significant progress in implementing the initiatives described years ago while developing new strategies for the future. COVID-19 has certainly impacted BGSU's planned strategies and required us to quickly reconfigure our academic schedule, modify course delivery modes, outfit classrooms with additional audio and video technology, and provide development and support opportunities to faculty, staff, and students. Despite the pandemic, BGSU's commitment to student success remains central to our mission.

#### **A. Increased Academic Profile of the Incoming Freshman Class**

BGSU's Office of Admissions strategies have yielded success in the recruitment of its most recent cohorts by leveraging a territory management model where admissions counselors gain a deeper understanding of the high school culture, economics, interests, and career paths of students in specific territories. By focusing on fit, strategic use of complex analytical data (beyond test scores and GPA), and leveraging scholarship funding, BGSU has increased both the academic profile of the freshman class and has made some positive gains in the first-time, full-time retention rate. While the average ACT maintained at 23 from 2018 – 2020, the average GPA increased from Fall 2018 (3.47; Fall 2019, 3.54) to Fall 2020 (3.59), the highest ever for new freshman enrollment.

#### **B. Falcon Tuition Guarantee**

The FTG provides all undergraduate, first-time students and their families the certainty that tuition, on campus room and meals, out-of-state surcharge, special purpose fees, and course and class fees will not increase over their four academic years at BGSU. Beginning in 2018-2019, the FTG has provided transparency and predictability about the cost of attending BGSU; which will assist students and their families in planning financial aspects of their BGSU careers.

#### **C. Setting Clear and Consistent Expectations for Students**

The path to degree completion is built upon the establishment, communication, and monitoring of

clear and consistent expectations at the onset of the collegiate experience. Students must know what is expected of them, and they must also be challenged and supported to establish goals as well as clarify their expectations of themselves. In addition, students must also understand what they can expect from BGSU in terms of programs, teaching, experiential learning, support, and resources. Beginning with the admissions process and on-boarding experience, and extending throughout the student life cycle, creating opportunities to discuss and communicate these expectations among faculty, staff, and peers is essential to establish strong academic expectations and community standards for both new and continuing students. These expectations are discussed and shared with students in a variety of ways and through various efforts and initiatives, including:

- 1. Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR).** The SOAR program is designed to support students with the transition to college and provide them with an overview of expectations, such as completing 15 credits each semester, and resources to help ensure their success. In addition to meeting with an academic advisor and registering for classes, students connect with fellow incoming students, upper-class Orientation Leaders, as well as faculty and staff.
- 2. Fall Welcome.** Fall Welcome is a comprehensive introduction to BGSU's academic and social environment. During Fall Welcome, students meet their peers, faculty, and staff while engaging in a variety of specialized academic programs and interactive events on campus. Throughout move-in weekend, students are engaged in small groups led by upper-class students who share their perspective and experience about the successful transition to college. Fall Welcome Leaders introduce new students to the many resources and services available and answer questions in preparation for the first day of classes. Fall Welcome continues for all students during the first week of the semester, including Labor Day weekend, with over 75 events and programs. New and returning students have opportunities to continue meeting peers, faculty, and staff who will help shape their BGSU Experience.
- 3. Academic Advising.** Academic advising provides students with the opportunity to build a relationship with their advisors for the purpose of gaining assistance in planning their educational career, learning the skills needed for academic success, and how to access the variety of resources and services available to them on the BGSU campus and online. All first-year students are assigned a professional advisor from their respective college or program. Advisors help students establish educational and career goals, develop academic degree plans, and explore experiential learning opportunities such as study abroad, service learning, internships, undergraduate research, and many other co-curricular opportunities. These expectations and resources are further explained in the *Advising Syllabus*, which is distributed to new students at SOAR, and available online. An integral part of BGSU's new Life Design (LD) initiative, LD Coaches offer a holistic approach in support of students' success by guiding students during their entire BGSU careers, helping to integrate academic goals and experiences with personal growth, professional development, and health and wellness.
- 4. Academic Expectations in the Classroom.** The course syllabus serves as a reference for faculty expectations for student learning, how the course will be taught, how assignments will be graded, and faculty contact information and office hours. All students have access to a syllabus for each course on or before the first day of class each semester, and all syllabi include course expectations, schedule and methods of assessment, support for student success, and teaching methods used in the course. The commitment of the faculty and the significance of providing a syllabus for each course is such that it is mentioned in the current version of the faculty collective bargaining agreement. At BGSU, faculty use the institution's learning management

system (Canvas) to provide information related to the course and communicate updates to the syllabus, change in course location, as well as to disseminate information about academic and personal support services available to students. By ensuring that all students are provided a comprehensive syllabus, faculty set the stage for success in the classroom.

- 5. Parent and Family Connections.** BGSU is launching a new office of Parent and Family Connections in January 2021 designed to engage families as partners in students' educational experience, and leverage family relationships in supporting student success. This office will develop and implement strategies that ensure students are effectively and appropriately supported from point of admission through graduation.

#### **D. Personalized, Technology-Infused, and Data-Directed Advising**

Academic planning continues to be a critical and contributing factor in student retention, progress toward degree, and degree completion. Following a significant investment and restructuring of the advising program in 2014, our centrally coordinated advising enterprise facilitates review and consistent interpretation of key advising policies, standardization of several advising practices, an industry standard in professional advising staff (i.e., advisee to advisor ratio better than 350:1), assessment and measures of accountability, an advisor-specific annual evaluation process, an online portal for housing all advising tools/technology, and centralized leadership of advising. The goal of these efforts has been to enhance the personalized and consistent advising experience for undergraduate students, along with fostering a data-rich environment for professional advisors. Additional investments and initiatives related to academic advising include:

- 1. Leveraging Navigate.** The web-based Navigate and student success platform combines technology, student data, and predictive analytics to help advisors positively influence persistence, retention, and graduation outcomes, particularly with at-risk and off-path students. This application is accessible online and uses current and historical BGSU student data to provide advisors, faculty, and other key stakeholders at-a-glance information to identify students who may be off their degree completion path, at risk of becoming off-track, and/or need some type of intervention, such as a change in major. Use of this platform has been expanded to include academic early alerts, tutoring and academic support tracking, reporting, and on-demand appointment scheduling with advisors and tutors.
- 2. Academic Planning Tools.** Since 2014, BGSU students have had the ability to automate the planning and personalization of their semester schedules based on their required courses and preferred schedule obligations such as work, athletic practices, or personal time. BGSU is currently developing companion software which will automate degree completion plans based on students' major, electives, and general education courses. This system, integrated with the uAchieve Degree Audit, is being implemented in three phases during 2021-2022. This graduation planning software will enhance the Graduation Plans/Four-Year Degree Pathway Project noted on page 17.
- 3. Advisor Training and Professional Development.** A committee of advisors and student support professionals from across the University meet regularly to assess the training and professional development needs of their peers and colleagues. This group also plans and coordinates monthly workshops and other activities related to the identified needs and best practices in advising.
- 4. The College Transition Collaborative.** Since the summer of 2015, BGSU has participated in a multi-institutional experimental research study designed to measure the impact of a social belonging intervention among incoming first-year students. More than 20 additional institutions

were involved in this project, including: The College of Wooster, Clemson University, Cornell University, Indiana University, Michigan State University, Stanford University, the University of Oregon, and Yale University. Early results from the data show that students who complete the treatment achieve a higher GPA when compared to their peers, particularly among first-generation college students. Although the research partnership has concluded, BGSU will continue to implement this intervention with incoming students with the goal of increasing sense of belonging, particularly among underrepresented and socially disadvantaged students.

#### **E. Identification, Intervention and Support for Students with Academic Skill Deficiencies**

BGSU has a number of planned interventions and support systems in place to address gaps in preparation or skill sets, which include pre-enrollment placement testing in English and Math, intake surveys and push polls, and early academic alerts. Academic and program advisors use Navigate to monitor student progress during the semester and after grades are posted. Communication Managers from the Office of Marketing and Communications provide guidance and support in developing and sending a series of general and specific messages (calls, text, and email) to specific and general groups of students in need of academic support or a call to action.

- 1. Moving from Remediation to Corequisite Support.** Students who are not prepared for college-level courses have been traditionally placed in developmental classes that do not count toward their degree. These students often take more than four years to graduate and incur higher costs than students who begin higher education by taking college-level courses. BGSU has moved from offering remedial courses to offering a corequisite model as recommended in Complete College America: Corequisite Remediation: Spanning the Completion Divide ([completercollege.org/SpanningTheDivide](http://completercollege.org/SpanningTheDivide)). Both Math and English composition (University Writing Program [UWP]) departments first piloted new corequisite models during the 2018-19 academic year. In UWP, students who previously placed into developmental writing now take a credit-bearing writing course that is linked to a seminar where they will get the additional writing assistance they need. In this course, students are also supported by classroom-based peer consultants who are trained by the Writing Center to offer additional one-on-one assistance with writing and to expand their network of support. In math, some students who place into MATH 1220: College Algebra will be enrolled in the same 4-credit, 5-contact hour credit-bearing math course and will earn credit in college algebra when they successfully complete the course. The course is graded A/B/C/NC (No Credit) so that students who do not earn credit can enroll in the course in the subsequent semester. Other students take either MATH 1550 or MATH 1990 to complete their Quantitative Literacy requirement.
- 2. Efforts to Improve Math Competency.** Retention and graduation rates of students who place into developmental math is an ongoing concern at BGSU and nationally. The Math Emporium is a computer-based learning center designed to help students learn math at their own pace by interacting with a team of instructors (non-tenure-track faculty, graduate assistants, and undergraduate assistants) and specialized software, ALEKS. Students work through their coursework and take a series of quizzes, tests, and exams to evaluate whether the concepts learned are retained. The lead professor and instructional team serve as coaches, providing individualized teaching and support as needed. The course currently taught in the Emporium is MATH 1220: College Algebra II.

The evolution of the Math Emporium has not been without challenges; location, setting student expectations for course delivery, attendance policies, technology, instructional methods and

grading schemas. Each facet of the Emporium has undergone regular evaluation and review. Ongoing assessment of instructional methods, curriculum, and learning in the Math Emporium will continue to inform practice and guide service delivery. The following are some recent enhancements:

- To assist students in staying on track, suggested deadlines are in place and students are incentivized to complete them on time or early and have the opportunity to re-take any tests upon which they score poorly, as long as deadlines are met.
- Undergraduate and graduate students serve as Math Emporium Assistants and provide just-in-time assistance to students as they work through the courses during class periods.
- Additional tutoring support, funded through the Ohio Strong Start to Finish initiative, has been provided to students. This initiative places tutoring in the residence halls in the evenings. Students who had not already sought additional support for MATH 1220 did take advantage of this tutoring.
- A new course, Math 1190, Real World Math Skills has been developed to provide basic quantitative literacy competencies for students who have majors that do not require an Algebra-based prerequisite or statistic course for their degree.
- Students previously placed into College Algebra who needed some of the material, but not the entire course have been redirected into Math 1190 in which students get a foundational understanding of numerical literacy and statistics.

After eight years, the success (grades, retention and persistence) of students using the Math Emporium continues to be monitored closely to identify connections among pre-entry characteristics, placement testing, curriculum, and instructional methods, as the University transitioned to a co-requisite model of instruction. Faculty and staff are focused on continuous improvement of teaching, learning, and identifying the best methods that support student success.

- 3. The Learning Commons.** Opened in 2011, the learning center provides academic support services to all BGSU students, both in-person and remotely. Certified by the College Reading and Learning Association, the Learning Commons continues to provide students course-based tutoring, mathematics and statistics tutoring, writing consultations (including an online writing center), and an environment conducive for studying. An additional Learning Commons service includes supplemental instruction, an internationally renowned academic program that helps students improve their understanding of material in courses with high D/fail/withdraw (DWF) rates. In 2020, the BGSU supplemental instruction program gained accredited program status with The International Center for Supplemental Instruction at the University of Missouri-Kansas City by demonstrating that SSI sessions at BGSU are significantly attended and help increase an individual student's grade in the course. In 2019, Learning Commons services expanded to include academic coaching appointments to help students with study and time management skills. The Learning Commons continues to have approximately 20,000 visits throughout an academic year and all services can be accessed in-person or remotely through Zoom, WebEX, or Microsoft Teams.
- 4. Falcon Learning Your Way.** Founded during the 2016-2017 academic year, the Falcon Learning Your Way (FLY) Program continues to support students with ADHD and/or other specific learning disabilities. Participants in this fee-based program have weekly meetings with Learning Specialists who hold master's degrees or higher and are experienced educators in supporting students with learning disabilities. Appointments with Learning Specialists are held in person or remotely through Zoom. Students in the program are also given specialized access to University Library and Learning Commons services. At the start of the Fall 2020

semester, the program expanded to include nearly 60 students. In 2019-2020, 47/51 students (92%) of students participating in the program remained in the FLY Program and had a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

- 5. Parallel Degree Planning Initiative.** With support from the Career Center staff, this completion initiative supports students who are not succeeding in their chosen major based on their grades in their major coursework. Academic advisors use success markers, predictive analytics, and degree audit technology to advise students regarding alternate/parallel majors and career paths so that students can make adjustments and move into a program that better aligns with their competencies and interests while minimizing additional coursework toward a degree.

## **F. Special Populations**

Over the past few years, BGSU has expanded the amount and types of data being gathered about and the intentional programming put into place for certain groups and subpopulations of students. Data is gathered from multiple sources on campus into one central database, analyzed and used to build predictive models. Working with offices in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, data is leveraged to aid in the development of targeted programs, interventions and methodologies to support persistence, retention, and graduation for students in these populations.

- 1. College Credit Plus.** BGSU's advocacy for the state's College Credit Plus program is consistent with the institution's access mission: as a public university for the public good, the University embraces the opportunities that College Credit Plus affords in expanding access to higher education through ensuring an affordable and attainable pathway towards completing a degree. Approximately 2,000 students participate in the program annually, benefitting from the opportunity to earn college credit at no direct cost. Additionally—and important to the University's and state's shared commitment to completion—participating students develop self-efficacy and a positive momentum towards attending college.

A decentralized approach in administration ensures quality in the student experience, with each of the University's campuses being responsive to the unique needs of partner districts in its region. In the fall 2020 semester, participating CCP students could enroll in BGSU courses on either BGSU campus, online, or in the high school at partner districts throughout northwest and northcentral Ohio. Faculty play an integral role in the program's development and success, including providing individual mentorship to qualified high school teachers delivering University courses in partner high schools.

To ensure student success, each participating CCP student is paired with a professional advisor. Student advising is approached holistically, mindful that course selections meet not only high school graduation requirements, but larger academic and career exploration interests. BGSU awarded 19 graduating high school seniors associate degrees at the conclusion of the 2019-20 academic year.

- 2. Commuter Students.** Recognizing that first-year commuter students face many of the same transition issues as on-campus students without the benefit of a supportive residence life environment, BGSU makes additional efforts to connect them with campus life. These efforts include a specialized communication plan that parallels messages to first-year students living on campus; enhancements to the commuter sessions and messaging at SOAR; including best practices in the creation of intentional, holistic commuter experiences; continuing to engage commuter coaches' support; and development of a feedback and assessment plan to measure

the impact of the commuter-focused retention initiatives. Preliminary registration data for the spring 2021 semester suggest that commuter students who have a peer mentor are enrolling at a 7% higher rate than those who do not. We will work to increase the number of commuter students who participate in the peer mentoring program as a result.

- 3. Residence Life Initiatives.** BGSU has a two-year residency requirement, with limited exceptions. Living on campus provides students with a supportive and diverse learning environment in addition to opportunities for friendship, fun, and personal growth. Professional staff, graduate assistants, and faculty work collaboratively to provide a learning environment, programming, and support that complement students' classroom experiences. Moreover, students who live on campus are retained at a higher rate than students who commute. During COVID-19 (and with one-half the usual population of students living on campus) these opportunities included extensive micro-programming: virtual or COVID-safe in-person events with ten or fewer students. In partnership with Student Activities, Residence Life engaged more than 1,000 students in these events in Fall 2020 and expects to continue them for as long as BGSU is operating under pandemic conditions.

  - **Academic Peer Mentor (APM) Program.** This program is designed to connect Academic Peer Mentors (APMs), undergraduate students who receive specialized training, with residents to help them succeed academically. APMs provide individual mentoring and hall-wide programming focused on promoting academic success. Each APM holds evening office hours in the residence halls and delivers programs geared toward supporting students' academic success.
  - **SMART (Students of Color Mentoring, Aiding, Retaining, and Teaching) Program.** The SMART Program is a peer mentoring program offered by the Office of Residence Life. It is designed to help first-year residential students, especially those from marginalized populations, transition successfully to BGSU and to assist with retaining them into their second year and beyond. During the 2019-2020 academic year, there were 110 mentee participants and 28 student (upperclass) mentors and team leaders.
  - **Residential Learning and Theme Communities.** Residential Learning (N=10) and Theme (N=11) Communities allow students to live together in a residence hall where they can study and attend class within the community; engage with faculty and graduate assistants inside and outside of the classroom; utilize and take advantage of the residence hall's community and resources; and remain connected to the friends, colleagues, and the core values of each respective community. BGSU's learning and theme communities focus on students' special interest areas including music, fine arts, teacher/educator development, service learning and leadership, personal discovery, natural and health sciences, language and cultures, business, forensic science, aviation, history, Honors Scholars, and Army and Air Force ROTC. Students in residential and theme learning communities regularly retain at higher rates than those who do not. For the Fall 2019 cohort, the 749 first-year, first-semester students enrolled in learning communities at Bowling Green State University retained at a collective rate of 84.38%. Those who were part of a residential learning community retained at a rate of 85.88% and those who were members of a theme learning community retained at 81.30%. The overall retention rate for the 2019 cohort of first-year students was 79.4%.
- 4. Academic Investment in Mathematics and Science.** The Academic Investment in Math and Science (AIMS) Program is a four-year scholarship program focused on supporting women identified students and students of color pursuing undergraduate degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. This University initiative is an example of

BGSU's long standing commitment to creating intentional support mechanisms for students; the AIMS Program has been supporting BGSU students for almost twenty years. The overall objective of the AIMS Program is to provide financial and holistic support to students to ensure they have a rich and supportive BGSU experience and leave BGSU prepared to be successful in their chosen field. As members of the AIMS Program, students participate in a number of activities designed to help them grow and develop. Activities include a summer bridge program for first-year students, monthly meetings which all students attend, individual meetings and workshops to discuss post-bachelor's degree plans. Presently, there are also three Choose Ohio First Scholarships associated with the AIMS Program: (a) 16.03 - Building Ohio's Sustainable Energy Future (BOSEF), (b) 19.71 - Choose Ohio First Scholarship in Computer Science and Software Engineering: Increasing Diversity in Computer Science and Software Engineering, and (c) 16.09 - Meeting Essential Doctor Needs in Urban and Rural Areas (MEDNURA). The AIMS Program provides varying levels of support to the students in all three of these Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) funded scholarship programs. For the Fall 2020 semester there are 71 students (22 in the fall freshman cohort) who have an affiliation with the AIMS Program either as traditional AIMS scholars or as scholarship recipients of one of the three Choose Ohio First grants associated with the AIMS Program.

**5. Transfer Students.** Growing transfer enrollment is a key element of BGSU's strategic enrollment plan, and improving students' experience and success is an area of institutional focus. The transfer onboarding process has been transformed into a "concierge" style model, where students are assisted individually with their specific needs by a dedicated transfer specialist. This involves advising readiness review and preparation in order to connect transfers with their academic advisors. In addition to articulation and dual admission efforts, BGSU's efforts to support transfer students to degree completion include:

- Designated Transfer Specialists to provide individualized pre-advising for prospective transfer students. This concierge approach provides for better transition planning, development of specific pathways to a bachelor's degree, and reduction in the number of courses that do not apply (as well as the corresponding expense).
- Scheduled pre-advising appointments with the Transfer Specialist on site at regional community colleges or virtually.
- Ongoing efforts to develop a transfer-friendly culture through campus-wide education regarding the barriers transfer students encounter and the means to mitigate their impact.
- Standardized, streamlined, and efficient/timely process for evaluating transfer courses and credit submitted to BGSU outside of the Ohio Transfer Module, Transfer Assurance Guides, and previously equated courses.
- General Education Course Equivalency Guides to document general education equivalencies between community colleges and BGSU's BG Perspective program.
- More frequent and more convenient monthly virtual transfer events/sessions/appointments focused on assisting with the transition to BGSU, addressing the "transferability" of courses, the applicability to degree programs, creation/review of degree completion plans and timelines, and connecting students with academic resources.
- The Transfer Opportunity Scholarship, a \$2000 renewable award for students who demonstrate financial need, have a college GPA of 2.5 or higher, and transfer from an accredited two- or four-year institution. The scholarship is for full-time students and renewable for one academic year.

- The Robert and Ellen Thompson Scholarship Program for Working Families is an award designed to assist students from working families who struggle with the cost of higher education. Eligible students receive a \$10,000 renewable scholarship based on financial need and academic success (30 credit hours of transfer coursework with a college GPA of at least 3.0), with preference given to active duty military or veterans.
  - Concierge-type support for students in the process of transferring to BGSU as well as ongoing support for students enrolled in the eCampus, such as assistance with registration, course substitution concerns, financial aid, bill payment, and advising.
  - Creation of Transfer Ambassador Program to help onboard transfer students and connect them with a current student who previously transferred to BGSU.
- 6. Guaranteed Transfer Pathways.** Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathways (GTP) is a state initiative grounded in Ohio Revised Code with an expected outcome that students who follow one of several meta-major pathways at community colleges will transfer seamlessly to the University and complete a bachelor's degree in no more than 60 hours. The first approved BGSU Pathway was Business, and BGSU is pleased that all 14 of its BSBA specializations can be completed after following the pathway and transferring to BGSU. The GTP is an opportunity to create consistent statewide transfer programs improving upon individual program-specific agreements. Creating the Pathways has been a positive experience for faculty bringing discipline experts together across two and four-year institutions. BGSU has continued to develop and submit pathways and to date has twenty ODHE-approved pathways across multiple disciplines including social work, mathematics, sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts, and history.
- 7. Nontraditional and Military Students.** Given the projection that 64% of jobs in Ohio will require a post-secondary credential by 2020 (ODHE's *Ohio Attainment Goal Proclamation* March 2017), BGSU is striving to increase the educational attainment of adults already in the workplace. Although the strategies are not new, the strategies implemented during the last two years will be our approach for the future. The office of **Nontraditional and Military Student Services (NTMSS)** specializes in the two populations with a focus on solving transition and transfer barriers. Specialized academic advisors provide support to each group while a third staff member is focused on addressing the applicability of military training and other coursework to students' degree programs. As students pivoted to remote learning in March 2020, these advisors became connections to solving problems, as well as providing support for student success. The importance of this connection became clear for our students who are Ohio National Guardsmen who were activated for COVID Response teams and other duties. Supporting those students to complete courses while serving the needs of Ohio was an important part of the daily work. We remain committed to the students who have been activated for COVID Response as well as students who are deployed overseas with Guard units. The military advisor conducts outreach to all military students including Veterans, active duty, members of the National Guard, and their dependents. The nontraditional advisor is available to work with all students 23 and older as they navigate balancing life, work, and academics.
- **BGSU continues to be recognized** nationally as "Best for Vets" by Military Times among four-year schools and first in Ohio. BGSU continues to meet the requirements of the Department of Defense MOU and HB 488, and is fully compliant with those best practices for BGSU's military population.
  - BGSU implemented a pilot program to assist military students in **translating their experience** to recognizable civilian knowledge and skills and we are testing a similar

program for nontraditional students. Students reported the transferability of previous coursework and military training as barriers to their success. BGSU has addressed the issues of accessibility and flexibility by offering more courses online, creating the eCampus (100% online degrees taught in 7-week sessions) and streamlining the transfer evaluation processes. An advisor in Nontraditional and Military Student Services continues to conduct more detailed reviews of nontraditional and military students' transfer and military credits to determine if out-of-state coursework and military training experience can be applied to general education requirements and/or degree completion, identifying efficiencies to reduce time-to-degree and cost savings. This review discovered that students often have earned college-level credit for workplace training and professional certificates.

- **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)** is available to students who have extensive work and/or military experience. This individualized effort provides an efficient pathway to degree completion while preventing duplicate courses, resulting in lowering costs and time-to-degree. BGSU added a question to the admission application in Spring 2020, providing the opportunity for students to identify that they hold professional certificates and/or work experience that may be college credit worthy. By selecting this item on the admission application, a work-flow process notifies the PLA Coordinator to contact the student for further information and review. Although not every student completes the PLA Self-Assessment or has a professional certificate, the new item on the application has dramatically increased the number of potential participants in PLA. The success of the Professional Certificate application item has resulted in the expansion of assessment to more nontraditional and military students and more faculty have been involved in evaluating professional certifications for college credit. In 2019-20, 18 portfolio reviews were completed, awarding 52 credits; seven courses were validated for 50.5 credits, and three students had industry credentials validated, for 48 credits.
  - **Intrusive Advising and Peer Mentoring** has been expanded for nontraditional and military students to address the challenges of life, work, and school balance. Previously, the nontraditional advisor met informally with students for coffee twice a semester and hosted monthly drop-in pizza lunches. Fall 2020 outreach, which had to change due to COVID-19, has had an overwhelming response from students with making and keeping advising appointments even in a virtual world. The advisors are using every student request, such as a grade option change or drop class request, as a reason to personally contact the students resulting in meaningful conversations and follow-up communications. Peer mentoring is offered to new military students in their first and second semesters, including a combination of pre-start outreach efforts and phone/email contacts that has proven especially effective for Fall 2020 due to remote courses for most students. Following the Spring 2020 pivot to remote coursework, students have responded to outreach efforts and are participating in advising sessions at a higher rate than previously experienced. The intrusive advising and mentoring are important tools and resources to keep our students connected and moving forward during the pandemic.
8. **Online Students and eCampus.** The BGSU eCampus, a combination of one-stop/concierge enrollment and support unit where students enroll in 100% online programs, has led to rapid enrollment growth for post-traditional student/adult learners, and military populations. Offering fully online degree programs in 7-week classes with six start dates, along with centralized enrollment management services has had promising results. The Office of Online and Summer Academic Programs (OSAP) assists colleges and faculty in developing and implementing fiscally sound summer enrollment strategies, and the creation of new online

programs to promote enrollment of adult and transfer students and increase degree completion rates. Enrollment in eCampus grew from 293 students in 2014-2015 to 2,170 by the end of 2020. Much of this growth was in graduate programs, though undergraduate programs also experienced an increase in enrollment.

- 9. International Students.** Establishing expectations and conditions for success are built into the strategy for recruiting international students and aligns with BGSU's institutional goal to build a campus that celebrates and appreciates diversity. Students from more than 75 countries are currently enrolled at BGSU. Increasing targeted recruitment efforts, providing assistance with admissions and the visa application process, offering an orientation program designed specifically for the international student populations, offering social and professional development events, assisting students to secure internships to expand their educational experience in the USA, and the International Student Ambassador Program and the Global Falcons program (international students assisting their peers in navigating and connecting with University faculty and staff, programs, and services with the former program and International Programs and Partnerships staff assigned to help specific new students in the latter) all help to support new and continuing international students. By adding campus-wide recognition (International Education Week), developing partnership agreements to create pathways for international students to attend BGSU (including transfers), offering English as a Second Language classes, and providing regular immigration information to students, BGSU continues to support the success of its international students. In response to COVID-19, International Programs and Partnerships quickly adapted by creating a quick system to set up virtual meetings for advising on immigration issues while programming fun events that would fit the virtual world (e.g., cooking classes, trivia and other games, photo contest, etc.). Due to the many changes in immigration regulations this year, we sent more messages to international students and advisors to make sure they were kept informed and engaged. In spite of the limits of such interaction, we continue to connect with our students by supporting those who reached out to us. Also because of COVID, we worked more closely with Student Affairs to identify the international students in need for the Student Emergency Fund.
- 10. Pre-Professional Programs.** The Office of Pre-Professional Programs (PPP) currently supports more than 625 undergraduates in their pursuit of post-baccalaureate programs in Dentistry, Law, Medicine, Occupational Therapy, Optometry, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, and Veterinary Medicine. First and second year students gain insight by reviewing the expectations and responsibilities of being a competitive candidate through the utilization of planning guides, tools and resources, programming efforts, campus visits, mentorship and experiential learning activities. Upperclass students find support in the application process through free test prep workshops; application, personal statement and essay review; guidance in seeking letters of reference, and interviewing techniques (including Multiple Mini Interview rotations). The PPP Office also develops partnerships with professionals in the field as well as professional programs through early admit, early assurance, and MOU agreements for those desiring early decisions. Recruitment efforts are enhanced by hosting three summer camps: Future Meds: Exploring Health Careers, a Pre-Vet, and a Pre-Law camp to provide high school students first-hand knowledge about careers in law and medicine. The Pre-Professional Programs pre-track enrollment increased 9% from last year. In 2018: 70% of the 88 graduates maintained a 3.5 or above cumulative GPA; 16% of PPP students completed their degrees in three years (due to credits earned prior to enrollment at BGSU); 53 % of students completed their degrees in four years; and 11% in five years. During COVID-19, staff in the PPP office have been serving as a source of additional support for students who were already feeling the

burden and stress of competition for limited spots in their chosen professional programs.

## G. Other Strategies

- 1. Individual College Success Plans.** Each of the undergraduate colleges has developed its own retention and persistence initiatives, goals, and action plans based on specific majors, programs, and perceived barriers to graduation. Leadership from each of the colleges meets at least once per semester to discuss progress toward goals and the potential for new opportunities for collaboration.
- 2. Three-Year Undergraduate Programs.** Students who earn college credit while in high school through AP, IB, CLEP, and College Credit Plus have the opportunity to test themselves against the academic challenges of college and shorten time-to-degree. BGSU advisors work with students to identify ways for them to complete college credit before they graduate from high school and provide support for students who enroll in any of BGSU's degree programs, particularly those posted online with three-year templates. Approximately 90 undergraduate degree programs have guides posted online, including programs in the College of Education and Human Development, College of Arts and Sciences, Schmidhorst College of Business, and College of Health and Human Services.
- 3. Graduation Plans/Four-Year Degree Pathways.** Creation of sample class schedules and key milestones/success markers for an eight-term or earlier degree completion plan for each major/degree serves as a companion to the degree audit and check-sheet by detailing the program requirements and curriculum in a recommended sample schedule, term by term. Key milestones and prerequisites for each program serve to provide students with achievement and completion outcomes along the way. Degree Maps for all major programs have been developed collaboratively with college advisors, Office of Registration and Records, and department faculty.
- 4. Expanding Bachelor's Degree Attainment via BGSU Firelands.** Students enrolled at BGSU Firelands, the University's regional campus and one of its seven undergraduate academic colleges, can begin study towards any of BGSU's 200+ undergraduate majors and programs. In addition to certificate and associate degree programs offered on campus, two recently-added bachelor's degree programs are conferred by the Firelands College: the Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Care and the Bachelor of Technical and Applied Studies, the latter including three distinct concentrations in small business enterprise, information technology support and healthcare leadership. Additionally, students can complete eight degree programs conferred by peer colleges with instruction delivered entirely from the campus location in Huron. Remaining degree programs—including the innovative Bachelor of Science in Resort and Attraction Management—can be completed via a combination of coursework delivered via the Firelands and Bowling Green campuses. **The Firelands Pathway Program**, a partnership between the academic colleges of the Bowling Green campus and BGSU Firelands, further expands opportunities for student degree attainment. Students who do not meet eligibility requirements for admission to the Bowling Green (main) campus can begin their study via the Firelands College prior to matriculation to a Bowling Green campus academic college. The program, started in 2014 with an initial cohort of 18, now enrolls approximately 275 students annually, with fall to fall retention increasing to nearly 65% for the Fall 2019 cohort.
- 5. BG Perspective Program (General Education Curriculum).** BGSU's revised general education curriculum, which provides students with a foundational knowledge on which to build their upper-level work, encourages active learning, and incorporates ongoing formal assessment, was implemented in Fall 2015. Modifications and refinements to the revised program are

ongoing. Since Fall 2018, the BG Perspective General Education Committee has engaged in a review of the program to ensure alignment with the Higher Learning Commission as well as the Ohio Department of Higher Education's requirement for general education to provide for more efficient planning for new and transfer students, with the potential to reduce excess credit hours and shorten time to degree:

- Conducted large-scale workshops and/or informal discussion sessions for faculty each semester to address issues related to general education and to examine assessment data. Sessions have been held virtually since the onset of the pandemic.
- Implemented a Natural Sciences Lab requirement for all students in Fall 2019.
- Collaborated with the Geography and Food and Nutrition Departments on the development of new online lab sections of general education courses to help online students more readily satisfy the new science lab requirement.
- Added an additional Natural Sciences course to the program, SEES 2220, Water Resources and Issues.
- Kept well-apprised on the development of BGSU's Life Design Program and the Higher Learning Commission Quality Initiative, with the eventual goal of integrating the general education program into these initiatives.

During the past two years the BG Perspective General Education Committee has provided substantial feedback to the Ohio Department of Higher Education regarding the revision of general education-related policies.

- 6. Finish What You Started.** BGSU continues to assist students who have earned college credit but have "stopped out" on their way to a bachelor's degree. Aligned with Ohio's *Credit When It's Due* initiative, every two years the transcripts of BGSU students who have ended their baccalaureate studies are reviewed to determine if they have met the requirements for an associate degree. As a result of the *Finish What You Started* initiative, 119 associate degrees were awarded in Fall 2019 and 79 are scheduled to be awarded in December 2020.
- 7. Leveraging Summer Enrollment/Discounting Summer Tuition.** In 2015, BGSU documented a number of initiatives to reduce the cost of a four-year degree. Two of the initiatives, leveraging the summer as an opportunity for students to catch up and get ahead and offering a discounted tuition were implemented. While a \$50 per credit hour discount contributed to an overall positive effect, it was replaced in summer 2019 with another incentive – waiving the application fee as well as GRE and related institutional-level testing scores. This modification resulted in a much higher positive effect on headcount and SCH and will be continued in Summer 2021.
- 8. Career Pathways to Graduation and Careers.** The University is committed to supporting students in exploring and selecting majors, securing experiential learning and employment opportunities, and providing career-related guidance to connect students with in-demand careers. Many new first-year students will make their first connection with the Student Employment Services and Career Center teams to create or update their resumes and seek part-time employment. Students in leadership and peer mentoring positions across campus also receive training on the resources and services provided by the Career Center, which include:
  - **FOCUS 2:** This resource is designed to help students assess their interests, skills, values, and personality. Once completed, FOCUS generates a list of occupations that match students' assessment results to explore occupations, career paths, degree programs, and majors. Students can also create action plans from their results that align with their career and educational goals.
  - **Handshake:** This is a platform that connects students with more than 35,000 on-campus and off-campus employers. Students can post their resume, apply for positions, and register to

attend career-related events. Students can also select from 15 different consultation types to connect one-on-one with the Career Center team.

- **OhioMeansJobs:** This resource is recommended to students during academic advising and career counseling consultations, career-related events, and first-year courses. Students are encouraged to use the different tools within this resource such as the Career Pathways, Career Profile, and Occupational Search. This resource also is located on the Career Center's website.
- **What Can I Do with A Major In...?** This resource outlines each major offered at the University with potential career paths. Students have access to the following information: major overview; top industries; related career titles, student organizations, and professional associations; and potential companies that recruit for the selected major. This resource also is recommended to students during academic advising and career counseling consultations, career-related events, and first-year courses.

9. **Leveraging Student Connections/Communications.** Tour guides, student ambassadors and campus partners help recruit and retain students through phone calls, text messages, videos and other social media channels. Admissions professionals know that prospective students like to talk to current students about admission requirements, next steps, housing, and campus life, among other topics. Outreach efforts include all students; calls and texts are directed to thousands of students each month. The call campaigns include next steps for application and completion, filing the FAFSA, scholarship deadlines, midterm grades, orientation reminders, and housing payments. Messaging is planned in collaboration with the Director of Enrollment Communications, who coordinates emails, print pieces, and social media to ensure the messages are consistent and complementary. The director also manages a new COVID-19 hotline, an outlet for students and parents to call with questions about testing, quarantining, isolation and other concerns. With the help of Marketing and Communications, the unit also oversees the social media pages that include cohort and parent pages. The messages on each Facebook page, for example, are based on where the student is in the student life cycle. A page for incoming students focuses on BGSU's COVID response, application deadlines, scholarship information, housing information, getting to know each other, and deciding on a major. Pages targeting a cohort that is moving through its first year tend to focus on issues related to retention such as coping with remote learning, homesickness, building a personal and professional network through student organizations, navigating campus resources, registering for classes for the upcoming semester, reminding students when bills are posted to their MyBGSU accounts, and how to pay them. A cohort that is further along the path toward degree completion sees information on their feed targeted toward persistence and continued academic and professional success. Such posts include information and events pertaining to leadership, internships and co-ops, career readiness, loan repayment, financial responsibility and graduation. Finally, parents' pages help to keep students' families in the loop by providing updates on deadlines for financial aid, housing and placement exams as well as a forum where experienced parents can support and advise their peers who are just beginning the college journey with their own children. Monitoring BGSU's student and parent social media feeds also provides immediate and valuable information about student and parent concerns and allows for quick and accurate responses to keep students informed and connected.
10. **The C. Raymond Marvin Center for Student Leadership (Marvin Center)** oversees a number of programs that facilitate leadership development for individual students, groups of students, and students in leadership roles at BGSU. The Falcon Leadership Institute targets first-year students and aspires to instill participants with confidence, ability, and passion to be actively engaged

leaders in their own communities. On average, ninety-five percent (95%) of students who completed the Falcon Leadership Institute in 2019-2020 are enrolled for Fall 2020, and 175 students are enrolled in the Falcon Leadership Institute for the 2020-2021 academic year. The BGSU Leadership Achievement Award program is a self-paced program designed to provide students a structure to develop their leadership and provide support throughout their time as a student. Since the program began in 2010, ninety-eight percent (98%) of all students enrolled in the BGSU Leadership Certificate program either continue at BGSU or have graduated. BGSU's best-known and nationally recognized undergraduate leadership program, The Sidney A. Ribeau President's Leadership Academy (PLA), is a four-year leadership program that focuses on scholarship, experiential learning, and community services. Acceptance to PLA requires an application, essay, and on-campus interviews. Members of the PLA receive a four-year scholarship up to the cost of in-state tuition and follow a four-year leadership curriculum that includes directed leadership development, academic, social and service experiences outside the classroom; increased interaction with faculty, staff, and students; and an understanding and appreciation for diversity and inclusion. Ninety-three percent of the cohort who began the program in 2019-2020 are enrolled for Fall 2020; 95% of the cohort who started the program in 2018-2019 are enrolled for Fall 2020; 96% of the cohort who started the program in 2017-2018 are enrolled for Fall 2020; and 91% of the cohort who enrolled in Fall 2016 either graduated or are on track to graduate by December 2020.

**11. The Division of Diversity and Belonging** oversees programs and opportunities for engagement to connect students with the campus community through programming, education and support.

- The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and staff support the retention of a diverse student body via mentoring, educational programming, cultural programs, and social gatherings to help students with the transition to college and ongoing success in the classroom. OMA's mission also includes providing diversity education and culturally-focused programs for all students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community. OMA undergraduate student ambassadors represent the office across campus, engaging students and others on topics of diversity, inclusion, and social justice issues as a way to raise cultural awareness and create a more welcoming, socially just, and inclusive campus community.
- **Multicultural Summer Link (MSL)** is a five-day summer program geared toward first-year students of color. During this program, incoming students will meet and connect with other first-year students, learn more about common aspects of college life and the BGSU experience, and enjoy academic and co-curricular activities. The program provides participants with tools and resources contributing to the success of their first year in college. The curriculum is grounded in data on supporting student success early and often (within the first six weeks) and extends throughout the fall semester with a UNIV 1510 class where students practice accessing resources and learn life design principles. Student participation in the MSL (605 in the 2018 cohort and 540 in the 2019) have reported improvement in the retention/persistence rates (52.38%/82.54%) from the Fall 2018 cohort to the Fall 2019 cohort (69.49%/86.44%).
- BGSU's **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+)** community is served by multiple dedicated staff members (at half-time) who provide educational programming, support, and advising services and oversee the LGBTQ+ resource center.

- BGSU has a long-standing history of supporting student success through participation in the Department of Education's **TRIO programs** to provide educational access and support for students who have been traditionally underrepresented. Student Support Services provides advising, tutoring, academic support, and scholarships for 350 students (low-income and first-generation, students with a disability, academically underprepared) each year. The Ronald McNair Scholars Program encourages degree completion by providing academic support, research opportunities, and faculty mentors to prepare undergraduate students (approximately 30 total participants annually) for graduate study. TRIO provides students with various opportunities depending on the program such as grant aid, while all programs offer additional mentoring and advising support. This program is working to retain students and help support those from marginalized and minoritized identities so that there are no institutional barriers to their success here at BGSU.

## H. New Initiatives

1. **Integrative Learning and Signature Work (LEAP).** The Integrative Learning and Signature Work initiative will achieve BGSU's goal of providing a "demonstrably superior and innovative learning experience that intentionally prepares (students) to lead meaningful and productive lives," (BGSU's Strategic Plan, *Focus on the Future*). This initiative incorporates Integrative Learning into curricula, practice, and assessment by adapting the American Association of Colleges and University's Integrative Learning VALUE rubric, integrating Signature Work practices into all programs of Study and integrating Communication in Context (as a subset of previous rubrics) into all programs of study. The adaptation of these learning outcomes will distinguish BGSU from other universities because of the scope of our implementation and through its integration with Life Design (which shares the Integrative Learning rubric of learning outcomes). The end result will be a fully integrated philosophy of education across campus, which will "significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning by implementing student-centered initiatives that ensure our learning environment sets clear expectations, supports one another, intellectually engages and involves students, and provides feedback and assessment" (*Focus on the Future*).

The Integrative Learning rubric emphasizes that students learn to connect academic knowledge to experience, to make connections across disciplines and perspectives, to adapt their learning and skillsets in new situations, to communication in new contexts in appropriate and effective ways, and to design and re-design their evolving futures beyond college. We are striving to make the communities we serve aware of the value of a BGSU education and to make transparent and accessible to students, parents, and the broader community the distinctive value of the curriculum and pedagogical practices that integrative learning and life design at BGSU bring to them.

2. **Life Design.** As part of our work to further improve the student experience and foster success, we are working to integrate and centralize academic and career advising across the university and have also launched a new student support initiative: Life Design. This initiative is characterized by a transformative, university-wide commitment intended to empower each student to intentionally design their college experience and to be life and career-ready upon graduation. A new cadre of professional staff, Life Design Coaches, will provide highly relational, dedicated, and on-going coaching and mentoring support to students from matriculation through graduation.

This initiative is launched in students' first semester with BGSU 1910 (a one-credit course), which sets the foundation for students to learn, adopt, and practice problem solving and way-finding skills as they design a meaningful college experience. All students will be assigned to a Life Design Coach

who serves as the instructor for this course, and these student-centric educators will radically collaborate and complement advising and career development staff in supporting students' academic and career goals. These Life Design Coaches will coordinate and deliver workshops and seminars for upper-class students and work with students to develop and update their personalized college/life plan to ensure they are making meaningful progress on their way to graduation.

Through Life Design and by exploring elements of their own lives, along with the world and communities around them, through curiosity and self-reflection, students will adopt mindsets and discover tools and skills to help them develop a well-designed, purpose-driven life, while focusing on the four key pillars of the BGSU student success framework; Academics and Career, Connections, Health and Wellness, and Purpose and Passion.

- 3. Content Restructuring.** In an effort to improve the teaching and learning experience students have in Canvas – which took on even more importance during COVID-19 – BGSU partnered with *Instructure* to enhance the presentation of courses with large enrollments of first-year students or that have been identified as important for student progress toward their degree. BGSU's focus on these courses recognizes the critical role they play in establishing a foundation for long-term student achievement. Content Restructuring involves a partnership between a professional Instructional Designer and a faculty member, who collaborate to reformat existing course material in a way that is clear, consistent, and easy for students to navigate.

This initiative is designed to enhance the learning environment for students at the same time it helps faculty members make a smoother transition to hybrid, remote, or online instruction as a result of COVID-19. With a Canvas course framework that is more intentionally designed from the outset, faculty members will be able to spend less time on course management and maintenance and more time engaging students directly with material that is central to their discipline. Fifty-nine courses went through the process in Summer and Fall 2020, and another round of content restructuring is underway in preparation for Spring 2021.

- 3. Mentor Collective.** Mentor Collective is a third-party peer mentoring program that provides support and guidance for students as they navigate their transition into BGSU and through their first year. The program matches upper-class student peer mentors with first-year mentees students. Peer mentors receive training in how to be effective in this role and connect with mentees through text, email, or in person. All electronic interactions are tracked by the Mentor Collective and professional staff members monitor and follow up on referrals.

This initiative launched in Fall 2020, with 762 first-year students assigned to mentors. Early indicators suggest the program is having a positive impact: students in the program registered for spring 3% above those who were not as of November 20, 2020. More notable is the impact on first-year students living off campus. Also, as of November 20, 2020, 88.64% of the 273 first-year students living off campus who had a mentor were registered, as opposed to 82.62% of the 869 who did not. Additionally, 89.74% of students of color with a mentor were registered, as opposed to 81.59% of those who did not. We are working on an expanded mentoring strategy for Spring 2021 to determine the longer-term significance of these preliminary results. We will also be examining the retention impact on mentors, as well.

## VI. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND THE JOBSOHIO KEY INDUSTRIES

Legislative language (ORC Sec. 3345.81) calls for campus plans to “align with the state’s workforce

development priorities.” In addition to programs and initiatives outlined in other sections of this report, the following are examples of the University’s academic and career resources and services that respond to and align with regional and state needs:

**A. Falcon Internship Guarantee.** Since 2014, the Falcon Internship Guarantee (FIG) Program has supported thousands of students in preparing for experiential learning opportunities and applying their academic coursework in a real-world setting. For the 2020 – 2021 academic year, this program was reimagined to best meet the changing needs of our students. The restructured program includes nearly 100 sophomore and junior students who have completed at least one year at the University. The smaller program size allows the career coach to customize their approach in supporting each participant and includes a new, required program curriculum and activities to provide greater accountability and measure each participant’s progress to completion. Students must attend orientation sessions and career-related events, complete a Focus2 career assessment and Handshake profile, design a resume, and participate in one-on-one consultations focused on career exploration, life and career design, resume development, experiential learning search strategies, and interview preparation.

Upon successful completion of the program curriculum and activities, FIG participants gain the knowledge and career competencies needed to secure internship and other experiential learning positions. They also are equipped with the tools to begin thinking about and acting on their future career with access to the following opportunities:

- Exclusive employer networking events
- One-on-one support with a career coach
- Priority notifications for internship and job fairs
- Individualized resume and internship search support
- FIG student spotlight featured on promotional materials

In addition, FIG participants receive a digital certification of completion to showcase on their resume, LinkedIn, and other professional platforms and continue to receive one-on-one support with their career coach after they have completed the program.

**B. Linking the BGSU Curriculum and Experiential Learning to the OhioMeansJobs In-Demand Jobs.** In addition to the benefits of OhioMeansJobs.com, the University, employers, and students have benefited from the Ohio Means Internships and Co-ops Grant Program. The University receives funding from the State of Ohio to increase internships and co-ops with the overarching goal of retaining more workers in the state. This funding is primarily provided to employers as a partial wage and benefit subsidy and focuses on companies that align with JobsOhio Target Industries. The University serves as the lead institution for the Northwest Ohio region on these grants and remains committed to supporting and increasing college completion through student participation in experiential learning. The grant funding has helped to support the following:

- **OMIC 2.0:** This grant was closed out in 2020. In total, 176 Bowling Green State University students were placed in internships and co-ops to support the grant’s objective.
- **OMIC 2.5:** This grant includes five institutions in Northwest Ohio. To date, over 40 students have been placed in internships and co-ops. This grant also supports pilot projects such as a hometown internship mapping tool at Bowling Green State University to visually identify potential companies in targeted industries, which may support internship and co-op experiences.

- **OMIC3.0:** This grant includes eight institutions in Northwest Ohio. To date, over 120 students have been placed in internships and co-ops. This grant also supports pilot projects such as a faculty training at Terra State Community College for potential faculty supervisors to oversee experiential learning opportunities.
- **OMIC4.0:** This is the newest of the OMIC grants and includes seven institutions in Northwest Ohio. This grant also supports pilot projects such as an alternative spring break program with The University of Toledo for students to learn about potential careers, professionalism, and experiential learning opportunities.

To date, BGSU, along with the other seven institutions, have collaborated with 219 business partners to support internships and co-ops in the state as part of OMIC grant funding. These business partners range from Dana Incorporated and Erie-Ottawa International Airport to Keller Logistics Group and Speedway.

**College and Career Readiness Camp, with funding from Ohio Means Internships and Co-ops**

**Grant 4.0.** The most recent version of the OMIC grants provides funding for incoming first-year students to learn more about potential careers and experiential learning opportunities in Ohio. Participants have an opportunity to network with industry professionals and participate in employer site visits. Participants also interact with the Career Center to explore major options and assess their career interests to prepare for college and beyond. The University has offered this in-person camp experience each summer since 2018, including a virtual experience in 2020 due to the pandemic. The College and Career Readiness Camp is an example of how the institution continues to address the gap between high school, college, and the workforce.

**C. Linking Curriculum and Programming to JobsOhio Industry Clusters**

BGSU has worked methodically to evaluate and realign its academic programs, including program reviews, review of duplicate programs in northwest Ohio, and low-enrolled programs. Many of BGSU's new, modified, and in development undergraduate programs, majors, and specializations align with Ohio's key industry clusters:

- **Advanced Manufacturing:** BS in Software Engineering, BS in Technology: Mechatronics Engineering Technology.
- **Aerospace and Aviation:** BS in Aviation was named as a unique degree program; was formerly a major within the BS in Technology. Students can choose from three specializations, Flight Technology and Operations; Aviation Management & Operations, and Aviation Engineering Technology.
- **Automotive:** BS in Technology Mechatronics Engineering Technology
- **Business Functions:** Bachelor of Technical and Applied Studies (customizable degree completion program); BS Resort and Attraction Management (business-focused)
- **Energy:** BS in Geology: Hydrogeology specialization; BA Geographic Information Systems specialization; BA Human Dimensions of Climate Change specialization.
- **Financial Services:** BSBA: Insurance Specialization; Data Science Minor (Arts & Sciences); BS in Education: Family and Consumer Science-Workforce Education & Development; BA in Advertising; BS in Math with Specialization in Data Science; BA in advertising
- **Healthcare:** Bachelor of Science in Nursing and RN to BSN online degree completion program; BS in Forensic Science: Forensic Biology, Forensic Chemistry, and Forensic Examination; Bachelor's in applied health science to PharmD at University of Findlay (early assurance admission for BGSU undergraduates).

- Information Services and Software: BS in Computational Data Science specialization; Digital Forensics specialization; Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics specialization; Software Engineering specialization; BS in Software Engineering; Data Science Minor.
- Insurance and Risk Management: BSBA specialization.

Additionally, the occupations with the predicted highest forecasted need (retrieved from <https://topjobs.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/indemand/list.11.10>) and bachelor's degree required with fewer than five years of experience include: Registered Nurses; Software Developers, Applications; Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists; General Operations Managers; Industrial Engineers; Child, Family, and School Social Workers; Personal Financial Advisors; Construction Managers; Human Resource Specialists; Industrial Engineers; and Financial Analysts. BGSU's new and updated academic programs in these disciplines include: Data Science Specialization, BS in Mathematics; Software Engineering Specialization, BS in Computer Science; new Major: BS in Software Engineering; new Minor: Data Science (College of Arts and Sciences); BS in Public Health; BS in Allied Health; Minor in Child Development; and new minor and new specialization in Insurance, BSBA.

#### **D. Leveraging Research and Engagement to Support Degree Completion**

- 1. Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship.** Each year, the Center for Undergraduate Research (CURS) supports more than 200 undergraduate students in their pursuit of gaining non-course based, hands-on experience with research, scholarly, and creative projects under the guidance of a faculty mentor. By participating in these projects, students gain not only valuable insight into the professional practices of their chosen discipline but are also able to build their resumes and enhance their written and oral presentation skills. Their faculty mentors are also able to serve as valuable references once the students are ready to enter the work force or apply for graduate school. CURS also hosts three large annual events during which all BGSU undergraduate students can present their research, scholarly, and creative projects to the BGSU community and the general public. Approximately 400 students participate annually in these events from disciplines across campus. CURS also supports annually several specific events hosted by departments and schools across campus, which provide additional avenues for students to gain presentation experience by presenting course-based and non-course-based projects. Due to COVID-19, CURS canceled its Summer Grant program in 2020, but launched again in Fall 2020 with thirty-nine grant recipients. A typical fall semester would have seen sixty recipients. COVID led to innovation in the way that the annual symposium was delivered, however. All students submitted electronic versions of their work that were shared online.
- 2. The Division of Research and Economic Engagement.** With a focus on increasing research and knowledge by aiding and informing the public about societal issues and challenges, one of the goals of the division is to support and grow BGSU's centers and institutes such as the Center for Fresh Waters and Human Health and the Center for Public Impact. Through investment in strategic faculty hires and developing internal partnership between Centers with aligned and complementary expertise, new and expanded high-level partnerships with area corporations, major non-profits, and governments are expanding. The creation of additional opportunities for collaboration on projects, faculty research, and student/faculty engagement, will result in additional experiential learning activities in current and emerging disciplines. Ongoing projects in the northwest Ohio region include work with The Andersons (business analytics), ProMedica (opioid education prevention), Toledo Museum of Art (robotics camp), and United Way of

Greater Toledo (data analytics), which add value to the credentials of students who graduate from BGSU and bring the assets of BGSU to bear on critical issues in our region and beyond.

## **VII. A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD**

Bowling Green State University continues to make gains in enrollment, the academic strength of the incoming first year class, and retention of the first-time, full-time cohort. Just as University leadership, faculty and staff have focused on increasing enrollment and retention, BGSU is equally committed to identifying and implementing strategies designed to increase the number and percentage of students earning meaningful postsecondary credentials. As evidenced by the strategic goals and objectives directly related to degree completion, BGSU continues to emphasize the BG Experience as we work collaboratively across departments and divisions to identify and mitigate barriers to student success while creating programs and pathways that take into consideration a diverse student body. During the coming years, there will be increased efforts focusing on the characteristics and learning needs of post-traditional, military, transfer, and international students as the traditional high school population decreases. Most importantly, as the University strives for continuous improvement—through thoughtful assessment of student learning and evaluation of programs and initiatives to promote student success, the information gained will be leveraged to improve practice and develop new initiatives to support the changing student populations served by the faculty and staff of Bowling Green State University. As a public university, it is our mission to serve our local communities in northwest Ohio. We educate our students and prepare them to “do well,” but with that, we also want them to “do good” wherever they go. Ultimately, it is essential that BGSU drive economic and cultural vitality as we serve our local, regional, and global communities as a *Public University for the Public Good*.