

# Strategic Planning Committee Minutes

## June 16, 2021

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The Strategic Planning Committee met on Wednesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. in the Athens State Ballroom. Present were Dr. Rick Barth; Ms. Pam Clark, Recorder; Dr. Joe Delap; Ms. Jackie Gooch; Mr. Jeff Guenther; Dr. Diann Hammon; Dr. Jim Kerner; Ms. Belinda Krigel; Dr. Kim LaFavor; Mr. Chris Latham; Ms. Sarah McAbee; Mr. Jeff Powers; Mr. Derrek Smith; Dr. Jackie Smith; Dr. Stephen Spencer; Dr. Darlene Turner-White; Ms. Debra Vaughn; Dr. Lee Vartanian; Dr. Philip Way; Dr. Catherine Wehlburg; and Dr. Lionel Wright. Mr. Jamie Adams; Mr. Ronnie Chronister; Ms. Laken Cleveland, SGA President; Dr. Keith Ferguson; Ms. Laura Beth Horn; and Mr. Mike McCoy were absent. Special guests were Mr. Frank Eskridge and Ms. Ashley Miller.

Dr. Way called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone. He asked for any amendments to the May minutes. There were no amendments to the minutes and they were approved on a voice vote.

The focus of the meeting was to report on student recruitment for Goal #3 of the Horizon 2030 Plan. Dr. Way turned the meeting over to Ms. McAbee. She presented on enrollment trends and Dr. Barth and Ms. Miller presented on current practices in enrollment (Handout - Horizon 2030: Goal 3). Members were divided into four groups for discussions.

### **Group 1 - Delap, LaFavor, Latham, Miller, J. Smith and Turner-White**

#### **What are ways that departments can help with recruiting?**

##### Academics

- Faculty speak to community college classes within their discipline.
- Connecting and collaborating with high school professional student organizations.
- Men of Kennis Service Learning project within the local school systems.
- Collaborate with community colleges where students start service learning projects that will transfer with them to Athens State.
- Admissions meets with each College Advisory Board to provide enrollment information.
- Bring back the Phi Theta Kappa Alumni Chapter with a faculty and admission representative.
- High School students take summer courses/camps at Athens State.
- Creating a program for Women of Color in the STEM field.

##### Alumni

- Alumni spotlights to share with prospective students.
- Alumni referral program.
- Alumni providing information on what they are doing before they graduate.
- Alumni Chapters raise money for scholarships and provide students from their area a scholarship (for example, Limestone Co. Alumni Scholarship).

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### Admissions

- Partner with community colleges and their planned events (for example, Military Day at Calhoun).
- Dual acceptance with Calhoun and Athens State.
- Provide materials in Spanish.

### Student Services

- Current students going back to the community college to speak to students about their experience. Specifically, our Hispanic population.

## **Group 2 – Eskridge, Kerner, Vartanian and Wright**

### **As we expand graduate programs, what are ways to recruit graduate students?**

#### Initial Thoughts:

- Growth with our graduate programs is continuing.
- What are we doing now? Marketing of programs is going well.

#### Networks - potential pipelines for recruiting:

- Recent graduates.
- Marketing and Archer's coordination for student outreach.
- Redstone Arsenal – Army & Materials Command.
- Networking.
  - Government
  - Local Leaders

#### Advantages for recruiting graduate students:

- Our programs are niche programs. Applicable to today's job market.
- Concentrations help compliment programs: concentrations are broad enough to be applied multiple places.
- Retrieving data from Department of Labor to better understand trends.
- Faculty has real world experience.
- Professor to student ratio – 15:1.
- Approachable faculty.

#### Stronger Web Presence:

- Website: continuing progress – continuing to grow content.
- Social Media: sharing information about graduate programs overall.

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- Social Media: content planning to promote programs: daily, weekly promotions.

### Customer Service:

- Being available – a live person for questions and solutions.
- Quality Assurance
  - Continuing culture (faculty & staff) of programs established for lasting success.
  - Focus Groups
    - What's working?
    - What's not working?
    - Different aspects of programs – thoughts of focus group?
    - Alumni/Student feedback on programs.
- Informing students how their degrees are applicable to different jobs. How the degrees *benefit* them.

### **Group 3 – Gooch, Hammon, McAbee, Powers, Vaughn and Way**

#### **Rolling out new academic programs, what leads to recruiting success?**

- How recruiting could be included in the earlier stages of program development even though the process is fairly prescriptive.
- Dr. Way mentioned a “SEAL TEAM 6” that could be a group included in the discussions to address any program issues that might impact other areas of the campus.
- It was noted that the RN to BSN program was approved in March, 2021 and was rolling out in June for marketing and recruiting efforts.
- Internal marketing/sharing opportunities are needed to share with each other all of the good work that is happening across the campus. Some ideas include electronic signage and public off campus signage.
- Recruiting opportunities for graduate programs include visits to senior level undergraduate classes to share graduate program information.
- Professional conferences like SHRM with student potential.
- Tennessee Hospital systems, nursing societies (G. Valcana might have more information).
- Try an MOU with community college system for data exchange from central system.

### **Group 4 – Barth, Guenther, D. Smith, Spencer and Wehlburg**

#### **What are institutional barriers to recruiting success that should be evaluated?**

##### General Education

- Need to be more flexible and creative in how we evaluate incoming general education courses.
- STARS states that we must accept certain classes from the community colleges, it does not restrict us from allowing additional courses to be considered for general education equivalencies.

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- Dr. Way discussed “upside down” degrees that allow students to come in with major courses from an AAS program but no general ed. We need to develop the ability for students to do general education during their first year with us.
- General consensus that our general education requirement is overly restrictive and not responsive.

Purchase order process - is cumbersome, takes time, and is out-of-date with competitors.

- Discussion highlighted that recruiters at other institutions have purchase cards (P-Cards) allowing them flexibility and speed when registering for college fairs, setting up private visits, renting cars if fleet-cars are out, and prevents them from having to wait for refund, etc.
- The lack of speed and flexibility of our purchase order system hurts Athens State.
  - College fairs, especially school or organization specific, often notify schools without significant notice and have limits of how many tables they reserve due to space limitations. There have been deadlines missed in the past waiting on the purchase order process.
  - If a recruiter needs to be sent from one event to another – for example, they are at a college fair one day and are able to get a school visit in the same area scheduled for the next day, the cost associated with an added visit has to be absorbed by recruiter who must then wait on reimbursement.
  - There is a requirement for invoices to be dated after date of purchase order request. Since admissions does not know when they will receive an invite for a recruiting event, it is impossible to put in the purchase order request before they are notified by an organization. Thus, organizations will often send out a standard invoice on the date of invitation and the recruiter must then contact the organization and ask for creation of differently dated invoice. Not every organization does this in a timely fashion. This also happens with items such as professional organization renewals and conference registrations.
- It was pointed out by the Provost that she assumed these are not highly paid employees and we are asking them to wait on reimbursement for items that a P-card could cover.
- Several members of the group mentioned that they had previously been at institutions that issued P-cards to recruiters and that training, restrictions, and accountability are key to making it work – such as a “three strike” system – for example, an employee who submits receipts beyond a set deadline would lose privileges.
- It was pointed out by a group member that sending faculty to recruit is difficult due to the purchase order system as well, and prevents colleges from getting excited about sending faculty out when they know they have to go through the current multi-step process. Deans should have P-Cards for this purpose if we are serious about faculty helping recruit.

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### Stronger Scholarships from Competitors

- Discussion of how UA and Auburn provide more valuable transfer scholarships than what we provide to similarly situated students.

### Data Integrity

- It was brought up that with the differing admissions systems and admissions personnel over the years, data integrity is an issue when trying to do trend analysis, projections, and other data mining projects that could assist with recruiting strategies and strategic planning

### Lack of resources compared to competitors

- The amount of money that other institutions spend on recruiting is significantly higher than what Athens State budgets for recruiting.
- Discussion on total number of staff dedicated to full-time recruiting with no other responsibilities is significantly higher at other institutions of similar size.

Dr. Barth and Ms. McAbee thanked everyone for their interest and ideas. The meeting adjourned at 12:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Pamela D. Clark

Handout: Horizon 2030: Goal 3 Presentation



**ATHENS  
STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

# Horizon 2030: Goal 3

2021

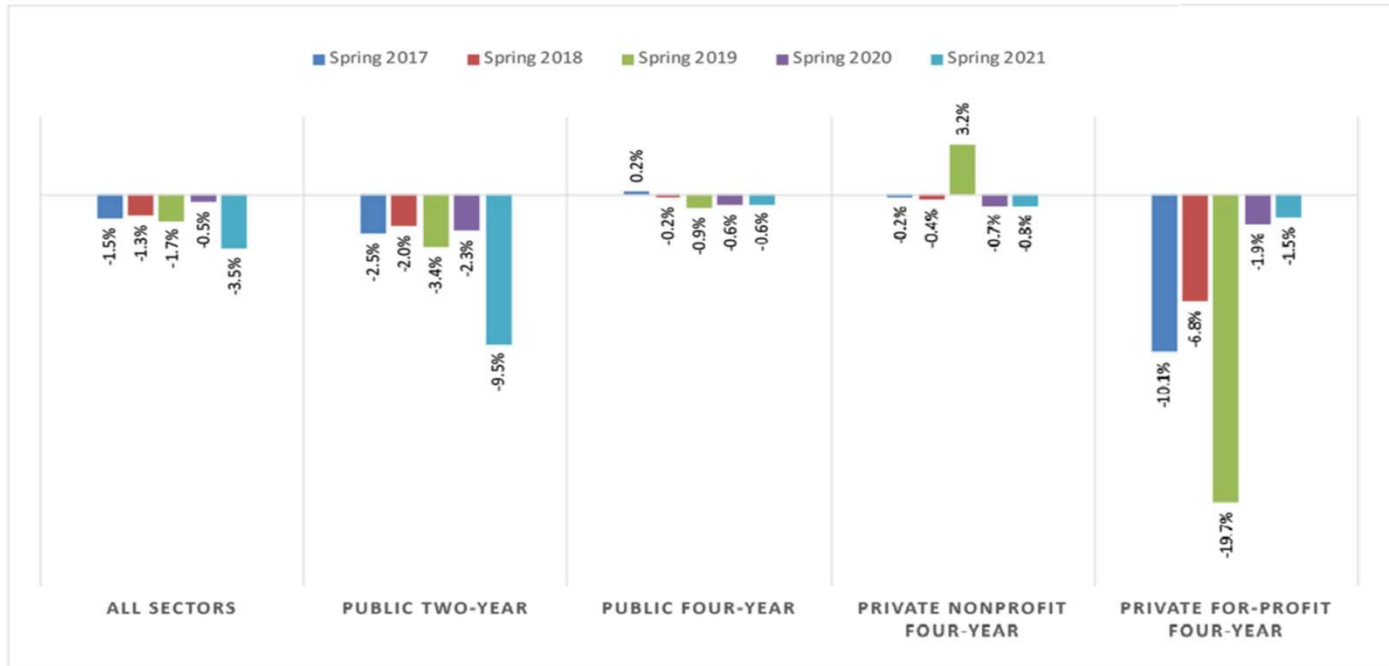
Athens State University will recruit, retain and graduate a growing high-quality, diverse and successful student body.

- Sub-Goal 1. Grow to offset the demographic cliff.
  - Minimum New Students    550 Undergraduate    130 Graduate
  - By 2024 New Students    650 Undergraduate    150 Graduate
  - By 2027 New Students    700 Undergraduate    200 Graduate
- Sub-Goal 2. Increase academic credentials of incoming students.
- Sub-Goal 3. Recruit with a focus on diversity.
  - Minimum Percentage    African-American 13.9%    Hispanic 2.6%
  - Percentage by 2027    African-American 14%    Hispanic 3.5%

# National Enrollment Trends

Percent Change in Enrollment from Previous Year by Institutional Sector:  
2017 to 2021

2021



# State Enrollment Trends

2021

Alabama Commission on Higher Education Alabama Public Institutions Historical Fall Enrollment						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change
Four-Year Institutions						
Alabama A&M University	5,860	6,001	6,106	6,172	5,977	-3.16%
Alabama State University	5,318	4,760	4,413	4,190	4,072	-2.82%
Athens State University	3,065	3,116	3,045	2,945	2,867	-2.65%
Auburn University	28,290	29,776	30,440	30,460	30,737	0.91%
Auburn University at Montgomery	4,878	4,894	5,211	5,188	5,212	0.46%
Jacksonville State University	8,514	8,567	8,479	9,021	9,238	2.41%
Troy University	13,310	16,999	16,537	16,075	16,087	0.07%
University of Alabama	37,665	38,563	38,392	38,103	37,842	-0.68%
University of Alabama at Birmingham	19,550	20,933	21,965	22,117	22,569	2.04%
University of Alabama in Huntsville	8,468	9,101	9,736	9,988	10,000	0.12%
University of Montevallo	2,800	2,717	2,616	2,559	2,600	1.60%
University of North Alabama	7,333	7,204	7,644	7,702	8,086	4.99%
University of South Alabama	16,443	15,569	14,834	14,397	14,224	-1.20%
University of West Alabama	3,986	4,646	5,206	5,653	5,734	1.43%
<b>4-Yr Subtotals:</b>	<b>165,480</b>	<b>172,846</b>	<b>174,624</b>	<b>174,570</b>	<b>175,245</b>	<b>0.39%</b>



# 5-year Enrollment Trends

Alabama Commission on Higher Education Alabama Public Institutions Historical Fall Enrollment						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change
<b>Two-Year Institutions</b>						
Bevill State Community College	3,806	3,873	3,745	3,787	3,204	-15.39%
Bishop State Community College	3,029	3,233	2,860	2,846	2,181	-23.37%
Calhoun Community College	9,900	9,861	9,736	9,315	8,278	-11.13%
Central Alabama Community College	1,776	1,835	1,682	1,802	1,546	-14.21%
Chattahoochee Valley Community College	1,528	1,425	1,568	1,592	1,399	-12.12%
Coastal Alabama Community College	7,146	7,079	7,422	7,537	6,651	-11.76%
Drake State Community & Tech College	829	752	831	790	825	4.43%
Enterprise State Community College	1,755	1,779	1,705	1,804	1,809	0.28%
Gadsden State Community College	5,109	4,979	4,736	4,599	3,994	-13.16%
Ingram State Technical College	449	453	443	485	399	-17.73%
Jefferson State Community College	8,943	8,842	9,082	8,713	8,531	-2.09%
Lawson State Community College	3,128	3,248	3,274	3,375	2,823	-16.36%
Lurleen B. Wallace Community College	1,742	1,838	1,784	1,767	1,666	-5.72%
Marion Military Institute	425	446	394	409	401	-1.96%
Northeast Alabama Community College	2,616	2,742	2,884	2,981	2,530	-15.13%
Northwest-Shoals Community College	3,752	3,442	3,541	3,515	3,361	-4.38%
Reid State Technical College	489	392	396	489	279	-42.94%
Shelton State Community College	4,810	4,607	4,355	4,204	3,743	-10.97%
Snead State Community College	2,321	2,220	2,281	2,239	2,012	-10.14%
Southern Union State Community College	4,683	4,829	4,531	4,655	3,985	-14.39%
Trenholm State Community College	1,662	1,845	1,855	2,042	1,526	-25.27%
Wallace Community College Dothan	4,543	4,647	4,613	4,478	3,686	-17.69%
Wallace Community College Hanceville	5,445	5,301	5,057	4,985	4,763	-4.45%
Wallace Community College Selma	1,622	1,471	1,476	1,529	1,316	-13.93%
<b>2-Yr Subtotals:</b>	<b>81,508</b>	<b>81,139</b>	<b>80,251</b>	<b>79,938</b>	<b>70,908</b>	<b>-11.30%</b>
<b>2 yr and 4 yr Combined Totals:</b>	<b>246,988</b>	<b>253,985</b>	<b>254,875</b>	<b>254,508</b>	<b>246,153</b>	<b>-3.28%</b>

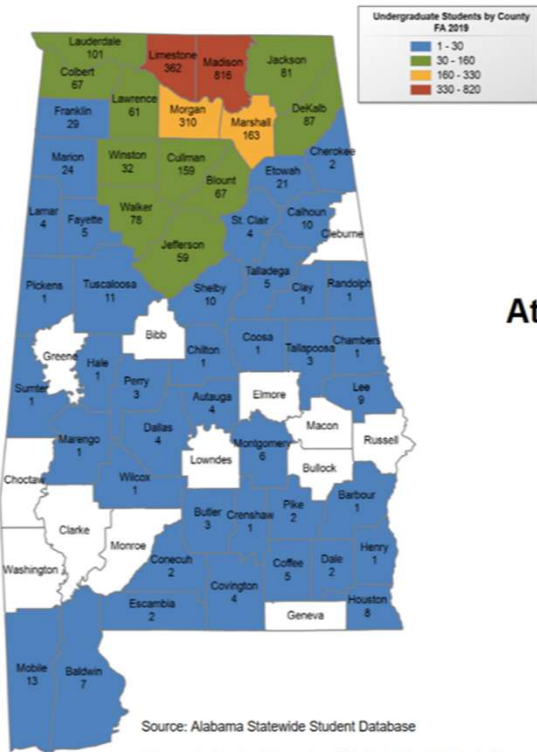
2021

2YR Subtotal: -11.30%  
Combined 2&4YR: -3.28%

# Market Share

Athens State 2019 Undergraduate Market Share				
All Alabama Public	100%	216,603	<b>2778</b>	1.28%
4 Yr Public	63.09%	136,665	<b>2778</b>	2.03%
2 Yr Public	36.91%	79,938	<b>2778</b>	3.48%

2021



## Athens State University

### FALL 2019 UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT ONLY

#### UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Total: 2,778  
From Alabama: 2,658



County Name	ATSU	Grand Total	Rank
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,658</b>	<b>87,750</b>	<b>11th</b>
Madison	816	9,239	4th
Limestone	362	1,989	2nd
Morgan	310	1,895	2nd
Marshall	163	1,280	4th
Cullman	159	917	1st
Lauderdale	101	1,864	5th
DeKalb	87	720	3rd
Jackson	81	534	3rd
Walker	78	663	3rd
Blount	67	638	4th
Colbert	67	1,012	3rd
Lawrence	61	359	2nd
Jefferson	59	12,845	14th
Winston	32	249	3rd
Franklin	29	321	3rd
Marion	24	312	4th

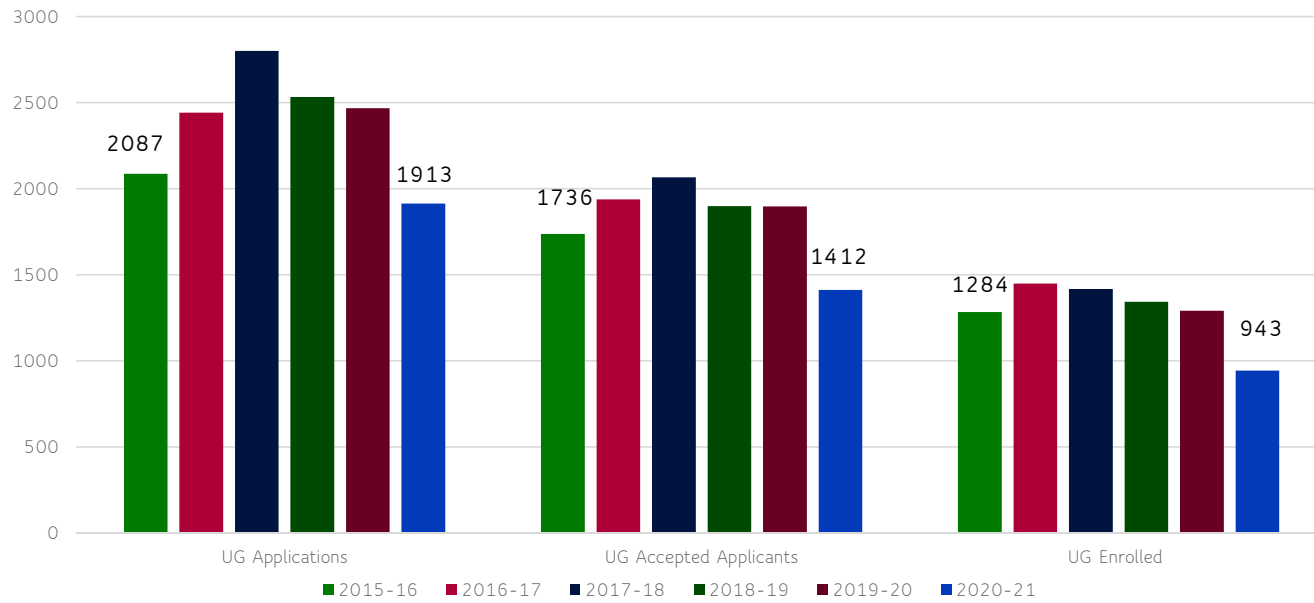
Source: Alabama Statewide Student Database

# in county denotes the number of Undergraduate students from each county who enrolled at this institution FA 2019.

# 5-Year Recruiting and Yield Trends

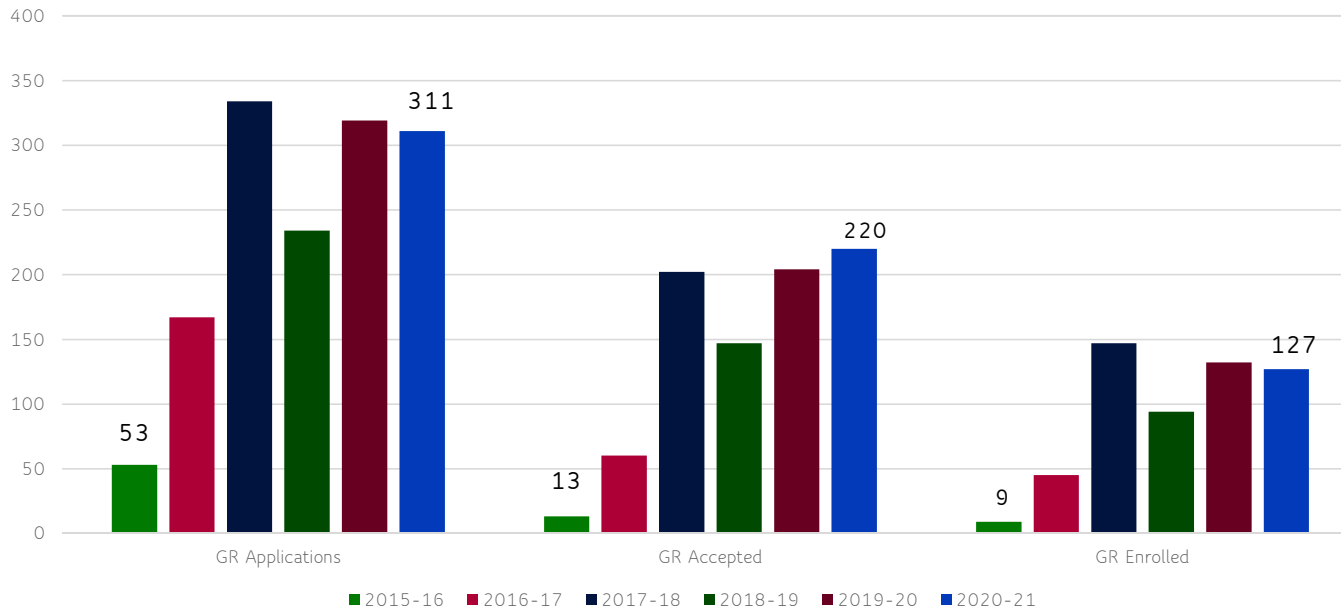
2021

### UG Recruiting Outcomes



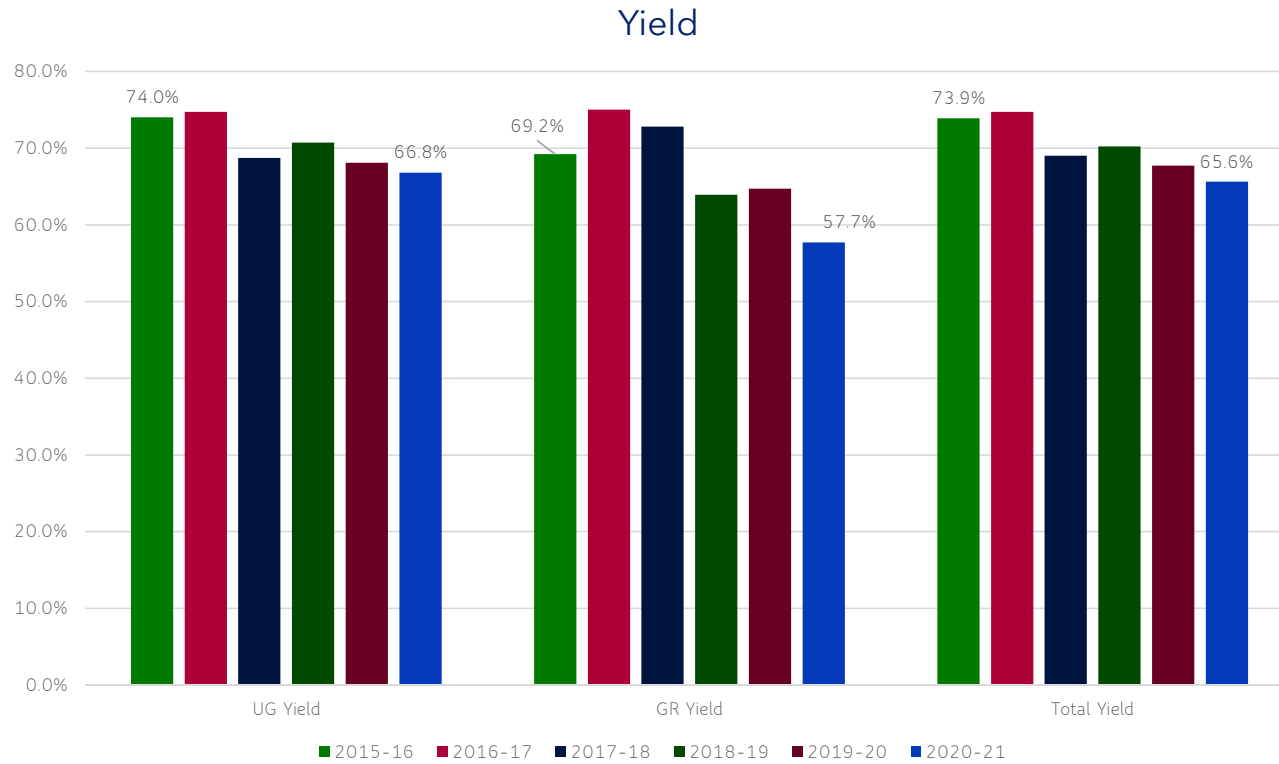
# 5-Year Recruiting and Yield Trends

### GR Recruiting Outcomes



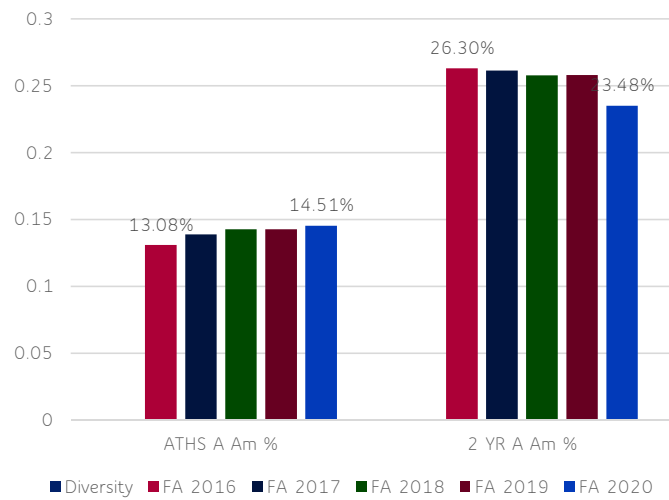
# Yield Rate (Admitted to Enrolled)

2021

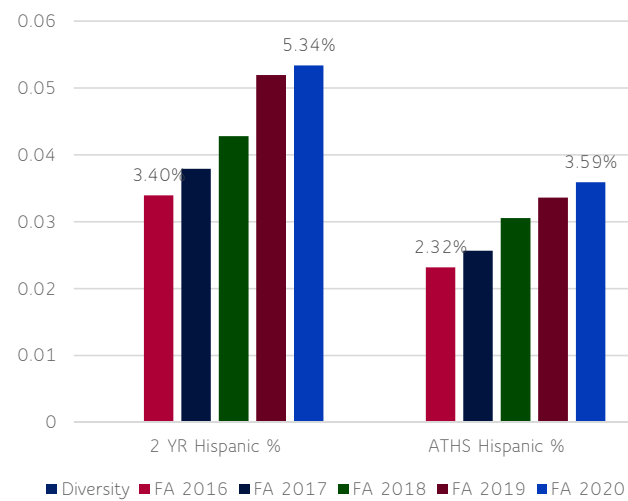


# Diversity

### African American Enrollment



### Hispanic Enrollment





## Current Recruiting Practices

- **Lead Generation**
  - College Fairs, Community College Visits, STARS, and more!
  - Transfer Students/Adult Learners
- **Key Strategies**
  - Strong rapport with Community Colleges
  - Admissions Summer Training
  - Multiple connections with students
  - Territory Management
- **Communication Initiatives**
  - Phone & Mail Campaigns
  - Weekly Outreach
  - Marketing Initiatives



## Current Recruiting Practices

- Recruiting Events
  - Virtual Advising Days
  - In-Person Recruiting
  - College Fairs
  - Community College Visits
  - Counselor Luncheon
  - Open House/Preview Day
  - Admitted Student Events
  - Campus Tours
  - Rapid Enroll with Community Colleges
  - New Student Sessions



## New Initiatives

- Stop-Out Plan
- New Partnerships – YLDP, Lawson St.
- Stronger Focus on Diversity Recruitment
- Promotion of New University Programs
- President’s Personal Video Welcome



## How Faculty and Staff Can Assist

- Share Professional Organization Events that Include Potential Students
- Identify High Impact Publication Space
- Share businesses/organizations that provide tuition support
- Refer Individuals in your Communities – [Celia.Venable@Athens.edu](mailto:Celia.Venable@Athens.edu)
- Use your personal social media accounts to promote Athens State
- Retention – Personal Contact with Students is Key
- Share any Program Specific Videos, Publications, Flyers etc.
- Weekly Admit Reports



## Topics for Break-Out Groups

- Group 1: What are ways that departments can help with recruiting?
- Group 2: As we expand graduate programs, what are ways to recruit graduate students?
- Group 3: Rolling out new academic programs, what leads to recruiting success?
- Group 4: What are institutional barriers to recruiting success that should be evaluated?