Gateways to Completion®
Overview, Evidence of Strength of Components & Summary of Outcomes to Date
Updated 12/05/15

Overview

This document provides brief information on the John N. Gardner Institute’s Gateways to Completion® (G2C®) process. It includes sections on:

- A Brief Description of the G2C Process
- The G2C Definition of Gateway Courses
- The G2C Measurable Goals
- Evidence of Strength of the Various Components of the G2C Process
- Leading Institutional-Level Indicators of Success / Outcomes to Date
- Information on G2C Participating Institutions to Date
- A List of G2C National Advisory Committee Members

A Brief Description of the G2C Process

Gateways to Completion (G2C) is a comprehensive process that mobilizes institutions to substantially improve gateway courses. The student success experts at the John N. Gardner Institute developed G2C for Excellence in Undergraduate Education with the added insight of a distinguished National Advisory Committee.

Specifically, the G2C process is designed to help institutions, and/or the systems/districts of which they are a part, collect and analyze data to craft and implement a plan for enhancing student learning and success in high-enrollment courses that have historically resulted in high rates of Ds, Fs, Withdrawals, and Incompletes (high DFWI rates). Lack of success in these courses is correlated with altered higher education goals including, for many students, the failure to complete a degree or certificate. These unrealized aspirations can limit social mobility and create increased debt – debt which students may never be able to repay.

The flexible G2C process and tools take into account various forms of instruction – face-to-face, blended, on-line – and are applicable to all institutional types – two-year, four-year, public, private, etc. The process also provides a predictive analytics process collaborative that includes analytics tools that allow institutions to collect and analyze historic DFWI rate data, and predictive analytics tools that allow faculty to intervene with at-risk students currently enrolled in their courses. In addition, G2C includes a Teaching and Learning Academy that helps faculty learn about and subsequently apply engaging pedagogies in their course transformation efforts.

Throughout the process, the Gardner Institute provides:

- Support from a senior Institute advisor
- General support from other staff on elements such as the Student Learning Gains survey and the G2C technology platform
- Access and enhancements to the G2C on-line technology platform and tools
- Process webinars and meetings such as the G2C Community of Practice Annual Meetings and the Annual Gateway Course Experience Conference
- A predictive analytics process collaborative
- A teaching & learning academy

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The G2C Measurable Goals

Eight measurable goals guide the work of institutions that take part in the G2C process. Through their work in the G2C process, institutions will strive to:

1) Improve student learning as measured by the responses to the Student Assessment of Learning Gains survey results (or results from a comparable instrument) as well as other germane content and context measures for students who are enrolled in the courses that are considered in the G2C process

2) Increase student success in high-enrollment courses as measured by the grades of students who are enrolled in the courses considered in the G2C process

3) Increase student degree / certificate progress as measured by retention rates for students who are enrolled in the courses that are considered in the G2C process

4) Increase student success as measured by graduation / program completion rates for students who are enrolled in the courses that are considered in the G2C process

5) Foster an enhanced institutional understanding about in-class and out-of-class gateway course teaching, support, policies, assessment/evaluation practices, and other efforts as measured by evaluation outcomes that connect these practices with improved learning and success in the courses that are considered in the G2C process

6) Engage in and promote a culture of continuous improvement as measured by: a) intentional linkages between the G2C process and institutional reaffirmation of accreditation quality improvement projects; b) intentional linkages between the G2C process and institutional strategic planning processes; c) general education reform; and d) other comparable efforts

7) Work with the Gardner Institute to shape and reflect the body of scholarship on gateway course success as measured by publications, presentations, and other germane scholarly output and

8) Provide feedback to the Gardner Institute to enable continuous improvement of the Gateways to Completion process

Evidence of Strength of the Various Components of the G2C Process

The three major components of the G2C process include: 1) Analytics facilitated via the Gateway Course Success Analytics Inventory, a Predictive Analytics model, and an Analytics Process Collaborative; 2) Active Learning / Engaging Pedagogies facilitated through a Teaching and Learning Academy; and 3) a Self-Study process that helps faculty apply evidence to action. A table outlining the various forms of evidence for the strength of these components follows.

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*Updated 12/05/15*

- Feedback sessions  
- Research opportunities and opportunities to disseminate findings

A diagram outlining the actions and components associated with each of the three years of the G2C process follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analyze &amp; Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Act &amp; Monitor</strong></td>
<td><strong>Act &amp; Refine</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| - Create Initial Steering Committee  
- "Complete" Gateway Course Analytics Inventory  
- Identify Course(s) based on GCAI evidence  
- Round Out Task Force  
- Administer SALG  
- Conduct Review of Principles & Key Performance Indicators  
- Create Initial Action Plan and Implementation Team | - Implement Plan  
- Update GCAI  
- Re-administer SALG  
- Continue Analytics Collaborative  
- Continue Teaching and Learning Academy  
- Attend G2C Community of Practice Meeting and Gateway Course Experience Conference | - Refine Implementation of Plan and Adjust Implementation Team  
- Update GCAI  
- Re-administer SALG  
- Ongoing Use of Analytics  
- Ongoing Teaching and Learning Academy Work  
- Plan to Address Other Courses and/or Continue Refinement with Other Courses  
- Disseminate Findings  
- Attend G2C Community of Practice Meeting and Gateway Course Experience Conference |

**The G2C Definition of Gateway Courses**

The Gardner Institute believes that a pragmatic approach is the best approach for institutions working to improve student performance in high-enrollment, high-risk courses. Pragmatic approaches place context at the forefront. For this reason, the Gateways to Completion (G2C) process does not use a rigid definition of gateway courses that ignores context. Rather, for purposes of the G2C effort, the Gardner Institute defines gateway courses as courses that are:

1) **Foundational** in nature – foundational courses may be non-credit bearing developmental education courses and/or college credit-bearing courses;

2) **High-risk** – as measured by the rates at which D, F, W (for withdrawals) and I (for incomplete) grades are earned across sections of the course(s) considered for the G2C work; and,

3) **High-Enrollment** – as measured by the number of students enrolled across sections of the course(s) considered for the G2C work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G2C Component</th>
<th>Source(s) for Evidence of Strength</th>
<th>Brief Summary of Evidence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Active Learning (via the G2C Teaching &amp; Learning Academy)</td>
<td>Freeman S., Eddy S.L., McDonough M., Smith M.K., Okoroafor N., Jordt H. &amp; Wenderoth M.P. (2014). “Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics. <em>Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (PNAS)</em>, 111: 8410-8415.</td>
<td>This 2014 study is the largest and most comprehensive meta-analysis of undergraduate STEM education published to date. It examined the frequency of use and types of active-learning methodologies described in 225 published analyses of active learning. The empirical results support active learning as the preferred, validated teaching practice in traditional classrooms. The use of active learning in undergraduate courses would raise average grades by a half a letter, and decrease failure rates by 55% over the rates observed under the traditional lecture format. The authors use the statistical comparisons to compute the potential impacts on the lives of the students taking STEM courses. For the 29,300 students reported for the lecture treatments across all students, the average difference in failure rates (21.8% in active learning vs. 33.8% with lecture) suggests that 3,516 fewer students would have failed if enrolled in an active-learning course. This and other beneficial impacts of active learning on students led the authors to state, “If the experiments analyzed here had been conducted as randomized controlled trials of medical interventions, they may have been stopped for benefit.” Active learning strategies are major components of the G2C Teaching &amp; Learning Academy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying Evidence to Action (via the G2C Course Transformation Planning &amp; Plan Implementation Process)</td>
<td>Drake, B. M. (2011). Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year 2010 retention analysis. West Lafayette, IN, <a href="http://www.jngi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/RetentionAnalysisExSummaryPDF.pdf">http://www.jngi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/RetentionAnalysisExSummaryPDF.pdf</a></td>
<td>This evaluation shows a 3.62 percentage point increase in first-to-second year IPEDS retention rates for institutions that generate and then implement evidence-based plans for student success via the Foundations of Excellence (FoE) process. This study also shows that the Gardner Institute is able to generate solid return on institutional time and resource investments. In addition, the Gardner Institute staff drew heavily on lessons learned from and processes associated with FoE to create G2C.</td>
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**Leading Institutional-Level Indicators of Success / Outcomes to Date**

The 13 institutions in the G2C pilot cohort started their work in November 2013, and began implementing their course transformation action plans in fall 2014. Thus, the results being reported at this juncture are very preliminary. They are also very promising.

The following indicators of success have been collected from institution-specific analyses that examine outcomes associated with “G2C transformed” courses to date. A comprehensive, institution-spanning external evaluation of the project will begin in spring 2016.

Outcomes to date include:

- **Higher retention rates** for students in G2C courses compared to students in sections of the courses not transformed by G2C

- **Lower rates of academic probation** for students in G2C courses compared to students in sections of the courses not transformed by G2C

- **Higher levels of resiliency** (defined as being on academic probation but still returning to the institution) for students in G2C courses compared to students in sections of the courses not transformed by G2C

- **Higher course passing rates** (rates of A, B, and C grades) and lower rates of D, F, W, and I grades (DFWI rates) for students in G2C transformed courses compared to students in sections of the courses not transformed by G2C

- **Higher grade point averages** for students in G2C courses compared to students in sections of the courses not transformed by G2C

- **Better exam scores** for students in G2C transformed courses compared to students in sections of the courses not transformed by G2C

**Information on G2C Participating Institutions to Date**

Since fall 2013, nineteen institutions have applied for and been selected to work with the Gardner Institute on the G2C process. This includes 13 institutions in the G2C Founding institutions cohort that began their three-year process in November 2013, and another 6 institutions in the 2nd G2C cohort that began their work in November 2015. These 19 institutions collectively enroll over 625,000 undergraduates. They include:

- Arkansas Tech University
- American Public University System
- Ashford University
- Bergen Community College
- College of Micronesia
- East Georgia State College
- Florida International University
- Middle Georgia State University
- Montana State University – Billings
- Nevada State College
- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- North Dakota State University
- Oklahoma State Univ. Institute of Technology
- Qatar University
Gateways to Completion®
Overview, Evidence of Strength of Components & Summary of Outcomes to Date
Updated 12/05/15

- Georgia Highlands College
- Georgia Southern University
- Georgia Southwestern State University
- Gordon State College
- Kennesaw State University
- Lansing Community College
- Lone Star College – North Harris
- Metropolitan State University Denver
- South Georgia State College
- University of Houston Downtown
- University of Rhode Island
- University of Southern Mississippi
- University of West Georgia
- Valdosta State University
- Western Michigan University
- University of Rhode Island

List of G2C National Advisory Committee Members

The G2C process has been designed and is being continuously improved with the assistance of a National Advisory Committee. This committee includes a variety members from all walks of higher education life including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G2C National Advisory Committee</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lou Albert – Arizona State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda Baer – Civetas</td>
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<td>Jillian Kinzie – Indiana Univ. Center for Postsecondary Research &amp; NSSE Institute</td>
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<td>Trudy Bers – Oakton Community College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Kubat – Pennsylvania State University</td>
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<td>Hunter Boylan – National Center for Development</td>
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<td>Tricia Leggett – Zane State College</td>
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<td>Linda Braddy – Mathematical Association of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Little – EDUCAUSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Campbell – West Virginia University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jean MacGregor – Washington Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Cox Brand – Oregon Community College Association</td>
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<td>Jodi Koslow Martin – North Park University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Cornett – Ivy Tech Community College</td>
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<td>George Mehnaffy – AASCU</td>
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<td>Brent Drake – Purdue University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry Odom – University of South Carolina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johanna Dvorak – University of Wisconsin Milwaukee &amp; NCLCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karan Powell – American Public University System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maribeth Ehasz – University of Central Florida</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynn Priddy – National American University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott Evenbeck – CUNY Stella and Charles Guttman Community College</td>
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<td>Elaine Seymour – University of Colorado at Boulder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trinidad Gonzalez – American Historical Association &amp; South Texas College</td>
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<td>Marion Stone – International Center for Supplement Instruction</td>
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<td>Bob Guell – Indiana State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uri Treisman – University of Texas at Austin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casey Green – The Campus Computing Project</td>
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<td>Ross Peterson-Veatch – Goshen College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeanne Higbee – University of Minnesota</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaye Walter – Bergen Community College</td>
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<td>Amber Holloway – Higher Learning Commission</td>
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<td>Cynthia Wilson – League for Innovation in the Community College</td>
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For more information on Gateways to Completion, contact Dr. Andrew K. Koch, Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Leadership & Innovation Officer, John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education – koch@jngi.org or 828-877-3549

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