FY15 Academic (Provost) Executive Goals
Aspiring to Greatness...

1. **Develop and promote programs of distinction for our colleges, schools, academic programs, and student programs in order to be publically recognized and to contribute to the strength of the GRU brand.**

   Our mission statement indicates we aim to provide leadership and excellence... Excellence is one of our core values that can be exhibited through our academic and student programs of distinction.

   Recognition of our achievements and the excellence we provide across the broad continuum of programs and services is important to building the new GRU brand as well as the immediate challenges of recruiting faculty, staff and students.

   Areas of opportunity include increasing the variety of programs for which we seek to be ranked or recognized within the State of Georgia, nation, and world.

2. **Strengthen and expand our academic program array.**

   The academic programs of study that an institution offers are a large part of what defines a university. During the early part of our branding efforts, our distinction as the state’s only public academic health center and unique health sciences programs make us the destination of choice for many students. As we move forward, there are two other aspects to our program array that are important for us to consider at this juncture: 1) Program coherency and 2) Breadth of our offerings.

   Coherency: Coherent programs (with reasonable pre-requisites, co-requisites, and major courses) that 1) offer state of the art delivery options, 2) are efficient for students to complete, and 3) are relevant for today’s market needs are vitally important.

   Breadth: As of the academic year 2013-14, GRU has 118 approved degrees and majors; far fewer than our peers within the University System and nationally. We need to examine our programs to ensure they are the strongest they can be, while also making choices about how to supplement our current offerings to offer programs that leverage our strengths, and respond to the needs of the market, our students, and external communities.

   Areas of opportunity include 1) evaluating our academic programs coherence; 2) identifying existing programs with low enrollment and developing methods to fill them to capacity or to amend them to make them more attractive; and 3) identifying new program growth opportunities with appropriate resource plans for their development and support. Proposals for new programs should generally address the following guidelines:

   1. Have the ability to attract new students based on present and emerging market needs.
   2. Avoid unnecessary duplication of programs within the University System of Georgia.
   3. Have high growth potential (versus highly specialized niche programs that have a low capacity for enrollment).
   4. Leverage existing strengths to enhance the university’s portfolio to build programs of distinction in the state and region.
3. **Develop and implement activities, programs, and processes to increase undergraduate and graduate enrollment.**

Student enrollment is a key measure for any university. Increases in enrollment suggest the institution is healthy, growing, and attractive to students. Fiscally, increases can provide additional resources in the form of tuition revenue especially when programs are not already operating at capacity.

Areas of opportunity to achieve enrollment growth include increasing the retention of undergraduate students and expanding recruitment for both undergraduate and graduate programs in order to fill them to capacity with diverse and inclusive populations of students.

4. **Improve undergraduate student retention, progression and graduation rates.**

We will provide a comprehensive learning community for our students and supplement our traditional classroom instruction with academic enrichment and living/learning opportunities, in an effort to support each student’s transition into college, increasing retention and reducing transfers and stop/drop outs, and increasing persistence and progression to enable students to complete their degree in a timely manner.

Areas of opportunity include 1) improving each student’s opportunity to succeed in their transition to college as well as in each and every course he/she attempts through support programs and early alerts by faculty & staff who engage most with students when they are experiencing academic or other difficulties that could interfere with their academic success, 2) assisting them in establishing their career interests, readiness to succeed on that path, and the resulting academic plan within their first 4 terms of enrollment (60 hours), and 3) providing academic enrichment, leadership, and civic engagement experiences that strengthen each student’s connection with our faculty, staff and each other, the university, and the local community within which they study.

5. **Develop and implement processes and programs that improve faculty engagement, satisfaction and retention to support teaching, research, and scholarship.**

Faculty are the life blood of any university and while attracting, developing, and retaining faculty are important intentions, building faculty engagement is critical to GRU at this juncture of our development. Engaged faculty members exhibit a combination of characteristics—including satisfaction, commitment, pride, loyalty, sense of personal responsibility and willingness to be an advocate for the organization. They demonstrate an emotional commitment to the institution and are usually highly productive.

Areas of opportunity to increase engagement and satisfaction include fostering empowerment by 1) clearly defining roles and ensuring that expectations related to assigned effort for teaching, research/scholarship, patient care, service, etc. are well understood; 2) rewarding self-improvement especially supporting development to enable designated faculty to increase their commitment to research and scholarship; 3) creating specific action plans based on results of the Employee Engagement assessment (Spring 2014), and 4) assisting faculty in documenting their productivity within each area of effort and 5) establish a consistent research mentoring approach across the University with defined roles for mentors and a mentoring program to match individual faculty with funded peers.
6. **Evaluate/assess opportunities to maximize facilities, technology, and space utilization.**

   Optimizing the management of our physical resources is a critical issue and support for any new construction is dependent on maximizing the utilization of our existing classrooms, facilities and technology.

   Areas of opportunity include 1) improving room utilization by filling rooms to capacity (increasing class sizes and/or moving class locations to more appropriately sized rooms), utilizing classrooms more hours of the day, and utilizing classrooms more days of the week, 2) enhancing the adequacy of our facilities and their ability to meet our needs, and 3) improving the technology infrastructure to support student learning in the 21st century.

7. **Increase support from sources other than state appropriations for our colleges, schools, academic programs, and student programs.**

   In our strategic plan, *Transition Forward*, we specifically identified the need to identify new resources to meet current and future needs. State appropriations have been reduced over the last several years and we must learn to operate under a “new normal”.

   Areas of opportunity include increasing the number of grant submissions to diverse funding sources (such as NSF, DOE, DOD, National Endowment for Arts & Humanities) in addition to soliciting grants, contracts, and support from foundations (such as the Gates Foundation, Robert Woodruff, etc.) for our programs and services in addition to increasing philanthropic support (in concert with the Office of Advancement) through thoughtful justifications and case statements that are convincing of our worth to our stakeholders.

8. **Strengthen and support research innovation through interdisciplinary collaborations.**

   By developing strategic interdisciplinary research initiatives, we can advance scientific discovery and inspire innovation. Interdisciplinary work is important to developing scholarship and research and to contributing to societal challenges. It is through the collaboration of faculty from various disciplines that we not only enrich research activities, but also our teaching, engagement and student research opportunities.

   Areas of opportunity include 1) populating centers and institutes with interdisciplinary faculty from a broad array of disciplines, 2) encouraging departments to (a) recruit faculty likely to have an impact beyond the hiring unit, and (b) include faculty from more than one discipline or college on faculty search committees, 3) lowering the barriers between disciplines and departments, and 4) establishing processes to facilitate and reward interdisciplinary research.