

# General Information

## eCore Mission

eCore provides University System of Georgia students the opportunity to successfully and affordably complete the first two years of their collegiate careers in an online environment. eCore Support Services delivers effective and efficient overall program management, including support for: student success; faculty recruitment, support and training; course development; evaluation; proctored exam scheduling; and marketing.

## History

1999: The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG), in collaboration with its institutions, began developing a fully online set of courses that would allow a student to complete core curriculum courses in Areas A-E for science and non-science majors. eCore became an award-winning, high quality, accessible set of interactive online courses that meet defined learning outcomes. eCore courses may be offered by any USG institution, taken by any USG student, and taught by any approved USG faculty member. (From 2000-2006 Factbook).

2001: The initial five eCore affiliate institutions (Georgia Highlands College, University of West Georgia, Valdosta State University, Columbus State University, Clayton State University) participated in a distance education substantive change visit by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC). As a result of the visit, those institutions were considered compliant with SACS regulations for the delivery of eCore online courses. To date, several affiliate partners have successfully undergone reaffirmation visits from SACS-COC.

2009: The University of West Georgia began providing support services for USG eCore.

2010: eCore became fully scalable and self-sustaining.

2012: eCore implemented 8-week short session courses within the Fall and Spring semesters. Course sessions include a short session /SS1 followed by a short session / SSII.

2014: On September 9, 2014 The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia issued a resolution supporting an expansion that would make eCore's online general education offerings available to students at all USG comprehensive universities, state universities, and state colleges. eCore, as a catalyst for increased statewide access to affordable and flexible education, will assist the college and university partners with retaining and graduating existing students as well as offering appeal to new and underserved populations.

eCore lowered tuition rates from \$189 to \$169 per credit hour.

## Why Collaboration?

eCore serves as a successful example for collaboratively delivering education in the online environment. It has evolved from being a small, early start-up collaborative (the first in the USG), to a growing model studied carefully by other systems. eCore program delivery results in high student retention and satisfaction, proven course quality and outcomes, and renewed interest. In FY 2016, eCore continued on this trajectory.

### Hallmarks:

#### Providing Increased Institutional Capacities for Fully Online Programs

While most USG institutions offer online courses, many are unable (due to finite resources or institutional focus) to offer all areas of the core courses online each semester. Without the full core online, institutions cannot offer full undergraduate degree programs online and, thus, lose students to more expensive, proprietary institutions. Also, institutions that do offer online core courses often require at least one face-to-face meeting in these courses, whereas eCore courses do not.

#### Efficient Funding and Model Operations

eCore is one of only a few collaborative programs across the United States that is primarily self-sustaining.

While rising tuition is a reality at most higher education institutions, effective Fall 2014, eCore lowered the per credit hour tuition rate from \$189 to \$169, resulting in a tuition cost savings of over \$2,000,000 based on 106,562 credit hours. Additionally, since Spring 2013, implementation of open educational resources has resulted in a textbook cost savings of almost \$3,000,000.

Institutions offering eCore courses receive \$42 per credit hour of eCore tuition dollars and have no faculty, course development, or revision costs.

eCore relies on centralized support services (unduplicated at institutions). These include course development and revisions, faculty development and support, identification and follow-up of student intervention, student success initiatives, student orientations, non-technical call center, tutoring services, data analysis, bookstore, proctored exam scheduling services, open educational resources, and marketing.

#### Enrollment Management

eCore course sections are analyzed on a daily basis, during the registration periods, to provide for the optimum number of course sections. Almost all sections of eCore are managed so that enrollments are sufficient to cover instructional costs while providing a healthy faculty to student ratio. Institutions delivering eCore courses ensure just-in-time capacity for students' unrestricted progression through the core curriculum.

#### Ongoing Affiliate Support

As eCore continues to grow, there is greater need to scale processes while successfully offering diligent and consistent support.

Face-to-face partnership visits allow for development of professional relationships, continued eCore updates, and affiliate feedback for program improvement. Relationships with key campus staff and faculty are essential for successfully supporting student, affiliate, and Board of Regents goals.

## Professional Faculty Development

eCore Support Services provides eCore instructors with a robust two-week certification process. Certification includes participation as a student in an online course, as well as comprehensive learning experiences relating to technology, online teaching, faculty expectations, community building, and the role of the instructor in student support. Ongoing support includes mentoring programs, an online community, an annual meeting, and webinars.

Many instructors who teach through eCore take their skills back to their home institutions, where they develop and teach higher-level online courses and mentor other faculty.

## Consistent Quality Courses

All eCore courses meet and exceed the rigorous requirements for a 5-Star Online Course or Quality Matters.

All eCore courses are evaluated and substantially revised by teams of eCore faculty every three years. Smaller revisions take place on an ongoing basis.

All eCore faculty agree to engage in specific practices that enhance student learning and success, including: high visibility in courses, timely responsiveness and grading, quality feedback, and identification of students for intervention.

## High Student Course Completion

eCore Support Services is staffed with professionals who are highly trained and have experience with the needs of online students, which can be markedly different than those of on-campus students.

eCore course completion has progressively increased, with a reported 90.19% for FY 2016.

There are several influences impacting the student course completion, which include:

1. A gated registration system which requires demonstrated understanding of the nature of the courses.
2. Streamlined, preemptive calling cycles.
3. Identification of students for purpose of reporting for intervention with faculty and eCore Student Support Team using the Student Engagement and Advancement Data System (SEADS) platform
4. Faculty training regarding the role of instructor with student success.
5. Highly intensive engagement with eCore Student Support Team members.

# KEY BENEFITS

- Efficient, scalable and consistent student services, course design, and teaching
- Accessible, affordable, and flexible: Increasing institutional capacity and student opportunity

6. Student-friendly navigation within courses and an eConnections tutorial course available prior to semester start, which remains open throughout the term
7. Embedded tutors in math, science, and foreign language discipline areas
8. Ongoing evaluation of student withdrawal requests and course evaluation data
9. Embedded librarians for all courses except science and math
10. Streamlined proctored exam scheduling

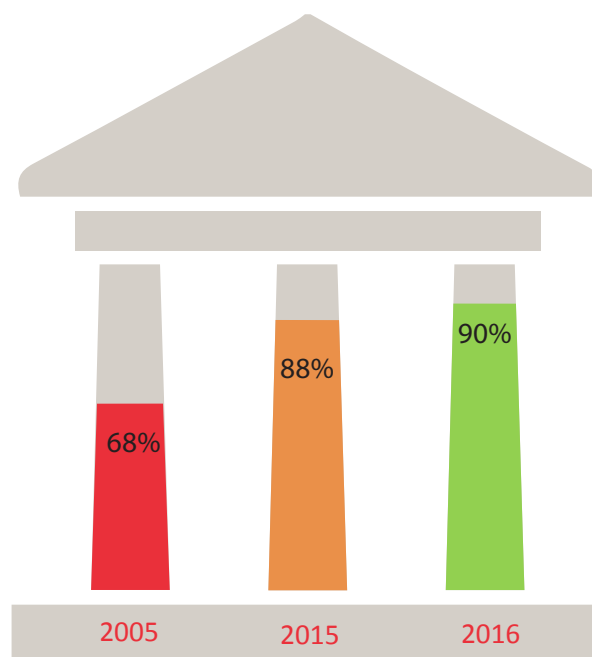
### Growth and Scalability

The improved financial model provides incentives for institutions to continue affiliation and provide faculty.

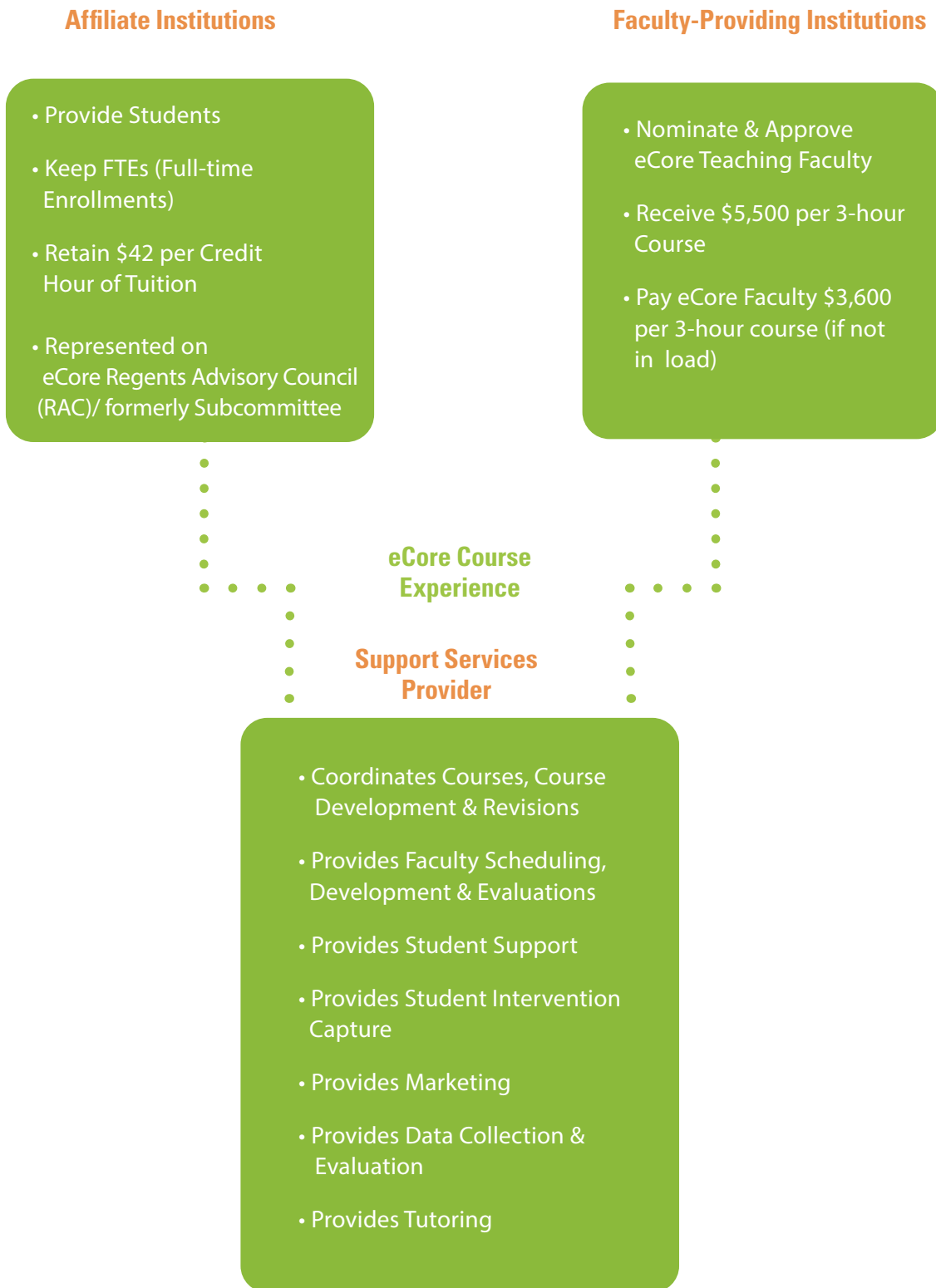
A standardized, streamlined process supports the increased student enrollment each term. There is continued focus on personalized, effective student engagement and quality support.

Through ongoing data collection and analysis, eCore Support Services aggressively identifies the changing needs of both member institutions and student populations and evolves accordingly.

### Course Completion Rate



## Collaborative Model for 2015-2016



## 2015-2016 Courses

Course Prefix	Number	Title	Semester Credit Hours
CHEM	1211K	Principles of Chemistry I	4
CHEM	1212K	Principles of Chemistry II	4
COMM	1100	Human Communications	3
ENGL	1101	English Composition I	3
ENGL	1102	English Composition II	3
ENGL	2111	World Literature I	3
ENGL	2112	World Literature II	3
ENGL	2131	American Literature I	3
ENGL	2132	American Literature II	3
ENVS	2202	Environmental Science	3
ETEC	1101	Electronic Technology in the Educational Environment	2
GEOL	1011K	Introductory Geosciences I	4
HIST	1111	World History I	3
HIST	2111	U.S. History I	3
MATH	1101	Intro to Mathematical Modeling	3
MATH	1111	College Algebra	3
MATH	1113	Precalculus	3
MATH	1401	Intro to Statistics	3
MATH	1501	Calculus I	4
PHIL	2010	Intro to Philosophy	3
PHYS	1211K	Principles of Physics I	4
POLS	1101	American Government	3
PSYC	1101	Introduction to General Psychology	3
SOCI	1101	Introduction to Sociology	3
SPAN	2001	Intermediate Spanish I	3
SPAN	2002	Intermediate Spanish II	3

In Spring 2016, eCore Service Level Agreement language was modified to state that eCore would supplement institutional core as a “high-quality set of courses.”

## The Assessments and Data Collected

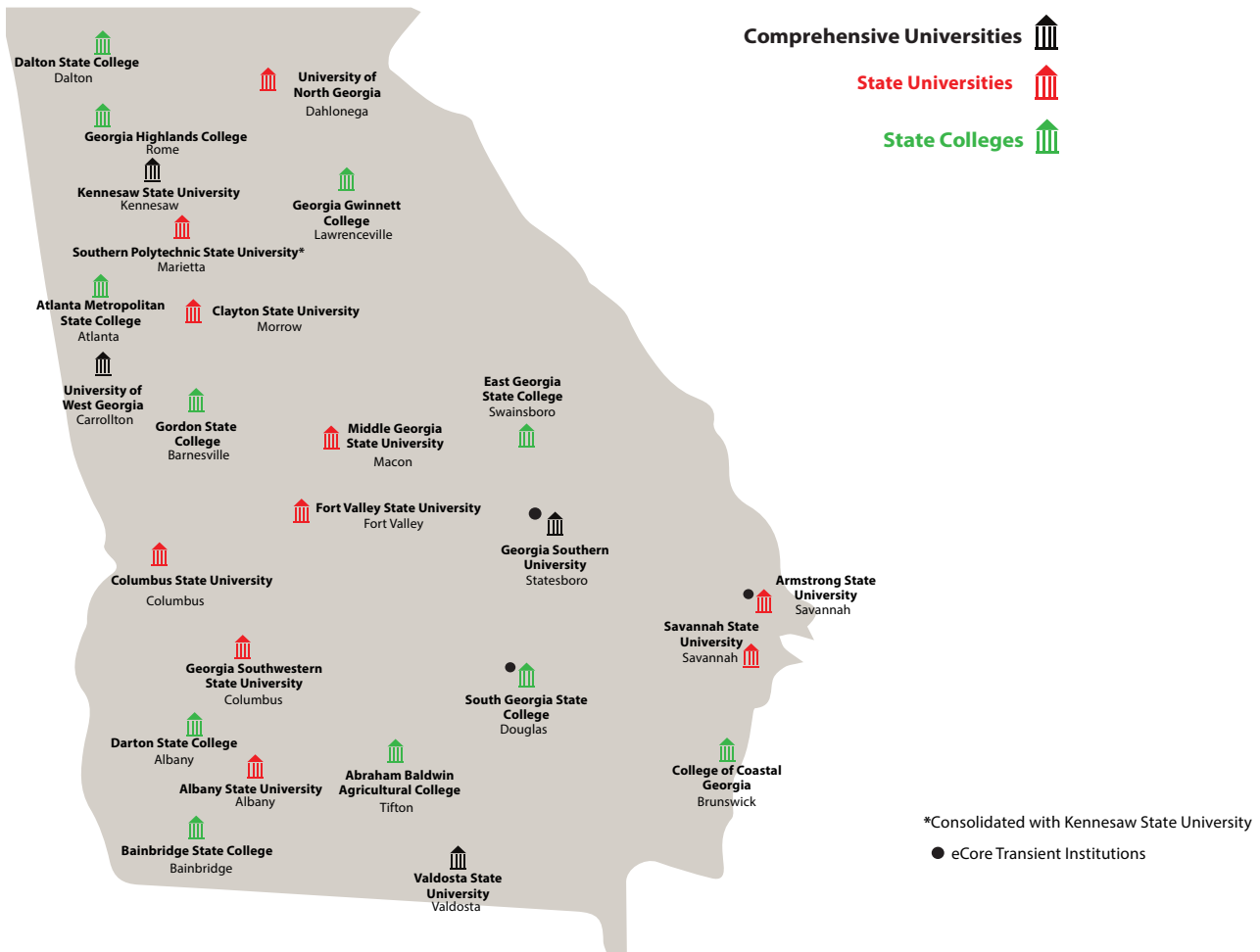
As part of eCore’s internal evaluation, several assessments have been initiated to allow a clear, thorough analysis of the processes, procedures, and outcomes of eCore operations and curriculum. The following chart lists eCore assessments conducted annually each term.

Assessment	Description	eCore Support Services
<b>General Information</b>		
Number of Home Institutions	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Home Institution Participation Timeline	Annually	eCore Support Services
Tuition Reduction Cost Savings	Annually	eCore Support Services
<b>Demographics</b>		
Student Demographics, including Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Major, Class, Location, Type	Annually	eCore Support Services & USG Research & Policy Analysis
Develop Student Demographic Profile	Annually	eCore Support Services
Student Platform Utilization & LMS Usage ** Currently not obtainable in Brightspace	Annually	eCore Support Services
Student Services Survey	Annually (Fall Term)	eCore Support Services
Tutoring Usage by Survey	Annually (Fall Term)	eCore Support Services
Enrollment Patterns by Affiliate and Special Populations	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services & USG Research & Policy Analysis
Outreach and Social Engagement	Annually	eCore Support Services
<b>Academic Information</b>		
Enrollment, including Fiscal Year, Fiscal Year Historical, Term, Historical Term, Duplicated, Unduplicated, Course, Session Type, Affiliate	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Student Course Completion by Term, Affiliate, Course, Fiscal Year, Fiscal Year Historical, Session Type	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
eCore Grade Studies by Term, Historical Term, Fiscal Year, Historical Fiscal Year, Session Type	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
MOWR Student Grade Studies	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Grade Comparisons eCore and Home Institution	Annually	eCore Support Services & USG Research & Policy Analysis
Semester Credit Hours Generated by Course, Term, Historical Term	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Smarthinking Tutoring Usage	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Embedded Tutoring Usage	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Outreach Activities, including Preemptive, Day 3, Day 5 Calling	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Outreach Intervention System Metrics from SEADS for Risks and Withdrawals compared to Full Enrollment	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Student Withdrawal Survey, including Reasons, Factors and Experiences	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
<b>Testing Information</b>		
Testing Centers	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Proctor Fees	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services and Testing Centers
Number of Exams	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Location of Exams (Home institutions, other inside Ga, outside Ga)	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Identification of students missing proctored exams	Within each term, Midterm and Final exam periods	eCore Support Services
Outreach Activities to students missing proctored exams	Within each term, Midterm and Final exam periods	eCore Support Services

<b>Faculty Information</b>		
USG Institution Faculty Participation	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Faculty Training and Certification	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Course Revisions	End of each term and annually	eCore Support Services
New Course Development	End of each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Student Course Evaluations and Effectiveness of Faculty Instruction	End of each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Faculty Review of Evaluations	End of each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Faculty Support Survey	Annually	eCore Support Services
Faculty Mentorship	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
OERs and Textbook Cost Reduction	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Faculty Technology Usage	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
<b>Financial Information</b>		
Home Institution Tuition Costs	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
eCore Tuition Dollars Generated by Affiliate, Fiscal Year and Course	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
eCore Course Development Costs	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
eCore Faculty Mentorship Costs	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
eCore Tuition Cost Reduction	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
<b>Research Outcomes</b>		
Enrollment & Success by Affiliate and Core Area	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
Regents Exam Pass Rate ** Exempted by All Affiliates in FY 2012	Annually	eCore Support Services
Course Preparation and Subsequent Performance in ENGL 1101/1102, SPAN 2001/2002, CHEM 1211K/1212K, and MATH 1113/1501	Annually	eCore Support Services
How Many Students Have Taken How Many eCore Courses?	Annually	eCore Support Services
How Many Students Have Successfully Completed Courses in Each Core Curriculum Area (Core A-E)?	Annually	eCore Support Services
Changes in Success Over Time	Annually	eCore Support Services
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>		
General Education Assessment	Annually (Fall Term)	eCore Support Services
eCore Course Level Outcomes	Annually (Fall Term)	eCore Support Services
eCore Historic Learning Outcomes by Course	Annually (Fall Term)	eCore Support Services
eCore Outcome Assessment Matrix	Annually (Fall Term)	eCore Support Services
Course Adjustments by Core Area	Annually (Fall Term)	eCore Support Services
Future Course Adjustments by Core Area	Annually (Fall Term)	eCore Support Services
Reflections on Assessments and Course Adjustments	Annually (Fall Term)	eCore Support Services
<b>Home Institution SLA Agreements</b>		
eCore and Home Institution Equivalents and Substitutions	Annually	eCore Support Services
<b>Faculty Credentialing</b>		
Faculty Teaching in eCore	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services
<b>Appendix</b>		
Staff Supporting eCore	Within each term and annually	eCore Support Services



## The 2015-2016 Partnerships



By Spring 2016, eCore courses were offered for credit by 21 affiliate USG institutions: Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Albany State University, Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Bainbridge State College, College of Coastal Georgia, Columbus State University, Clayton State University, Dalton State College, Darton State College, East Georgia State College, Fort Valley State University, Georgia Gwinnett College, Georgia Highlands College, Georgia Southwestern State University, Gordon State College, Kennesaw State University, Middle Georgia State University, Savannah State University, University of North Georgia, University of West Georgia, and Valdosta State University.

Non-affiliate institutions offering eCore courses via the eCore Transient Process were Armstrong State University, Georgia Southern University, and South Georgia State College.

- Affiliates are identified through a self-nomination process.
- Each Institution conducts a careful analysis of participation criteria, including institutional academic review of eCore courses.
- Affiliate VPAA's sign letters of commitment documenting faculty endorsement of eCore, including their willingness to support students and accept eCore as in conformance with their institution's mission and standards.
- Affiliate institutions admit and enroll students, maintain student records, provide financial aid, and provide academic advising.

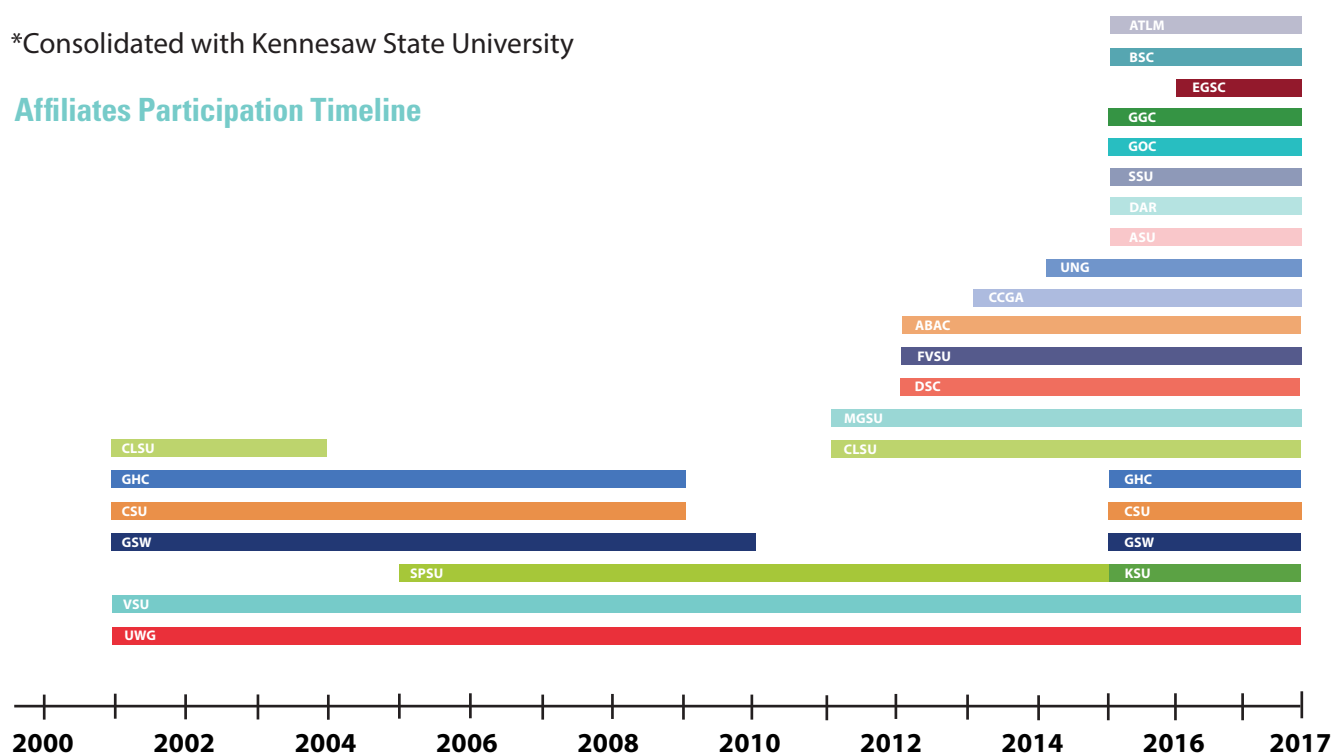
## Affiliate History

In its 16-year history, eCore has had 22 affiliating institutions:

- Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC)
- Albany State University (ASU)
- Atlanta Metropolitan State College (ATLM) – Fall 15
- Bainbridge State College (BSC) – Fall 15
- Clayton State University (CLSU)
- College of Coastal Georgia (CCGA)
- Columbus State University (CSU)
- Dalton State College (DSC)
- Darton State College (DAR)
- East Georgia State College (EGSC) – Spring 16
- Fort Valley State University (FVSU)
- Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) – Fall 15
- Georgia Highlands College (GHC)
- Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW)
- Gordon State College (GOC) – Fall 15
- Kennesaw State University (KSU) – Fall 15
- Middle Georgia State University (MGSU)
- Savannah State University (SSU)
- Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU)\*
- University of North Georgia (UNG)
- University of West Georgia (UWG)
- Valdosta State University (VSU)

\*Consolidated with Kennesaw State University

### Affiliates Participation Timeline



## State Initiative Alignment

Strategies and initiatives implemented by the University System of Georgia's statewide collaboratives can address a wide range of barriers to the student, demonstrating true effectiveness in targeted populations. eCore strives to be a part of the solution set to help streamline a quality education through degree completion. Efforts require continual communication between eCore Support Services Team and the eCore Regents Advisory Council (RAC), University System Board of Regents and the Adult Learning Consortium/RAC-AL.

As a statewide initiative, eCore is instrumental in taking important steps toward identifying and serving targeted populations and partnering with other collaboratives to create seamless pathways by increasing the array of online options. Outreach broadened in 2015 - 2016 as eCore executed effective strategies.

### eCampus

Developed in the Spring of 2016, eCampus is a service unit of the University System of Georgia that partners with USG institutions to provide quality, affordable, high demand, post-secondary online degrees and credentials that address the workplace needs of Georgia and beyond. Program development is still being identified across the state, but the degrees are ideal for traditional students, working professionals, military members, and anyone looking to continue their education for a competitive advantage in today's job market. Another important feature regarding programs within eCampus is their ability to be delivered in 8-week sessions and in a competency-based format in order to shorten time to degree completion.

The pilot program within the eCampus framework was an Associate of Science in Information Technology degree and was collaboratively developed under the academic direction of Middle Georgia State University and eCore Support Services.

### eCampus Mission

We leverage resources to support and foster revolutionary, affordable, and quality higher education pathways to enhance the economic, cultural, and social interests of the people of Georgia. Our vision is for Georgia to be the most highly-educated state in America, with graduates who utilize their knowledge and skills to make Georgia the most desirable place to live.

### Complete College Georgia

The eCore program has an important role in the Complete College Georgia plan to accelerate the number of college graduates in the upcoming years. As a University System of Georgia collaborative, eCore is dedicated to acknowledging and addressing economic realities while focusing on creating a student culture of connection and quality.

eCore provides accessible, flexible, and affordable higher education course options that support the following Complete College Georgia initiatives:

Go Back Move Ahead is an integrated marketing campaign that is aimed at assisting Georgia residents who have some college but no degree to return and complete credentials. eCore and eMajor collaborative programs are vital partners to the campaign's success in providing ease of transition and access for the state's adult learners.

High Demand Career Initiative is focused on tomorrow's workforce and filling Georgia's employment gaps in high demand industry fields.

Move On When Ready is Georgia's non-need based grant that provides funding for tuition and books for dual credit courses. eCore provides high school students an opportunity to take courses for college credit even if they do not have daily access to a college campus.

## Pathways to Faster Degree Completion

eCore relieves class scheduling conflicts by increasing institutional core course capacity. eCore offers adult learners, with family and job responsibilities, flexible options for higher education attainment.

University System of Georgia institutions increasingly identify eCore as the core option for students seeking 4-year online degrees.

eCore began implementing short term courses in Summer 2012. The 8-week courses require the same course learning outcomes and rigor as the full-term courses. They are offered within the regular 16-week sessions and summer term. These short-term courses have increased in enrollment at a faster pace than full-session course enrollment.

## eMajor

The University System of Georgia eMajor initiative launched in Fall 2012. The eMajor initiative is in direct response to the Complete College Georgia plan and is designed to develop online collaborative undergraduate academic programs.

The initiative offers majors and concentrations that focus on preparing adults to advance in their careers or pursue new career paths. The initiative has demonstrated commitment to standardized Credit for Prior Learning and Prior Learning Assessments (AP, CLEP, CBE) to ensure adult learners earn credit for the professional learning and experiences gained during their careers. eMajor offers opportunities for partnership and collaboration success across the USG.

eMajor supports Georgia's High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI). The HDCI is focused on preparing Georgia's future workforce now. eMajor fosters economic development and is positioned and aligned to collaboratively offer degree programs that directly meet the needs of state employers.

## Dual Enrollment Initiative

Qualifying high school and home schooled students can take advantage of eCore's online curriculum through dual credit programs. Taking college-level courses while continuing high school provides exposure to rigorous, challenging coursework while increasing the college career academic performance of students. Research indicates that dual credit students tend to graduate sooner, make better grades, and earn more college credit than non-dual credit students.

Move On When Ready, Georgia's non-need based grant intended to fund dual credit, was fully enacted 1 July 2015. This state funding, for tuition and books, has increased awareness and demand for dual enrollment options. Many of Georgia's rural high school students are too far from a USG campus to attend dual credit courses offered face-to-face. For these students, and those with no transportation or prohibitive schedules, eCore offers a viable dual enrollment opportunity to earn college credit.

Numerous high schools throughout the state lack the resources to provide adequate rigor course opportunities necessary for successful postsecondary preparation. eCore courses allow high school students, from resource-challenged districts, to gain rigor course experience while satisfying HOPE scholarship requirements.

## DID YOU KNOW?

More than 90% of students taking eCore courses through dual enrollment earned college credit for Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters.