



Of Special Interest in this Issue

- Academy entering second year
- New students accepted every fall and spring semester
- Meet the Director
- First Year Results
- New Staff Introduced



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Classes Resume Soon

On August 21, classes will resume for both Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) students and Gateway to College Academy students. The new DeKalb County charter school opened last August on the Clarkston campus of GPC.

New students are admitted every fall and spring semester for the Gateway to College Academy, so this August will see both new and returning students enrolling in classes. The staff projects that total Academy enrollment for this

August will be approximately 175 students.

The Gateway to College Academy is an early college charter school which targets students ages 16-20 who have not yet completed their high school diplomas. Typical students are behind in credit for their age and many were not attending high school prior to joining the Academy. While enrolled in the Academy, students take GPC college classes to earn both college credits and credits toward their high school diplomas.

The first graduates could come as early as this December (2006).

The staff have been training since mid-July to prepare for the opening days of classes. With both returning and newly hired faculty and resource specialists in place, the Academy is excited about the new school year. "This is only the second year of the school's existence, but we are feeling very good about things", says Director Robert Wigfall.

Meet Our New Staff

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Welcome to the new Gateway to College Academy staff. Just when we thought things couldn't get any better, we added new staff members! Please help us welcome:

Shenika Hall, English Instructor, comes to us with experience from several area school systems. Her B.A. is in English Literature and her M.Ed. is in School Counseling.

Dolores McCrary, Mathematics Instructor, has

many years of classroom experience as well as other administrative experience. Her B.A. is from Spelman College and she also holds a Master's in Project Management as well as a Ph.D. in Christian Education.

Pedro Robles, Resource Specialist, hails originally from Puerto Rico where he earned two of his B.S. degrees and his M.A. degree in Guidance & Counseling. He speaks, reads and writes English, Spanish and German and brings several

years of teaching experience with him.

Kevin Scott, Resource Specialist, comes to us from the Raleigh/Durham area. He earned his B.A. from NC State and his M.A. in Counseling from NC Central.

Derrick Tennial, English Instructor, has taught both in the Memphis City Schools system and Gwinnett Co. Schools. He is currently working on his doctorate at Georgia Southern Univ. in Curriculum Studies.

Every nine seconds, a student becomes a high school dropout in America.

Why GPC Cares

- The U.S. has fallen to ninth in the developed world in high school graduation rates among young adults (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]).
- "In 1970 the U.S. produced over 50% of the world's science and engineering Ph.Ds, and that number is projected to fall to around 15% by 2010." (Margaret Spellings, US Secretary of Education)
- The overall national public HS graduation rate for the class of 2003 was 70 %, according to a study by the Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute:²
 - White (78 %) and Asian (72 %) students had higher graduation rates than African American(55 %) and Hispanic (53 %) students
 - Female (72 %) students had higher graduation rates than male (65 %) students
- There is a significant gender gap for minority students:
 - 59 % African American females graduated compared to 48 % African American males
 - 58 % Hispanic females graduated vs. 49 % Hispanic males
- Georgia had the second worst graduation rate in the nation:
 - 50) South Carolina (54 % graduation rate was worst in nation)
 - 49) Georgia (56 % graduation rate)
 - 48) New York (58 % graduation rate)

Dropout Crisis

- Russell W. Rumberger of the Univ. of California Santa Barbara estimates that Georgia loses \$7.3 billion in wage-related revenues and will spend \$105 million to incarcerate 528 of the 27,027 students who drop out of HS in Georgia per year.
- Nationally, 75% of state prisoners and 59% of federal prisoners are HS dropouts
- HS dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than HS graduates to become incarcerated
- 90 % of the youth in adult detention facilities do not have more than a 9th grade education.
- Nationally, the 23 million HS dropouts (18-67 yrs.) will contribute approx. \$50 billion less per year than HS graduates in state and federal taxes.
- Census Bureau estimates indicate that HS dropouts earn on average \$18,900 per year vs. \$23,400 per year for HS graduates.
- Average HS dropouts earned \$35,087 in 1971.
- Approximately 90 % of the fastest-growing jobs of the future will require some postsecondary education or training (U.S. Department of Labor).
- In mathematics literacy and problem-solving skills, U.S. students rank 24th among 29 developed nations (2003 Programme for International Student Assessment test [PISA]).
- College graduates in the U.S. earn nearly twice as much as workers with only a high school diploma [OECD]).

Application Information

The Gateway to College Academy accepts applications from eligible students for admission both in August and January. Deadlines for priority processing are July 1 (for August) and November 1 (for January). All students must be eligible to attend a DeKalb County high school, must meet in-state eligibility requirements for GPC's tuition, and must be at least 16 years old but not more than 21 years old. Students are

completing a high school diploma by taking college classes, so applicants are screened and counseled to determine if they would be a good fit for the Academy. The Academy targets students who have not yet been successful in a traditional high school setting but who indicate that they could be successful in our college environment. Call (678)891-3220 for application information.

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.gpc.edu/~gpcgway/

First Year Results Are In

When asked about how the first year went, Director Robert Wigfall replied, "We feel very good about things overall. It's rough the first year getting things going, working out all of the kinks, but we feel very proud of the results we obtained with many of the students."

Assistant Director Gina Gavin says, "It's easy to focus on the problems and the negatives, but when we look at the students that did well and the test scores and compare our results with the other similar sites, we realize that we had a very good year."

Dr. Margaret Venable, Assistant Vice President, Educational Outreach, agrees. "We set very high goals for ourselves at the beginning of the year, so every time we

lost a student, we felt as if we failed. But we were warned going into this that it was not realistic to expect that we would retain all of the students."

Although the Gateway to College Academy students have not been successful in traditional high schools prior to coming to us, they all show promise of being successful in college classes when they are admitted. Many do step up to the challenge and perform at the same level or better than entering GPC students who already have high school diplomas. Some, however, find that they are not yet ready for this level of commitment.

It is not all bad news, though, for the students who leave. Nearly all of the students who leave the Gateway to College

Academy are referred to other programs and many of them have chosen to try another educational program to complete either their high school diploma or a GED. We count these students as successes also since they did at least return to the educational pipeline.

Comparison of the Gateway to College Academy's High School Graduation Test results with other DeKalb County Alternative schools indicate that our students are doing very well. In fact, 100% of our students passed the Writing test last year and 92% passed the Language Arts portion of the test. Seventy-one percent (71%) passed the Math portion. We expect even better results during our second year.

Make a Donation

Are you looking for a way to help the Gateway to College Academy? Don't have a great deal of time to volunteer? Please help build our scholarship fund by making a donation.

No amount is too big or too small. The funds will be used to support students in need and will provide assistance with transportation costs, fee payments, summer tuition, and/or living expenses.

All donations are tax-deductible. To make a donation, please contact GPC's Foundation and ask

about making a donation to the "Outreach Scholarship Fund".

The GPC Foundation may be reached by contacting Ms. Karen Berson at (678)891-2553. Remember to specify that your donation is for the "Outreach Scholarship Fund".

Students are nominated for the scholarship by the Gateway to College Academy staff. Amounts awarded are based upon the recommendation of the staff (depending upon the need and also based upon availability of funds).

Although students do not pay tuition or book expenses, some students have difficulty making the \$240+ fee payment each semester or paying for transportation expenses, etc. When a student is making every effort to go to school, we do not want a few dollars to be the reason they fail.

Please help support our students by donating to this worthy cause. This is an excellent way to increase the retention rates of our worthy students.

No amount is too small – or too big. Make a donation and support a worthy student.



Meet the Director

Robert Wigfall, Director for the Gateway to College Academy, is not new to GPC or working with youth. Mr. Wigfall has spent his entire career working with youth in a variety of capacities.

With credentials in counseling, Mr. Wigfall is a natural at talking with students and

parents about the Academy's expectations. Mr. Wigfall spent many years working in the Advising and Counseling Center on the Decatur campus of GPC before becoming the Gateway to College Academy Director. He also spent quite a few years working with TRIO programs such as Upward Bound. This federally funded

program also involves high school youth.

Mr. Wigfall is a parent and recently became a grandparent. His staff looks to him for guidance and support and knows that he does not expect them to work any harder than he does.

Board of Directors meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month during the school year. Call the Academy or check the website for details.

About the Gateway to College Academy

The Gateway to College Academy is a DeKalb County early college charter school located on the Clarkston Campus of Georgia Perimeter College. Modeled after a successful program at Portland Community

College, the Gateway to College Academy is one of 10 such sites that will be in operation as of fall of 2006.

The Gateway to College early college model is part of the Bill and Melinda Gates

Early College High School Initiative. Start-up funds for the Gateway to College Academy were received from the Gates Foundation through Portland Community College.

New and Returning Staff

Robert Wigfall, Director

Gina Gavin, Assistant Director

Quadethia Burton, Head Resource Specialist

Cliff Rawles, Outreach Intake Specialist

Lakisha Edwards, Secretary

Carl Glisson, Resource Specialist

Jade Holley, Resource Specialist

Pedro Robles, Resource Specialist

Kevin Scott, Resource Specialist

Joy Nikolova, Mathematics Instructor

Dolores McCrary, Mathematics Instructor

Shenika Hall, English Instructor

Derrick Tennial, English Instructor

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