



Of Special Interest in this Issue

- New students accepted every fall and spring semester
- Meet the Assistant Director & Head Resource Specialist
- First Graduates Expected in May
- Successes every day



<http://www.gpc.edu/~gpcgway/>



First Graduates Anticipated

We are knocking wood and holding our breaths, but it looks as if we may have our first graduates of the Gateway to College Academy as early as May, 2007.

Although the Gateway to College Academy, which serves students in grades 10-12, just opened in August of 2005, the students, faculty and staff have been working hard since that time. After the first semester, students enter mainstream college classes on the Clarkston Campus of Georgia

Perimeter College (GPC) to earn both high school and college credits as they complete their high school diplomas.

"We will be working with the students who hope to graduate this semester to ensure that they are prepared to continue in college after they graduate", says Head Resource Specialist Quadethia Burton. They have been exploring careers and majors since they first began their coursework at the Gateway to College Academy, so the

Academy faculty and staff are optimistic that the students will make a seamless transition into college and complete associate's and bachelor's degrees in a timely manner.

Current Gateway to College Academy students are pursuing careers and majors such as Nursing, Pharmacy, Business and Sports Medicine.

Student Successes Every Day

Gateway to College Academy

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When Gregg first came to the Gateway to College Academy, he felt discouraged, but now his classmates and the faculty and staff all know him as an outgoing leader with a bright future ahead of him.

Before Cherice came to the Academy, she had been told she couldn't make it, but today she is making good grades in college classes.

Javan says that he missed twenty days in one semester at his previous traditional

high school, but he is much happier at the Gateway to College Academy and makes getting to class on time a "first priority".

April says her attendance previously at her traditional high school was "unacceptable", but now she wants to come to school. She hopes to earn high enough grades to obtain a scholarship to transfer to Georgia State University or even Howard University after completing her high school diploma at the

Gateway to College Academy.

Halimah, who maintains a 3.50 GPA even while taking college classes in the Gateway to College Academy, tells others that the Academy is a good opportunity to gain "insight on what it takes to succeed in college".

We believe that all students have the capacity to achieve in the collegiate environment....

The Gateway to College Academy Mission

We believe that all students have the capacity to achieve in the collegiate environment, including students who have not yet experienced success in the traditional K-12 system. We strive to:

- Help students achieve academic success
- Open students' eyes to post high school opportunities
- Provide a transition to the post-secondary environment
- Support students during their enrollment

The Gateway to College Academy's mission is to recover high school dropouts ages 16-20 and re-channel them into the educational pipeline. Through the collaborative efforts of Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) and DeKalb County

School System (DCSS), we offer students the option of completing high school while concurrently receiving credit toward an associate's degree. One of the greatest benefits is that the Academy does actually create a "Gateway to College" for individuals that never dreamed college was possible.

The curriculum and model are characterized by an application of varied instructional delivery styles, a technology-across-the curriculum approach and along with small class sizes and academic enrichment.

Who Are Our Students?

The typical Gateway to College Academy student is not an average student. Our students are smarter! Despite the lack of high school diploma, 38% of the newly admitted students placed into collegiate English when they were administered college placement tests during the Fall of 2006. Twenty-four percent (24%) of these students placed into collegiate Math and 19% placed out of all Learning Support requirements.

According to Fall 2006 demographic data, the average age of our entering student is 17 and 54% are male. Racially, we are a mixture consisting of Black/African American (87.9%), Multi-racial (4.6%), White/Caucasian (2.3%), Other (2.3%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (1.7%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (1.1%).

Some of our students are parents (11.4%) and some have lived in a foster home (8.3%) while

others have experienced some level of difficulty in school before coming to the Academy because of homelessness (7.2%).

Of the students surveyed, 32% were currently employed and 70.2% of these students contribute funds to their household expenses.

Our students have admirable goals and high expectations for themselves. Although very few of their parents have completed college degrees or graduate degrees (approximately 20% on average for each parent), 75% of our entering students plan to complete a bachelor's degree or graduate degree. Imagine the difference this early college can make in the future of these students and their families yet to come and it is easy to see why the entire nation is watching this model and our own Gateway to College Academy.

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/

Meet Our Head Resource Specialist



Head Resource Specialist, Ms. **Quadethia Burton**, came to the Gateway to College Academy from Redan High School where she served as a guidance counselor. Prior to that, Ms. Burton worked in North Carolina at Appalachian State University.

At the Gateway to College Academy, we call our counselors "Resource Specialists" because they do so much more than a traditional high school guidance counselor. Our resource specialists teach career guidance and exploration as well as study skills classes. They also work very closely with students assigned to them to tailor each student's individualized curriculum to

meet the needs of the student. The Resource Specialist monitors each student's academic progress and assists with any personal or social issues that arise which may prevent a student from succeeding.

Because all of our students had difficulty with high school prior to coming to us, our Resource Specialists are a key ingredient to helping our students succeed. The Resource Specialists work with students to help ensure same old issues do not prevent students from being successful again now that they have decided to make a fresh start with the Gateway to College Academy.

In some cases, however, we determine that the Gateway to College Academy is not a

good fit for a student. At that point, the Resource Specialist works with the student and family to find a better solution to ensure that the student finds some way to return to or remain in the educational pipeline.

Ms. Burton helps ensure that all course credits are entered appropriately with DeKalb County Schools on the students' transcripts, she works with students and the other Resource Specialists to find solutions to various personal and administrative problems and she is known by all of the staff as one of the students' fiercest advocates. The mother of two, Ms. Burton seems equally dedicated to her biological children and her Gateway students.

How Can I Help?

If you are a faculty member, you can welcome our students into your classes and contact our staff immediately if you have any concerns about a student's academic or social progress. If you are a staff member, you can help our students learn their way around campus and become fully integrated into the College.

If you want to do more, you can always donate to our scholarship fund specifically designated to help students who need assistance paying their fees, summer semester tuition or meeting other living expenses (e.g., MARTA cards, gas cards, food and toiletries). Although students do not

pay for books or tuition during the fall or spring semesters, they must pay tuition if they wish/need to take classes in the summer term. Also, all students must pay the student fees each semester (approximately \$242/semester) and provide their own transportation to and from the Gateway to College Academy.

All donations are tax-deductible. To make a donation, please send a check payable to the Georgia Perimeter College Foundation and be sure to designate that your donation is for the "**Outreach Scholarship Fund**".

The address to mail checks is:

Georgia Perimeter College,
Office of Institutional
Advancement, 3251
Panthersville Road, Decatur
GA 30034

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).

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Meet the Assistant Director

Ms. **Gina Gavin**, Assistant Director for the Gateway to College Academy, can be the Academy's strictest enforcer of rules and codes of conduct but she can also be a student's biggest supporter. Students know that Ms. Gavin has high standards and expectations because she believes in them and wants the best for them. Her colleagues see her passion for the students and the Academy in the long hours she

puts in, the countless numbers of reports she completes and the endless numbers of meetings she attends. Despite the hard work, Ms. Gavin always maintains her composure as a true "Spelman lady".

Ms. Gavin worked for many years with federally funded TRIO programs before coming to the Gateway to College Academy, coming most recently from Clark Atlanta University. A

native Georgian, Ms. Gavin hails from Albany, Georgia. She came to Atlanta first to attend Spelman College and returned to the Atlanta area after her first job in rural Tennessee.

Ms. Gavin is also known for her baking skills and is personally responsible for at least some portion of the Gateway to College Academy staff's holiday weight gain.

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 across the country that is 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.

Join Our Parents Group

If you are a parent/guardian or other VIP in the life of one of our students, we are especially interested in your participation in your student's academic success. Expressing a daily interest in your student's activities and success can go a long way toward showing that you care and that the student's happiness is important to you.

We would also love to have your support for the Academy through hands-on volunteer service to the Academy. Don't worry! We won't ask you to build playground facilities or mop floors or even serve lunches. Mainly, we need your advice and input from time to time about how best to serve our students and their families. We also appreciate any community contacts you have through your employers, friends or neighbors for donations of items such as refreshments for occasional events (e.g., student orientations), for donations of MARTA or gasoline cards, and donations of gift cards that can be used by students in need of food/clothing.

Finally, we would like to offer our parents an opportunity to network with each other and provide support for each other. You're not alone. To join our Parents Group, please contact either your student's Resource Specialist or call (678)891-3220 or email gpcgway@gpc.edu. It's not just for parents – any person committed to supporting one of our students is welcome.

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