MGA's Path to Excellence - Strategic Plan 2023-2028
AY 2025-2026 Progress Analysis

Executive Summary

The AY2025-2026 progress review shows meaningful advancement across nearly every strategic priority, anchored by a successful SACSCOC on-site review, record fall enrollment, a reversal of last year's decline in degree production, and strong momentum in fundraising and athletics. Several long-running goals reached a natural inflection point this year: Cabinet formally redesigned, retired, or marked complete a number of milestones that were no longer driving meaningful progress, reflecting a maturing and more disciplined approach to strategic plan governance. At the same time, alumni engagement remains well below target, data-dashboard and scorecard work slowed due to Institutional Research staffing transitions, and a handful of data-quality issues in this year's biannual reporting should be resolved before the report is finalized or shared externally.

Key Highlights:

- **Enrollment Growth:** Preliminary Fall 2026 enrollment reached 9,720 as of July 31, 2026, exceeding the FL26 target of 9,597 and continuing two consecutive years of growth from 8,409 in Fall 2024.
- **Accreditation Progress:** SACSCOC's on-site review committee was hosted successfully in March 2026 and reported no recommendations, positioning MGA well for the December 2026 reaffirmation decision.
- **Degree Production Turnaround:** Associate, Bachelor's, and Graduate degree counts all exceeded AY milestone targets in both Fall 2025 and Spring 2026, reversing last year's decline.
- **Capital Campaign:** The comprehensive campaign entered its silent phase with approximately $20M raised toward the $30M goal, following Foundation Board adoption of a campaign resolution and Case Statement in December 2025.
- **Philanthropic Growth:** 67 major gifts were secured in 2025 alone, already surpassing the 2028 target of 44 major gifts.
- **Athletics Transition:** MGA was approved by the NCAA to advance to Year 2 of provisional Division II membership, following successful certification of student-athletes and NCAA Convention attendance.

Conclusion

Middle Georgia State University demonstrates strong and, in several areas, accelerating momentum toward its 2028 strategic goals. Enrollment growth, degree production, accreditation

progress, and philanthropic fundraising all exceeded this year's milestones, and the successful SACSCOC on-site visit reflects sustained institutional capacity to manage complex accreditation processes alongside day-to-day operations. Cabinet's willingness to redesign, retire, or mark complete a number of goals this year — rather than continuing to report against milestones that were no longer serving their intended purpose — is itself a sign of a maturing strategic planning process.

Continued attention is warranted in a few areas: alumni engagement remains well below target for both the general and athlete/65+ populations, and the underlying definitions of these goals should be clarified; dashboard and scorecard work slowed this year pending completion of Institutional Research's staffing transition.

Strategy 1: Champion Student Success

Key Areas Exceeding Targets

- **SACSCOC On-Site Review:** Compliance Certification submitted on schedule (71/75 standards in compliance per the off-site review); on-site committee hosted successfully in March 2026 with no recommendations reported.
- **Fall Enrollment:** Preliminary Fall 2026 headcount of 9,720 (as of July 31, 2026) exceeds the FL26 target of 9,597.
- **Degree Production:** Associate (109 Fall / 121 Spring), Bachelor's (506 Fall / 457 Spring), and Graduate (180 Fall / 154 Spring) degree counts all exceeded the AY milestone targets (Associate 104, Bachelor's 452, Graduate 124 by Spring 2026).
- **Faculty AI Training:** 44 of 293 FT faculty (15%) trained in Fall and 39 of 293 (13.3%) in Spring, both exceeding the ≥13% milestone.
- **Study Abroad Growth:** Participation increased 313% year over year (33 students vs. a baseline of 8); USG Goes Global participation rose 122%; new international partnerships are advancing in Finland and Ireland, supported by new donor funding.
- **Career Center Internship Reporting:** 171 internships were reported through Handshake Experiences for AY2026, far exceeding the milestone target of 67.
- **Graduate Enrollment:** Met or exceeded the 8% of total enrollment target in both Fall (8%) and Spring (8.1%) terms.
- **FTFT Retention:** MGA's retention dashboard shows a Fall 2025-to-Fall 2026 estimate of 67.32%, above the AY milestone of 63.4%.

Areas on Target

- **First-Year Experience (FYE) Committee:** Established in Spring 2026 to begin building a cross-divisional engagement framework, in coordination with NISS recommendations.
- **Knight Life Engagement:** FY26 total attendance grew 26% and events grew 18% year over year; unique-attendee growth (8%) trailed the 10% target slightly, but participants showed a 77% Fall-to-Fall retention rate versus 69.6% institution-wide.

Areas Needing Attention

- **Quality Matters (QM) Training:** Cabinet redesigned this milestone mid-year due to low confidence in reaching Year 5 targets; 53 of 293 FT faculty (18%) participated in QM or CETL-aligned programming under the new definition.
- **TTE Faculty Scholarship:** No consolidated figures on faculty presentations or publications were produced this year; MGA is still working to standardize data collection across Deans and Chairs.
- **Career Center Employer Partnerships:** Knights@Work reached 36 employer partners by year-end, still below the 50-partner target, though a streamlined intake process introduced in April 2026 is expected to improve growth.

- **Georgia Academy:** A new Director of Campus and Community Engagement was hired and dual-enrollment partnerships are expanding, but no enrollment or course-offering figures were reported against the 2-3% growth and 12% face-to-face expansion targets.

Areas with Incomplete Data

- **Student Success Indicators (SRRI/IER/IAR):** This milestone was redesigned mid-year; engagement activity (a Knights Hour pilot, club-participation data) was reported, but the specific effectiveness and adoption-rate metrics called for in the SMART description were not.
- **SACSCOC Standard 7.2 / QEP:** Cabinet recommends retiring this goal following SACSCOC's suspension of the QEP requirement; related effort is being redirected into NISS-aligned student success work.
- **Georgia Academy Enrollment and Offerings:** As noted above, the quantitative growth targets for enrollment, course offerings, and events remain unreported.

Strategy 2: Lead Innovation and Economic Opportunity

Key Areas Exceeding Targets

- **ORSP Staffing:** A Director was hired along with 3 graduate assistants and 1 student worker, exceeding the staffing milestone; 2 offices were secured (one shared).
- **Grant Development Activity:** Faculty/staff development workshops increased 25% year over year as targeted; 100% of ORSP staff completed grant development training; 5 federal and 9 state/private grant proposals were submitted, meeting or exceeding both submission targets, with several awards already secured and others still under review.
- **PTA Accreditation:** Specialized accreditation was secured for the AS in Physical Therapist Assistant program, clearing the way for its Fall 2026 launch in Dublin.

Areas on Target

- **Health Sciences / PTA Launch Readiness:** An Enhanced CTI program was launched and an Accelerated Nursing curriculum/cohort developed in support of Fall 2026 program launches.
- **Academic Center Incubator (ACI):** A three-phase (Launch, Growth, Independence) framework proposal was developed to govern MGA's academic centers, with a coordinating committee structure proposed.

Areas Needing Attention

- **Graduate Nursing Programs (MSN-CNL, DNP, MSW):** Development continues, but no BOR/SACSCOC approvals were finalized this year; the MSW program is furthest along in the approval pipeline.
- **BS in Applied AI:** Enrollment targets were reset in coordination with Enrollment Management rather than met as originally set; curricular enhancements remain under evaluation.
- **University Centers Strategic Priorities:** This year's progress centered on the ACI planning framework rather than the milestone's called-for execution of engagement plans, grant-writing training, and marketing/communication plans.

Areas with Incomplete Data

- **Faculty/Staff Board Service:** Cabinet recommended retiring this goal, determining it was not meeting the intent of the original priority.

Strategy 3: Build Culture and Identity

Key Areas Exceeding Targets

- **Great Place to Work:** MGA achieved the "Great College to Work For" designation this year; Staff Council participation grew following new outreach efforts, and a new Professional Development Initiative (two faculty-led courses) was approved for Fall launch.
- **NCAA Division II Transition:** President Blake and Athletics leadership attended the NCAA Convention, and MGA was approved to advance to Year 2 of provisional Division II membership while maintaining Peach Belt Conference membership.
- **Athletics Fundraising:** Cumulative giving reached $1,027,652 against the AY milestone of $500,000, including $117,543 raised in the first half of 2026 alone.
- **Housing & Residence Life Engagement:** FY26 total attendance grew 28% and events grew 13% year over year; the Housing Advisory Council completed its second year and is transitioning toward a full Residence Hall Association.

Areas on Target

- **Compliance Training:** Campus Security Authority and Programs Serving Minors training both remained at 100% completion; Title IX training reached 91% completion (1,142 of 1,252 employees).
- **Salary Alignment:** Cabinet determined this goal has been achieved to the extent within MGA's control, given a systemwide hold on compensation studies, and recommended marking it complete.
- **Health & Wellness Programming:** $10,000 in USG funding was secured and used to expand Health and Wellness Week (18+ activities), launch a Farmer's Market partnership, and begin monthly yoga sessions.

Areas Needing Attention

- **General Alumni Engagement:** Engagement remained well below the 7% target (1.05% in the first half, 0.75% in the second); the underlying data itself raises a question about whether the 7%/11% goals refer to engagement of the contactable alumni population or of all alumni — this should be clarified before the metric is reported further.
- **Athlete and 65+ Alumni Engagement:** Of 1,259 athlete alumni, 5.9% attended an event; of 9,874 alumni aged 65+, only 0.4% did — both below the 1.5% engagement target despite improved tracking methodology this year.
- **Employee Turnover:** After last year's improvement to 12.2%, the turnover rate ticked up slightly to 13.1% this year, attributed largely to a wave of retirements. MGA still compares favorably to USG's systemwide rate of 14.0%, but the trend is worth monitoring.

Areas with Incomplete Data

- **Campus Academic Identity:** No milestone was defined for this goal in AY2025-2026, and the internal audit found planning still incomplete; assignment of a dedicated owner is recommended.

- **Health & Wellness Outcome Tracking:** Programming activity was strong, but the Health Conditions and Prevalence Report's chronic-disease trend data, EAP utilization figures, and participation tracking called for in the SMART description were not reported.

Strategy 4: Sustain Fiscal Resilience and Brand Value

Key Areas Exceeding Targets

- **Capital Campaign:** The Foundation Board adopted a campaign resolution and Case Statement in December 2025; by mid-2026 the campaign had entered its silent phase with approximately $20M raised toward the $30M goal.
- **Major Gifts:** 67 major gifts were received in 2025 alone — already surpassing the 2028 target of 44 — with an additional 39 gifts totaling $3.29M received in the first half of 2026.
- **Employee Giving:** The 2025 Faculty/Staff campaign achieved 66% participation, meeting the rate targeted for 2028.

Areas on Target

- **Academic Affairs Scorecard:** The FY25 scorecard concluded and was posted; the FY26 scorecard was updated and is finalizing for year-end posting.
- **SACSCOC Financial Literacy Standard:** Cabinet determined this goal achieved — rated "Compliance" by the Off-Site Review Committee — and recommended marking it complete.

Areas Needing Attention

- **Public/Internal Dashboards:** Governance and divisional adoption remain uneven; progress paused this year due to staffing changes within Institutional Research, pending completion of the office's recent restructuring.
- **Comprehensive Divisional Scorecards:** Progress is documented for Academic Affairs, but no evidence of the 80%-of-divisions adoption target was reported for other divisions.
- **Low-Cost/No-Cost Course Materials:** Fall 2025 counts (42 low-cost, 315 no-cost) show continued softness against targets; Cabinet recommended redesigning this goal to better reflect market and definitional constraints.
- **Alumni Giving:** 333 gifts were recorded in 2025 and 234 more (from 98 donors) in the first half of 2026; because the milestone is expressed in "giving units" that won't be calculable until calendar year-end, progress against the 525-unit target is difficult to assess mid-year.