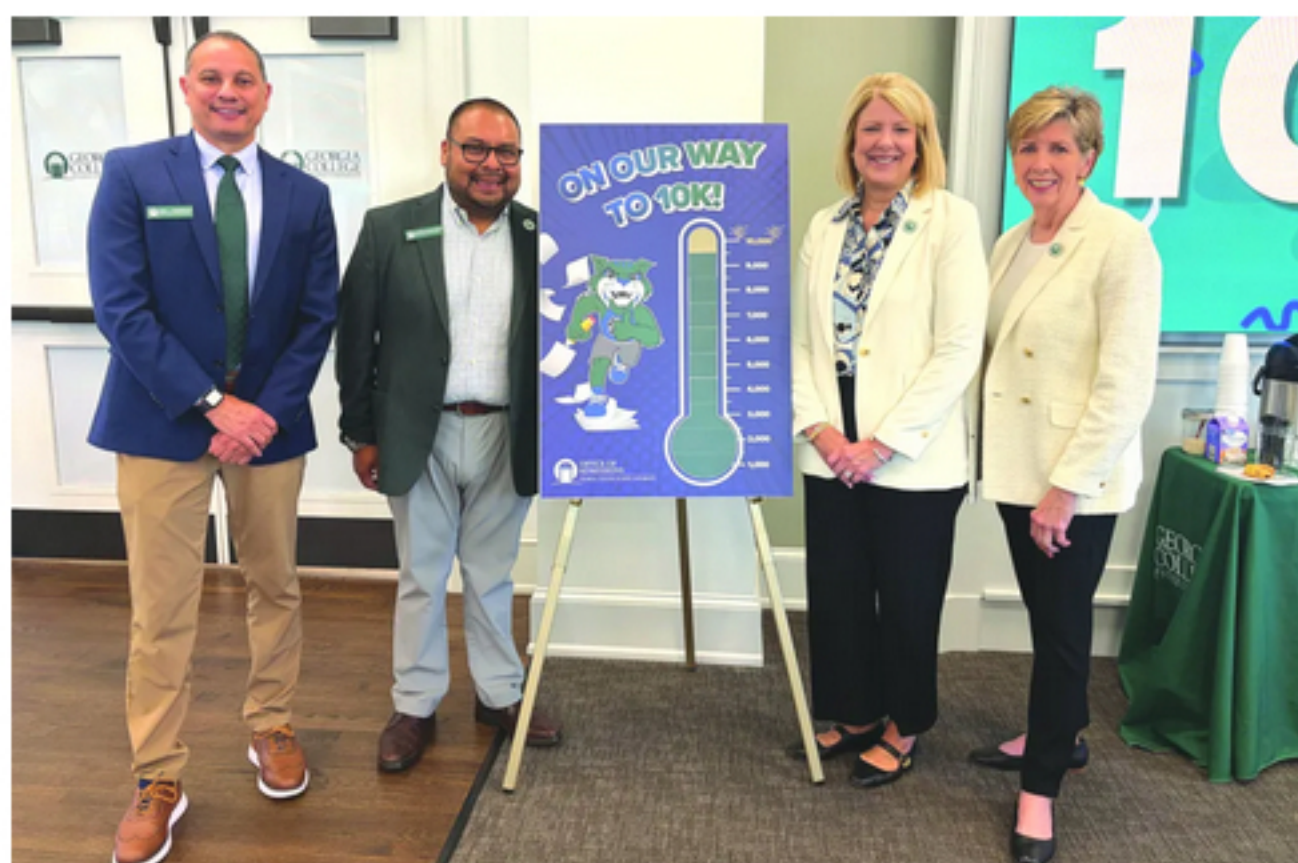


# Record-high new student applications extend historic growth period at GCSU

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By Special to The U-R



The Office of Enrollment Management celebrated the admissions milestone of more than 10,000 completed undergraduate applications as of the April 1, 2026, deadline. University Leadership including (from left) Joel Robinson, senior associate vice president for Enrollment Management; Javier Francisco, executive director of admissions; Dr. Holley Roberts, Georgia College provost and vice president for Academic Affairs; Cathy Cox, Georgia College president.

Georgia College & State University reached an unprecedented milestone April 1, 2026, receiving over 10,000 new student applications for undergraduate admission, the most ever received in the university's 136-year history.

"The secret is out about GCSU," University President Cathy Cox wrote in a memo to faculty and staff this week, announcing the news. "This latest accomplishment serves as a culmination of that forward momentum, highlighting that student and family interest in the high-caliber liberal arts education we offer continues to soar."

In fact, Georgia College has steadily achieved record-breaking milestones since 2022. Last October, the university certified its highest-ever enrollment at 7,304 total students for the 2025-2026 academic year. The following month, in November 2025, the most new-student applications ever recorded during the fall "early action" period was reached, with over 5,000 students seeking admission.

For President Cox, this momentum is a testament to the university's commitment to small class sizes and cross-campus collaboration opportunities that allow GCSU students to learn by doing.

That model, she said, has direct career benefits, too.

"Employers are up to 81% more likely to hire graduates who have participated in experience-based learning activities — such as undergraduate research, internships, study abroad, leadership programs and community-engaged learning," she said. "At GCSU, we guarantee every student meaningful access to opportunities like those, beginning in their first year."

To ensure students continue to form personal connections with faculty mentors through this small-class-size approach, 70 new professors were hired prior to the fall semester, maintaining the university's 17:1 student-to-faculty ratio.

The approach is working: 93% of GCSU students report engaging in transformative learning experiences — starting in Year One.

In addition to reaching new highs in the volume of applications received, the caliber of students who apply to GCSU is also improving.

Since 1996, when GCSU was given new mission direction from the University System of Georgia Board of Regents to become the state's designated public liberal arts university, the unweighted grade point average of its students has ballooned from 2.95 to 3.65. Admitted students this admissions cycle boast an average weighted GPA of 3.91, along with an average 1223 SAT score, securing GCSU's place among the three selective admissions institutions in the USG, along with the Georgia Institute of Technology and University of Georgia.