



GOSS NEWS

THE GEORGIA ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

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GOSS Returning to St. Simons Island

For its 2024 annual conference, GOSS will be returning to the King and Prince Beach and Golf Resort on St. Simons Island. Please see the [GOSS website](#) for information about registration and proposal submission. **The deadline for proposal submission is September 18.**

Dr. Sonja Ardoin will be a keynote speaker. Proud of her rural hometown of Vidrine, Louisiana, her working-class, Cajun roots, and her first-generation college student to Ph.D. journey, she holds a B.S. in secondary education from LSU, an M.S. in higher education and student affairs from Florida State, and a Ph.D. in educational research and policy analysis from North Carolina State. She currently serves as associate professor in the higher education and student affairs programs at Clemson University.



The purpose of GOSS is to provide a forum for the study, discussion, dissemination, and evaluation of policies and programs that influence post-secondary college readiness and student success in Georgia. Thus “Lighting the Way to Student Success” will be the conference theme, and together we will explore innovative ways to support learning.

Information about membership options is available at the [GOSS website](#). Please feel free to contact a member of the leadership team with any questions.

Do you have ideas, reviews, or action research you'd like to share? We'd like to hear from you.

Send submissions to talktogoss@gmail.com. Please put “newsletter submission” in the subject line.

GOSS (the Georgia Organization for Student Success) is an affiliate of NOSS (the National Organization for Student Success).

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Want to know more about GOSS? Check out our web site: <https://gossonline.org/>

The Learner-Centered Syllabus

Steve Raynie

As an undergraduate back in the last century, I took a career test like the Kuder Journey that suggested I become an attorney or a college professor. Although eventually (through a few professional side adventures) I chose “college professor” as my life’s work, last week in a conversation with a colleague I realized that I had never lost that “attorney” tendency. The syllabi for my courses read like an End User License Agreement or a set of closing documents for a real estate deal.



Was I inspiring a sense of belonging? Or was I unintentionally excluding students?

Even though I have been teaching rhetoric for a few dozen years, it never dawned on me that the syllabus was part of the inclusive space I was trying to create. The document just was not designed with accessibility in mind and used phrases like “academic self-efficacy.” I included the core curriculum learning goal for the course too, but I did not explain what terms like “identify,” “analyze,” and “evaluate” mean in concrete language. In other words, I made a fundamental rhetorical error by not accounting for my audience in creating the document.

I rewrote my course documents in a way that made the space I was creating more inviting and accessible. If you are interested in something similar, consider Aaron Richmond’s short paper: [Constructing a Learner-Centered Syllabus: One Professor’s Journey](#).

The Georgia Organization for Student Success (GOSS) is a state affiliate of the National Organization for Student Success (NOSS).

Interested in joining NOSS? [Click here to find out how](#).

Recommended reading for student success: J-CASP: [Journal of College Academic Support Programs](#) (tdl.org).

Recent Books About Student Success

Arney, Jo, Timothy Dale, Glen Davis, and Jillian Kinzie. *Radical Reimagining for Student Success in Higher Education*. New York: Routledge, 2023.

Bentrum, Erin and Gavin Henning. *The Impact of a Sense of Belonging in College: Implications for Student Persistence, Retention, and Success*. New York: Routledge, 2022.

Martin, Georgianna and Sonja Ardoin. *Social Class Supports: Programs and Practices to Serve and Sustain Poor and Working-Class Students Through Higher Education*. Sterling, VA: Syllus, 2021.