



**Location:** Atlanta, GA

**Focus Areas:** Basic Need; Health & Wellbeing;  
Academic Supports; Advising; Community

Georgia State University (GSU) is a public four-year university serving over 54,000 highly diverse students across six campuses around the metro Atlanta area.

## Approach Overview

The Division of Student Success quickly pivoted core services to virtual delivery in March 2020 when all courses shifted online. GSU introduced an array of virtual programs and services.

**Financial Hardship & Emergency Assistance:** GSU created a new [Financial Hardship & Emergency Assistance](#) program to provide a single comprehensive online application for students to identify a host of potential needs, even beyond financial need. Submissions are auto-routed to key university partners to immediately begin assessing the student's needs and determine available resources to meet both immediate needs and provide case managed follow up to provide wrap-around services (both university and community based) and long-term solutions.

**Be Well:** Specifically addressing students' wellness needs, GSU offered an array of Be Well programs and services. The Student Health Clinic and Counseling Center shifted in-person services to telehealth, including same day consultation and assessment, group counseling, psychiatric assessment and medication monitoring. A new layer of continuous access with 24/7 online mental health was added through a free online community called [Togetherall](#). Integrated virtual health programming expanded access to populations historically unable to participate in-person, offering timely focus on stress management, meditation to build resilience, food insecurity, art as a stress reliever, cooking healthy on a budget, red flags of an unhealthy relationship, sexual health, and mindfulness.

**Academic Support and Advising:** Over 100 staff members are dedicated to offering virtual advising, and the Navigate app was deployed to provide virtual appointment scheduling, academic



### At A Glance:

- » Launched a new financial hardship and emergency assistance program, 24/7 access to online mental health services, and online orientation and event modules
- » Enhanced networked case management approach for engaging all elements of the student experience

planning, and resource connections. The Student Success team monitors daily student engagement data that helps advisors proactively reach out to students who aren't participating in their online courses.

**Community:** GSU launched a Panther Connect program during summer 2020 to all new students through orientation that looks at high school involvement data from the admissions application as well as intended academic field of study, and each new student is automatically enrolled in a co-curricular cluster – through the [Panther Involvement Network](#) – that allows them to quickly connect with student leaders and organizational advisors in the organizations that may be of most interest to them. The Panther Connect program helps diminish the overwhelming information overload of 500+ student organizations to a select handful that may be more directly relevant to that individual student's interests.

GSU also utilizes chatbot technology to communicate key messages and solicit timely feedback from students. Chatbot campaigns are tailored to specific student populations and gather real-time student input immediately used to adjust or enhance programs and services as needed. Students also have multiple mechanisms for communicating their concerns and questions, some of which are focused on specific services, programs, and offices. PantherAnswer is a premiere online virtual tool powered by Salesforce that utilizes artificial intelligence to answer questions, schedule appointments, or connect with various offices and staff such as Admissions, Registrar and Student Financial Management.

GSU's dynamic team emphasized the following elements as important pieces of their approach:

“ We did have a lot of these wonderful systems in place, but I would say that in many cases we were not maximizing all of the capabilities of those systems previously. It's important to ask, are you really using everything you already have available through your existing systems? What can you do with what you already have versus trying to go out and buy something that costs even more money to add on?” ”

“ The more we asked why, the better we were able to get to a solution that worked for our students and make it better. I would tell other institutions, keep asking the question, 'why?' ”

“ We made the commitment that we would do the hard work on the back-end to figure out how we share information and engage the right parties, but not put the burden on the student to have to figure out how to run around a rather large university to get the solutions they need.” ”

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