CHARTING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER
FIVE-YEAR REPORT ON THE UNIVERSITY’S STRATEGIC PLAN
As Armstrong State University prepared to celebrate its 75th year in 2010, the Armstrong community joined forces to reflect upon our rich history and to visualize what the university could become in the next five, 10 or 20 years. The result was the development of a new strategic plan, Charting Excellence Together.

The plan, which officially debuted on Aug. 12, 2010, reaffirmed Armstrong’s commitment to being a teaching-first university, our strong ties to Savannah, our sound professional preparation and our liberal arts core that prepares graduates for careers, as well as thoughtful, civically engaged lives. Most importantly, the strategic plan focused on Armstrong’s commitment to student success, an unwavering commitment the university has embraced since its founding in 1935.

Five years have passed since Charting Excellence Together was developed. As Armstrong enters its 80th year, it’s time to reflect on the progress we have made with our strategic plan as a guide. This report offers an overview of progress and accomplishments during the first five years of the strategic plan’s implementation.

Learn more at: armstrong.edu/strategicplan

**ARMSTRONG’S CORE VALUES**

Armstrong State University embraces these core values:

- We value education that is student-focused, transformative, experiential and rigorous, leading to student success.
- We value balance among teaching, mentoring and scholarship.
- We value an environment of mutual trust and collegiality that builds an inclusive community.
- We value transparency that fosters shared governance.
- We value and respect diversity.
- We value ethical behavior and accountability that support high standards of performance.
- We value civic engagement through outreach and service.
- We value our relationship with Savannah, its unique geographic location, rich history and abundant opportunities.
STRATEGIC GOAL #1

Armstrong will foster STUDENT SUCCESS

Armstrong will impart the skills and habits of mind to motivated students that help them realize their potential as productive citizens of the world.

The strategic plan supports Armstrong’s efforts to attract and retain dedicated, hard-working students who will sustain a record of achievement and service. A variety of programmatic goals and initiatives have been strategically implemented to address overarching themes, including the academic advising system and students’ academic preparedness.

Student success must be nurtured when a student first begins his or her college career. To address incoming students’ common need to engage with the Armstrong community and to develop skills that are foundational to their academic success, a First Class program was implemented for all first-year students. First Class is a small-group seminar linked to a core course focused on literacy skill development, student engagement and building a learning community.
Other initiatives designed to enhance the first-year experience include Summer Challenge, Living-Learning Communities (LLC), Hispanic Outreach and Retention at Armstrong (HORA) and the African American Male Initiative (AAMI).

Students who participated in Summer Challenge, a program to help promising students achieve academic success, experienced strong retention rates.

HORA and AAMI programs have higher retention rates than the general population.

**SUMMER CHALLENGE RETENTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>86% retained to Fall 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>89% retained to Spring 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63% retained to Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93% retained to Fall 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89% retained to Spring 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE INITIATIVE/ MOVE RETENTION RATE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2012</td>
<td>93.8% retained to FY 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2013</td>
<td>100% retained to FY 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2014</td>
<td>100% retained to FY 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The quantitative and qualitative successes of MOVE complement new student success initiatives, including Student African American Sisterhood (SAAS) and Brother To Brother (B2B), as well as existing programs like Goizueta Scholars, Hispanic Outreach and Retention at Armstrong (HORA) and Hispanic Outreach and Leadership at Armstrong (HOLA).

**POSITIVE RESULTS**

Initiatives targeting our first-year students have shown the following results:

- Freshmen retention is up 1.8% for spring 2015 at 90.7%
- Average successful completion of credits in the first semester is up 6% from fall 2012 (11.54 credits earned fall 2012 versus 12.24 credit earned for spring 2015)
- Average first semester GPA is up 5% (previously 2.46 fall 2012, currently 2.59 as of spring 2015)
- The number of credit hours per semester taken by first-time, full-time freshmen is up from 13.28 in FY2010 to 14.44 in FY2014.
The university also implemented Degree Works and Grades-First to help students graduate on time. The Armstrong Athletics Department was the first to use GradesFirst in spring 2011, and the department has experienced a steady increase in student grade-point averages and graduation rates.

In FY2010, the grade-point average for student-athletes on scholarship was 2.97 and the graduation rate was 43%. In FY2014, the student-athlete GPA was 3.07, with an increased graduation rate to 48%. GradesFirst has now been implemented across the university.

Helping students realize their potential is supported across campus within our Writing Center and Science and Math Tutorial Centers. In addition, the number of students served through the Office of Disability Support Services has increased by 40% since 2010.

Attractive programs for graduates and undergraduates, innovative research opportunities, strong academic programs and student-centered support services will continue to drive success in teaching and learning.

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**HEALTHCARE HUB**

Armstrong has established itself as a leading university in Georgia for health professions, conferring more bachelor’s degrees than any other University System of Georgia institution.

**UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA HEALTH PROFESSIONS BACHELOR’S DEGREES CONFERRED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong State University</td>
<td>Georgia Regents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia Southern</td>
<td>Clayton State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Georgia</td>
<td>University of West Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennesaw State</td>
<td>Columbus State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valdosta State</td>
<td>Georgia State</td>
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</table>

*Includes all fields within the 51 Health Professions CIP Code except 51.24, 51.25 and 51.0808, which are related to Veterinary Medicine. Note: Consolidated Institutions’ data for prior years were totaled to create comparable data. Source: Armstrong State University Office of Institutional Research; University System of Georgia Degrees Conferred Reports 10-08-14

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**ACTIVE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY SERVICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2010</td>
<td>154</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2011</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2012</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2013</td>
<td>216</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY TOTAL DEGREES CONFERRED**

(Associate, Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctorate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>FY 2012</td>
<td>1,179</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2013</td>
<td>1,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2014</td>
<td>1,303</td>
</tr>
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</table>
STRATEGIC GOAL #2

Armstrong will ensure TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

Armstrong will build upon and strengthen its foundational commitment to teaching, ensuring that transformative learning occurs inside and outside the classroom.

Armstrong’s history of academic excellence rests upon superior teaching. The strategic plan reinforces the continued expectation of high-quality learning experiences underscored by diverse learning environments.

Students learn in small classroom settings. Highly qualified faculty teach students, rather than teaching assistants. Since 2009, the number of tenured, tenure-track faculty has increased by 2.15%.

In addition to the 35 bachelor’s degree programs, 11 associate degree programs and 42 minors available, unique programs are emerging, such as the Biochemistry degree and new degrees in Cyber Security and Business Economics. The recently established Center for Applied Cyber Education brings an interdisciplinary approach to the high-demand field of Cyber Security, giving students the opportunity to learn to secure data, investigate intrusions and prosecute cybercrimes from day one.

3D technology is also enhancing the learning environment at Armstrong. 3D printing, first used in our Engineering program, has now expanded to all STEM disciplines. In addition, a grant-funded 3D Evolution learning opportunity, offered through the Biology department, allows students to learn about evolution with the latest in 3D technology and through the operation of a state-of-the-art Next-Generation Genetic Sequencer.

Learning opportunities have been diversified by offering online and hybrid course offerings. Since 2010, the percentage of students taking only online courses has increased by 53%, and the percentage of students taking 50% or more of their course work online has increased by 58%.
Our military-affiliated student enrollment has steadily increased due to intentional outreach and recruitment, an active Office of Veterans Affairs, a robust Student Veterans of America chapter and the expansion of the Armstrong Liberty Center. This has resulted in the following achievements:

- #12 in the nation on the prestigious Military Times Best for Vets Colleges 2015 list
- Department of Education and Veterans Affairs 8 Keys to Veterans Success site
- Got Your 6 campus partner
- Post-9/11 GI Bill Yellow Ribbon Program participant

The university has also developed an innovative Green Zone program to increase the knowledge and skills of Armstrong faculty and staff, enabling them to identify and address the needs of veterans across campus.

Armstrong’s Undergraduate Research and Student Scholars Symposiums, events designed to celebrate the outstanding scholarly achievements made by our students, have exemplified what it means to ensure that “transformative learning occurs inside and outside the classroom.”

Students also pursue transformative learning outside the classroom. Since 2012, the number of student clubs and organizations has steadily increased from 76 to 102, including seven fraternities and seven sororities. These student-led organizations provide a social and academic outlet and support system, allowing students to translate classroom learning experiences to group and social settings.

Students not only participate in student clubs, organizations, activities, programs and events, but also use our state-of-the-art Recreation and Wellness Center that offers exercise equipment and a variety of ways students can learn about healthy lifestyle habits.

The 2014-2015 Recreation and Wellness Experience at Armstrong included 10 off-campus outdoor excursions, 20 intramural sports teams, 8 sports clubs and 22 group exercise and wellness activities. Participation in group exercise has increased by 47.5% since 2010, and building usage has increased 12%.

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**ONLINE LEARNING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course Sections</th>
<th>Students Taught</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4,631</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>5,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>5,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>6,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>6,927</td>
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</table>

**MILITARY-AFFILIATED STUDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>184</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>323</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>909</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2011-2014 ARMSTRONG STUDENT SCHOLARS SYMPOSIUM STATISTICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Presentations (oral and poster)</th>
<th>Total Number of Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes some students were authors on multiple presentations. In 2012, 165 individual students participated. In 2013, 243 individual students participated. In 2014, 299 individual students participated.

**PROFESSIONALLY ACCREDITED PROGRAMS**

- Chemistry
- Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Computer Science
- Health Services Administration
- Medical Laboratory Science
- Music
- Nursing
- Physical Therapy
- Public Health
- Radiologic Sciences
- Nuclear Medicine Track
- Respiratory Therapy
- Teacher Education
STRATEGIC GOAL #3
Armstrong will MODERNIZE AND EXPAND TECHNOLOGIES campuswide

Armstrong will enhance existing campus technologies, expanding both its technological capabilities and reach, to meet current and emerging needs.

Armstrong is keenly aware of rapid changes in technological innovation that affect higher education. The university must assess the needs of faculty, staff, students and other constituents in order to systematically develop plans to secure, deploy and maintain appropriate technologies campuswide.

Since the 2010 implementation of the strategic plan, Information Technology Services (ITS) has focused on four areas: advancing technology, classroom and instructional technology, reporting and data, and customer service.

Over the last year, IT Services has achieved:

- **43%** improvement rate in closing tickets
- **92%** improvement rate in ticket assignment and response time
- **100%** improvement rate on resolution time for priority tickets
- **7 min.** average response time to classroom technology issues
- **1.1 Gb/s** current campus internet bandwidth, increased from 25 Mb/s
In the area of advancing technology, IT Services implemented new technologies and processes to enhance the infrastructure on campus. New fiber-optic cables were installed across campus to replace existing end-of-life infrastructure and provide better redundancy.

Armstrong’s main website was moved to Amazon, guaranteeing website operations in the event of Internet issues on campus. Wireless Everywhere Print Anywhere technology was also implemented, allowing students to print from home/residence hall/mobile telephone. To improve the delivery and installation of new computers, a computer replacement plan was developed, reducing installation time from more than two weeks to two to three business days.

Ensuring that state-of-the-art technology is available to support academic instruction served as a top priority. Since 2010, new audiovisual (AV) equipment has been installed in 82 classrooms on campus. Classroom functionality checks are scheduled twice weekly to verify audio, video and network functionality for podium and/or laptop computers. Status of equipment and equipment availability may be viewed at classrooms.armstrong.edu.

Forty-six academic training sessions on use of equipment were offered, with 140 individuals participating in the sessions. The integration of the virtual classroom application Blackboard with the learning management system, Desire2Learn (D2L), expanded access to classroom tools such as a virtual whiteboard, chat and web cam.

Managing and accessing data are keys to maximizing efficiency throughout the university. A number of initiatives have been implemented in this area. Banner — the system used to manage accounts receivable, financial aid, alumni/advancement, finance, students and human resource information — underwent a major revitalization project.

The project focused on defining and streamlining business processes and supporting the technology, in order to support the overall mission of the institution. Results include:

- Banner integration with D2L
- eReporting through ARGOS
- Banner self-service applications
- Elimination of paper student records through Banner Document Management

The implementation of a new online scholarship application, Scholarship Manager, allows students to more easily view and apply for scholarships. The online directory has been updated and published with processes in place to keep the information up-to-date and in sync with users’ Google Contact information.

In looking to the future, Armstrong will continue to modernize and expand the technology base. IT Services is working with campus constituents to create a 35-year IT strategic plan, which will include major equipment investments and equipment rotation. A classroom AV replacement plan has been developed, which proposes 30 new installations over the next two years. Sixteen of these 30 installations were completed by the start of the fall 2015 semester.

IT Services is also partnering with key faculty to develop cloud-based, IT-hosted solutions for web, database and application development instruction. This initiative will improve access for faculty and staff to these resources, as well as reduce costs by leveraging existing investments in the Amazon Web Services infrastructure.

Even the best technology requires customer support. A working group was formed to better address the technology support needs of the students, faculty and staff.

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STRATEGIC GOAL #4
Armstrong will STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY ITS FINANCIAL BASE and resources

Armstrong will strengthen its financial base, diversify university resources and wisely invest in initiatives in order to ensure long-term sustainability.

Armstrong faces strong competition for limited resources. The university has identified and secured diverse but reliable sources of revenue in order to meet its obligations, while fueling future development.

The five-year period since the strategic plan was put into place has been challenging for the university from a financial standpoint. State funding per student full-time equivalent has declined, from $7,239 in 2010 to $6,607 in 2014, as the cost of providing quality instruction and academic support has increased.

$59.3M
financial aid awarded in FY2014, up 10.3% from $53.7 million in FY2010

$2.3M
total scholarships awarded in FY2014, up 42.7% from $1.6 million in FY2010
Through initiatives such as new budgeting management tools, collaborative processes and alumni outreach, Armstrong has been able to maintain revenue streams that outpace expenditures.

There has been an increase of capital assets by 33%, including the new Armstrong Liberty Center in Hinesville, renovations to Gamble Hall, new Learning Commons, re-purposing the Armstrong Center for the College of Health Professions, a new Alumni Center in Burnett Hall, improved sports fields and renovation of Compass Point Apartments. Armstrong also secured $1.8 million in design funding for a proposed new College of Health Professions facility.

Armstrong received more than $10 million in external research funding over the five-year period. The College of Science and Technology obtained 44% of this funding and the College of Health Professions secured 34% of the external research funding.
Thanks to the diligent work done in Armstrong’s Advancement Office, our endeavors to provide transformative and innovative learning experiences for our students have boosted our visibility locally, as well as across the state and region. This increased visibility has manifested in higher levels of giving to the university.

Armstrong has enjoyed marked endowment growth over the past five years. FY2010 reported $5.8 million endowment dollars, and in FY2014 that number increased to $7.8 million.

While student tuition increased over this five-year period, the impact was blunted by scholarships offered externally and through the Armstrong Foundation. Foundation-funded scholarships rose from $387,297 in FY2011 to $442,245 in FY2014.

### COMMITMENT TO FACULTY AND STAFF

A salary study was completed, comparing Armstrong personnel salaries to the CUPA HR average personnel salaries. The data revealed adjustments were needed. A series of market adjustments for salaries of faculty and staff were initiated using redirected funds.

In 2014 and 2015, funding was provided through state appropriations for merit raises, with Armstrong voluntarily supplementing the amount each year.

### FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES RECEIVING SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STRATEGIC GOAL #5
Armstrong will ENHANCE ITS IMAGE AND VISIBILITY

Armstrong will increase its visibility across the state and region by transforming its most compelling strengths, values and offerings into resonant messaging that inspires loyalty among internal stakeholders and alumni and builds lasting relationships with the local community.

Armstrong must have a clearly defined image and increased visibility to attract students, faculty, staff, donors and community partners. With strong, targeted marketing and public relations plans, Armstrong can position and differentiate itself to achieve its vision.

In 2012, Armstrong launched the university’s new Start Strong branding and visibility campaign. The multimedia Start Strong campaign — which includes television commercials, billboards and digital advertising — celebrates our campus and community. It has successfully established new funding opportunities, started new traditions and supported Armstrong’s ongoing efforts to ensure student success.

- 8,224 community service hours logged in five years of Treasure Savannah day of service
- 50 nonprofit organizations served in Savannah and Hinesville during Treasure Savannah
- $221K alumni giving in FY2015, up from $140,000 in FY2010
Armstrong's curb appeal was enhanced with signage welcoming visitors to campus and welcoming students home. We recently celebrated one full year as Armstrong State University, having removed “Atlantic” from our name in July 2014. The support for the name change speaks to our strong relationship with the Board of Regents and Regent Don Waters, a proud Armstrong graduate.

Increased alumni engagement has boosted visibility for the university. Alumni applauded the Connection E-Newsletter, our expanded social media presence and the opening of a new Alumni Center in Burnett Hall. Over the past five years, alumni attendance at university events has more than doubled, and fundraising has greatly increased.

Paint the Town Maroon — a high-profile celebration of Pirate Pride held annually in Johnson Square — unites the campus and community, raises funds for Armstrong, increases awareness and draws positive attention to the Armstrong community.

A visible presence in the St. Patrick's Day Parade and the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade reminds the campus community that Savannah is our home. Each year, more than 150 students, faculty and staff participate in both parades.

Since 2010, Armstrong has united in service to Savannah. Through the university's Treasure Savannah initiative, we bring together students, faculty and staff twice a year to give back to local nonprofit organizations.

Through expanded programming efforts, the university's visibility within the region has dramatically increased over the years. Some of the initiatives include:

- Armstrong Day at the Capitol
- Science on Tap
- Tech Fest
- Moveable Feast
- Alumni Gala
- Celebrate Armstrong Finale
- Savannah Asian Cultural Festival
- Military Family Day
- Savannah Children's Book Festival
- Savannah Winds Patriotic Concert
- Masquers performances
- Interprofessional Healthcare Summit
- Teens for Literacy
- Cultural Heritage Month Celebrations
- Armstrong Farmers Market
- Robotics Camp
- Summer Camps

Since 2010, our athletic teams have expanded our visibility nationally, within the region and in the Peach Belt Conference by bringing home five NCAA national championships, four NCAA southeast region championships and 37 Peach Belt Conference championships.
Visits to the Armstrong website have more than doubled since 2010. The university has also dramatically increased its visibility on local television news stations, increased its mentions in local newspapers and magazines and has developed strong media relationships.

Armstrong’s marketing logos, campaigns and designs have been streamlined for a wider audience. We have released new radio and television commercials, increased our billboard visibility, increased digital marketing and expanded our visibility in social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr and LinkedIn.

Through social media, we have been able to inform and engage current students, faculty, staff, alumni and Armstrong affiliates, as well as connect with prospective students to support current enrollment goals.

Armstrong received two Lumina Foundation grants for CAMINO and Savannah Graduates. CAMINO, a collaborative program that strives to increase the post-secondary credentials of Latinos, is a collaborative initiative with our in-city sister universities, local public school systems and nonprofit and for-profit partners. CAMINO’s success drew national recognition, was awarded a gold star by Lumina and was featured on PBS American Graduate Day and a three-part Univision National Network series.

CAMINO’s achievements also contributed to Armstrong’s newest community partnership collaborative endeavor, Savannah Graduates. Funded in 2014, Savannah Graduates has a goal of increasing the number of citizens in Chatham County with a post-high school degree or professional certificate by 80% by the year 2025. This effort brings together local, state, federal, nonprofit and for-profit organizations to educate and improve opportunities for citizens in our community.
Armstrong’s Strategic Plan, implemented five years ago, has served as an important road map, guiding the university community toward common goals and uniting faculty and staff around our core commitment to student success.

Thanks to careful planning and a powerful commitment to our core values, the university is well-positioned to continue on its progressive path of cultivating, nurturing and developing tomorrow’s leaders.

As we close the first phase of our Strategic Plan, we are proud to embark on a year of anniversaries. During the 2015-2016 academic year, we will celebrate Armstrong’s founding 80 years ago and the university’s move to Savannah’s southside 50 years ago.

As we honor our past, we eagerly look ahead to the future and to supporting future generations of students for many years to come. Armstrong will continue to recruit, retain and graduate a diverse student body from across the country and around the world, helping them start strong and finish even stronger.