

NORTH GEORGIA REED

Regional Education and Economic Development

PROGRESS REPORT
2020



ACCESS TO EDUCATION



WORKFORCE READINESS

IMPACT

IN NORTH GEORGIA



PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

UNG | UNIVERSITY of
NORTH GEORGIA™

“

The collaboration between our school systems, businesses and regional leaders is an integral part of Georgia’s leading workforce development programs. We appreciate the University of North Georgia’s efforts in building a curriculum that supports the state in ensuring that Georgia’s workforce possesses the skills necessary to succeed in future high-demand careers. Additionally, we want to thank the University and their partners for their continued commitment in developing the Regional Education and Economic Development Initiative to help Georgia’s students on the path to success.

— **Georgia Department of Economic Development Commissioner Pat Wilson**

I often say, everything touches everything. We’re proud to support the REED initiative, as it takes a holistic view of how all industries – including health care – can work together to support a thriving regional economy.

Carol Burrell, President and CEO, Northeast Georgia health System

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Greetings,

The University of North Georgia launched the Regional Education and Economic Development Initiative in 2015 to support educational attainment and economic development through increased collaboration with K-12 educators and industry. Our goal is to prepare young people to realize their potential and to succeed as adults and contribute to the economic prosperity of their communities.

I am pleased to provide this report highlighting a few of our successes, celebrating our partners, and sharing information about current and future projects supported through the REED Initiative.

As a public institution with five campuses and nearly 20,000 students, the University of North Georgia has a responsibility to the citizens of Georgia. I am grateful for the tireless efforts and support from our faculty, staff, students, alumni, friends, and partners who contribute to the success of the REED Initiative. Only together can we continue to strengthen educational opportunities and economic development in north Georgia.

Sincerely,

Bonita C. Jacobs, Ph.D.
President

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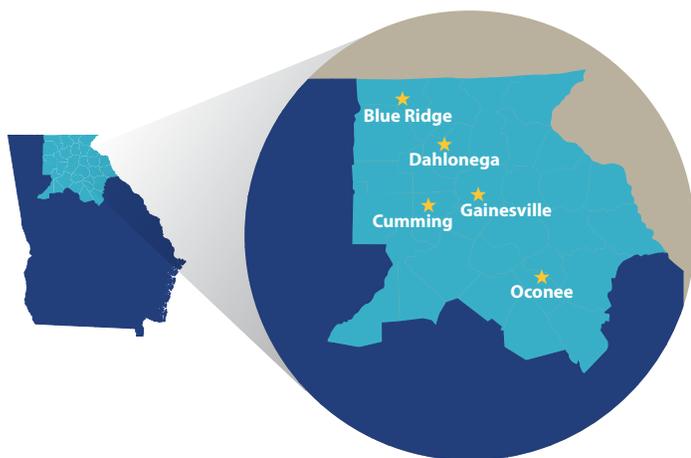
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About UNG

The University of North Georgia (UNG) is a leading regional university that helps fuel educational attainment and economic momentum in one of the fastest growing areas of Georgia. UNG is a public institution and part of the University System of Georgia. One of only six senior military colleges in the nation, UNG holds designations as a State Leadership Institution and The Military College of Georgia.

As one of Georgia's largest and fastest growing universities, enrollment has increased 31% since 2012 to nearly 20,000 students. Approximately 80% of our students are from a 30-county service area although we attract students from every state in the nation and nearly 80 countries. The majority of UNG graduates remain in Georgia, contributing their energy and expertise to helping local communities thrive.



UNG comprises 5 campuses and about 80% of our students are from a 30-county service area.

The University of North Georgia continues to expand its national reputation as an institution that provides students with an academically rigorous, career-focused education and prepares them to be leaders and innovators wherever life takes them.

KIPLINGER'S
BEST
COLLEGE
VALUES

2019

FORBES
BEST
COLLEGES

2019

RANKED
16
AMONG PUBLIC
REGIONAL
UNIVERSITIES
IN THE SOUTH

U.S. NEWS &
WORLD REPORT
BEST COLLEGES
2020

\$723
MILLION
IN ANNUAL
ECONOMIC
IMPACT
ON COMMUNITIES
IN NORTHEAST
GEORGIA.

ONE OF THE NATION'S
BEST
COLLEGE
VALUES

FORBES

3RD LOWEST
STUDENT
DEBT
IN THE SOUTH

U.S. NEWS &
WORLD REPORT

About the REED Initiative

In 2015, the University of North Georgia launched the Regional Education and Economic Development (REED) Initiative in response to input and recommendations received from regional leaders representative of business, education, government, and nonprofit organizations from communities in the university's 30-county service area. The overwhelming consensus was that many of our young people in Georgia were not prepared to join the workforce of tomorrow. Much of our work through the REED Initiative focuses on creating opportunities that connect educators and students to the business community to raise awareness of Georgia's most significant industries, in-demand job opportunities, and skills and educational requirements necessary for employment.

Through increased collaboration with K-12 school systems, our technical college partners, and industry, the REED Initiative supports activities designed to ensure young people are prepared to succeed as adults and contribute to the economic prosperity of their communities.

FOCUS AREAS



**ACCESS TO
EDUCATION**



**WORKFORCE
READINESS**



**PARTNERSHIPS &
COLLABORATION**

Access to Education

Access to education lies at the heart of economic prosperity. Education reduces poverty, improves health, contributes to social stability, and drives economic growth. A significant aspect of UNG's mission is to ensure students have the access and opportunity to pursue a college education. We continue to respond to social inequality by creating meaningful opportunities for students from all communities.

Upward Bound gives low-income, first-generation students hope of attending college. Funded through a \$2.6 million multi-year federal grant, students from Gilmer High School in Ellijay and Johnson High School in Hall County have the opportunity to participate in a residential summer college program.



The Summer Scholars Institute, an intensive four-week summer program for rising 8th, 9th, and 10th grade “at promise” students, encourages high school completion and entry into post-secondary education.

Heritage Spanish-speaking students earn a college degree and a job through the **Realizing Inspiring Successful Educators (RISE)** undergraduate program. Tuition is paid by the school district where students work as paraprofessionals with English learners while they complete their education, after which they receive an offer of employment to teach. The RISE Program is possible through partnerships with Hall County and Gainesville City Schools.





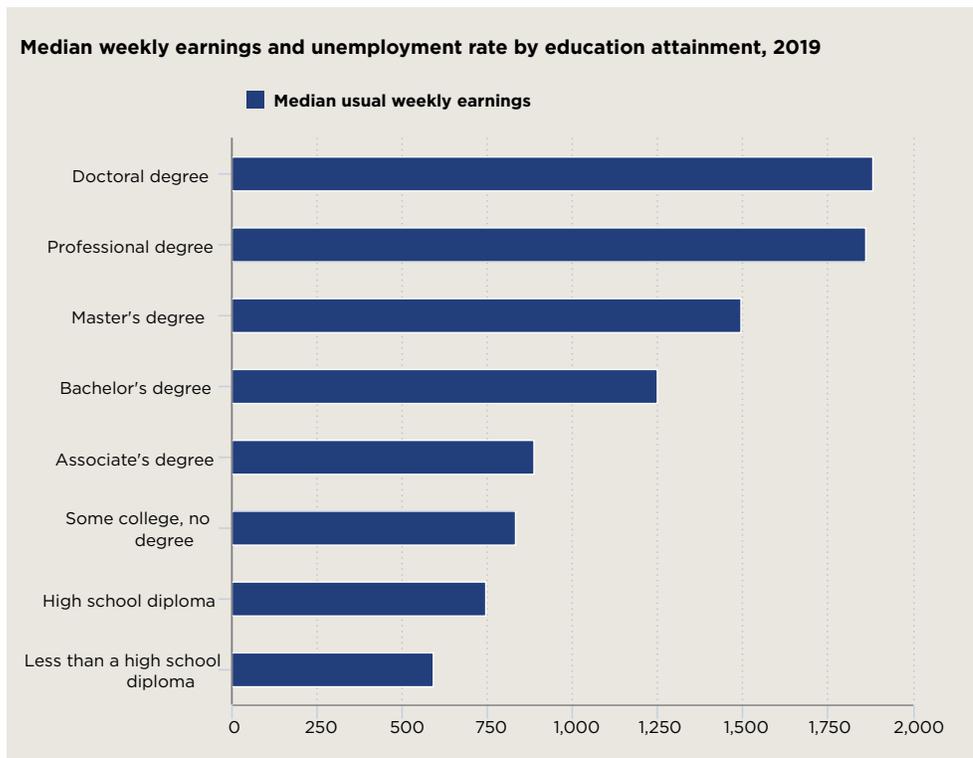
In 2015, the University of North Georgia received a grant for \$2.1 million over five years from the U.S. Department of Education to establish a **College Assistance Migrant Program** providing migrant youth the support and guidance they need to enroll and graduate from college. UNG received a second award of \$2.1 million in 2020 to renew the program for an additional five years.

A new stand-alone **Blue Ridge Campus** opened in Fall 2020, the former Lanier Tech facilities on the UNG Gainesville Campus are undergoing renovation, and plans are underway for construction of the Cottrell Center for Business, Technology, and Innovation in Dahlonega. These facilities not only expand UNG’s capacity to serve students but also strengthen current programs and provide support for new academic offerings with improved learning environments and technology.



Educational Attainment Increases Earning Potential

Source: 2019 Current Population Survey. U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



Workforce Readiness

The economy is changing daily, and the talents, skills, and experience needed to be a part of that growth cycle are also changing. Employees who are workforce-ready have skills that are flexible and transferrable to different work situations.

Our goal at the University of North Georgia is to equip students with marketable skills, knowledge, and experience to succeed in a meaningful career in the field of their choice. To support this goal, the university continues to add new academic programs and increase hands-on learning opportunities that are strategically aligned with community and industry needs.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor's most recent employer survey, 85% of employers indicated that soft skills and work ethics were an issue at their company. Creating opportunities for hands-on-learning in real-world situations reinforces academic coursework and encourages the development of soft skills and the competencies most valued by employers.

87%



OF EMPLOYERS SAID
**CREATIVE THINKING &
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS**

WERE OF MORE CONCERN THAN BASIC...



Math Skills



Reading Skills



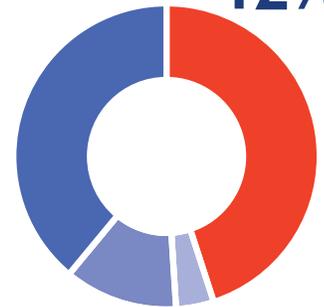
Locating Information Skills

To what do you attribute your turnover rate?

42%

LACK OF:

- Work Ethic/Soft Skills
- Pay/Benefits
- Work Schedules/Shifts
- Technical Skills



Competencies Most Valued By Employers

- Attitude
- Initiative
- Flexibility
- Organization
- Discipline
- Integrity
- Respect
- Effective Communication
- Attendance & Punctuality
- Customer Service
- Critical-thinking & Problem Solving
- Technology Usage & Social Media Ethics
- Professionalism
- Adherence to Policy

Data courtesy of





The **UNG GenCyber Warrior Academy** is a summer residential program for high school students funded through a grant from the National Security Agency. Students receive 80 hours of classroom instruction, 40 hours of hands-on lab activities, and the opportunity to engage with military

leaders and professionals from Georgia's leading cyber companies. The GenCyber Warrior Academy was the first career-focused summer camp program hosted by the university. Future plans include new high school summer programs focused on logistics and healthcare.



UNG's BB&T Center for Ethical Leadership reaches more than 1,350 high school students annually through its Building Ethical Employability Program that brings students together with business professionals for interactive workshops that promote ethical decision-making.

UNG students gain real-world experience through service-learning and internships.



Alternative Spring Break



Voluntary Income Tax Assistance Program



Student-led Therapy and Rehab (STAR) Clinic

Partnerships and Collaborations

At the University of North Georgia, we believe that engagement through collaboration and authentic partnerships with our communities should be an integral part of our DNA as an institution, not only determining who we are but also who we will be in the future. By developing and sustaining strategic partnerships, we can advance the public purpose of the university and deepen our ability to improve community life and educate students for civic and social responsibility.

Whether building collaboration between colleagues and departments or developing larger partnerships with industry, government or non-profit organizations, harnessing the strengths and abilities of others is the most strategic way to further education and economic development. In today's fast-paced environment, a "do-it-alone" approach is not effective to solve complex problems.

The University of North Georgia is one of 119 U.S. Colleges and Universities to receive the **2020 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification**, an elective designation that indicates institutional commitment to community engagement. Including the 2020 designees, only 359 schools nationwide carry the classification and only six public universities in Georgia have earned this designation defined by the Carnegie Foundation as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity."



For more than 40 years, the nationally acclaimed **Gainesville Theatre Alliance** has entertained audiences with its talented casts and construction-savvy and technically gifted students from the University of North Georgia and Brenau University. This successful collaboration advances student professional development and the community through performing arts.

The University of North Georgia partners with **Junior Achievement of Georgia** to sponsor the Career Exploration Center in The Mike and Lynn Cottrell Junior Achievement Discovery Center near UNG's Cumming Campus. More than 15,000 middle school students visit this interactive space each year where they explore college and career options as they enter and depart the Discovery Center. UNG students enrolled in social foundations courses help to facilitate programs at the Discovery Center and thrive on this service-learning opportunity.



The University of North Georgia and the **Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation** partnered to open new art facilities at the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation complex in 2015. Students on the Oconee Campus benefit from the partnership by gaining access to state-of-the-art studio spaces and gaining opportunities to work with OCAF members and the local community.

The University System of Georgia purchased the former Chestatee Hospital in Dahlonega for future use by UNG. This facility, currently leased by Northeast Georgia Health System while they move forward with plans to construct a new medical center in Lumpkin County, may be used in the future to expand healthcare education programs, student-led community clinics or other outreach programs. NGHS is the official healthcare partner of UNG Athletics and collaborator with the university on health initiatives and Wellness Expos, as well as with Student Counseling and Health Services in Gainesville.



Northeast Georgia
Health System

Community and Corporate Development

The University of North Georgia has multiple centers that enhance academic programming and support community initiatives relevant to their focus area.

Appalachian Studies Center supports research and educational programs that preserve and translate the history and culture of Appalachia into new entrepreneurial endeavors.

BB&T Center for Ethical Leadership promotes ethical decision making through research, education, and professional development programs at the community, university and K-12 levels.

Center for Cyber Operations Education develops highly capable cyber professionals and leaders for the private, non-profit, military, and government sectors. We accomplish this through innovative co-curricular opportunities, interdisciplinary research in emerging threats and solutions, and relevant community outreach to foster a sustainable ecosystem to support cyber operations education.

Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation is a collaborative initiative that engages students, faculty and staff across the University, as well as communities in the region who imagine, innovate, and seek to start and grow new and existing ventures.

Environmental Leadership Center supports service, research, and teaching activities that promote leadership and stewardship to preserve and enhance the environment.

Institute for Healthy Aging brings together academic programming and community initiatives to enhance quality of life for older adults in our region.

MakerBot Innovation Center employs digital technology to inspire innovation and invention enabling entrepreneurial thinkers to conceptualize, create, and produce prototypes, visual art pieces and other products.

Career Services connects employers to students for internships and employment opportunities.

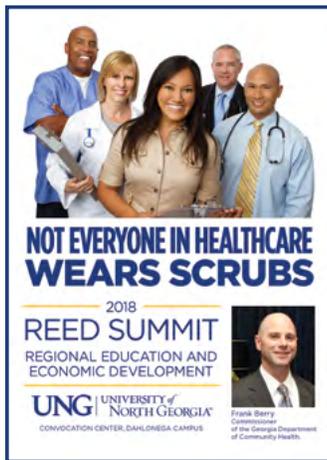
Professional and Continuing Education provides practical knowledge and skills to help individuals advance their careers and organizations accelerate their results through customized training for employees.

Career fairs are an affordable option for employers to recruit well-prepared students with a depth of knowledge in their major and experience developed through internships, project based learning, campus leadership, and volunteer service.



Annual REED Summit

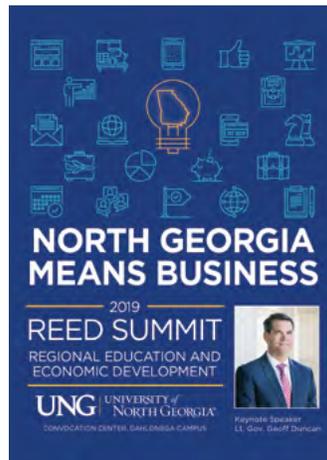
The Regional Education and Economic Development Summit brings together groups with varied interests learn about and discuss industry trends, educational pathways, and existing and future high-demand career opportunities in the rapidly growing north Georgia region. Participants include economic development professionals, government officials, business and community leaders as well as educators and students from the region's high schools, technical colleges, and universities. Introduced with an inaugural Summit in 2018, the annual REED Summit was established to connect the dots and create a cohesive dialog relevant to the three focus areas of the UNG REED Initiative: access to education, workforce readiness, and partnerships and collaboration.



2018

Not Everyone in Healthcare Wears Scrubs

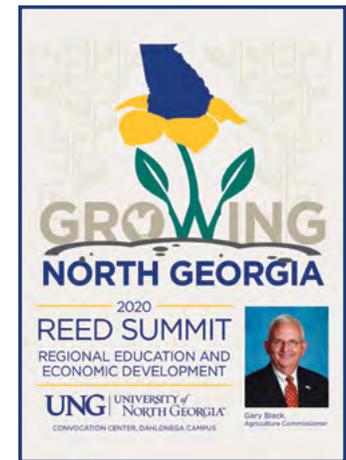
When people think of medical professions, they envision doctors and nurses, but many jobs in healthcare are considered “non-clinical.” The 2018 Summit focused on the unique healthcare challenges faced by rural communities and non-clinical careers that impact patients and in a positive way.



2019

North Georgia Means Business

As manufacturers, distribution centers, and technology businesses expand in north Georgia, demand for workers skilled in logistics and supply chain management, cybersecurity, and financial technology is growing. The 2019 Summit featured plans for construction of a new inland port in Hall County and demonstrated ways emerging technologies are changing how we do business in today's global marketplace.



2020

Growing North Georgia

With more than \$75 billion in economic impact every year, agribusiness is Georgia's leading industry. The 2020 Summit showcased career opportunities in agribusiness and ways that biotechnology, drones, telematics, yield monitoring, and other precision ag technologies are changing how Georgia grows.

Educational Opportunities and Research

The Center for Global Engagement manages education abroad programs, hosts international students and scholars, and supports international educational experiences and partnerships.

The Center for Language Education provides English learners with high-quality instruction to improve their spoken and written skills in preparation for university studies.

Institute for Leadership & Strategic Studies supports students pursuing careers as leaders in the U.S. Army, government and non-government agencies, and corporations with global interests.

The Office of Research and Engagement supports the creation and transfer of new knowledge and scientific discoveries into technical and scholarly innovations that lead to new entrepreneurial endeavors and address pressing social issues.

Academics:

The University of North Georgia offers a broad range of academic programs from certificates and associates degrees through professional doctorate programs.

College of Arts and Letters

Mike Cottrell College of Business

College of Education

College of Health Sciences and Professions

College of Science and Mathematics

Lewis F. Rogers Institute for Environmental and Spatial Analysis

University College (offering interdisciplinary degrees for students who want a specialized degree path with more than one focus area)

The Office of Government Relations and Economic Development at the University of North Georgia serves as a liaison between the community and the university by fostering positive relationships with local governments, surrounding neighborhoods, civic and community-based organizations, and the local business community. Our team can assist you to access and leverage university assets relevant to your needs.



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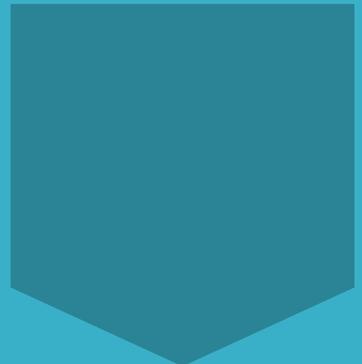
The University of North Georgia serves as a catalyst for economic prosperity in north Georgia and has many resources that to help you start or grow your business, solve complex problems, or drive social change.

“

Leadership is the key to the success of each community in north Georgia. We are thankful to have in our region the University of North Georgia and the leadership they bring in helping the communities succeed and the new leaders they produce back into the communities each year. The REED Summit is just one example where their continued leadership makes a difference in educating today's leaders in the real issues that affects education and economic development.”

— **Rope Roberts**
Community and Economic Development Manager
Georgia Power

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Blue Ridge • Cumming • Dahlonega • Gainesville • Oconee

UNG is designated as a State Leadership Institution and as The Military College of Georgia®.

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