WORKFORCE READINESS

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Greetings, Friends of the Northeast Georgia Region,

e Complete College Georgia initiative has revealed an alarming statistic: only 17 perce of Georgia's public high school freshmen w graduate on time from a two- or four-year colleg or university. In addition, many of our young people are not prepared to join the workforce tomorrow. To address these issues and positiv impact the future of our region, the University of North Georgia established the Regional Education and Economic Development (REED) Task Force, a partnership of more than 100 invited business, education, government, and community leaders from a 27-county area of the northeast region of the state. ese dedicated task force members took on the charge of identifying the challenges and opportunities for ensuring that more of our K-12 students will succeed as adults and contribute to the economic prosperity of their communities.

e University conducted three, daylong task force meetings held across the region. Consistently, the conversation came back to three overarching themes for change:

- X P S L G S P F S B D E F J O F T T
- B D D F T T U P F E V D B U J P O
- Q B S U O F S T I J Q T B O E D P M M B C P S B U J P O T

is summary presents task force recommendations for action around the three themes and examples of existing models of success "gamechangers." REED's three themes will be part of our university's new strategic plan, re ecting our commitment to strengthening educational opportunities and economic development in the Northeast Georgia region.

My hope is that you will use this report as a resource to continue the momentum established by the REED Task Force. Advancing our region requires a collaborative e ort and the following pages demonstrate that we are well on our way. As a public university with four campuses and over 15,000 students, the University of North Georgia has a responsibility to the citizens of our region, and we are committed to "kicking the rocks out of the road" with you. I look forward to sharing in the success of this continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Bonita C. Jacobs, PhD
President
University of North Georgia

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Workforce Readiness is the knowledge, skills, abilities, habits, and characteristics required to be successfully employed. REED Task

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

e state of Georgia has a plan to increase the education attainment level of its citizens. Complete College Georgia is a partnership between the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia that involves 60 institutions of higher education, each of which has a speci c plan for college retention and completion. A major goal of Complete College Georgia is to provide access to education to a greater number of traditional and non-traditional populations. Speci cally, it recognizes that “in addition to academic readiness, students need information, encouragement, and hands-on support in order to access, and be successful in, college.” e REED Task Force agrees. It identi ed three strategies for increasing access to and succeeding in education: (1) providing multiple points of access to education, (2) reaching out to and supporting nontraditional populations, and (3) assisting with challenges that impact the learning success of both traditional and nontraditional students.

Education programs that are a ordable and exible and take advantage of innovative delivery opportunities will address many challenges. To implement such tailored programs requires collaboration and commitment at the community level. Program leaders must keep pace with the needs of the region’s workforce and, at the same time, ensure that students receive high quality education.

Task Force Recommendations

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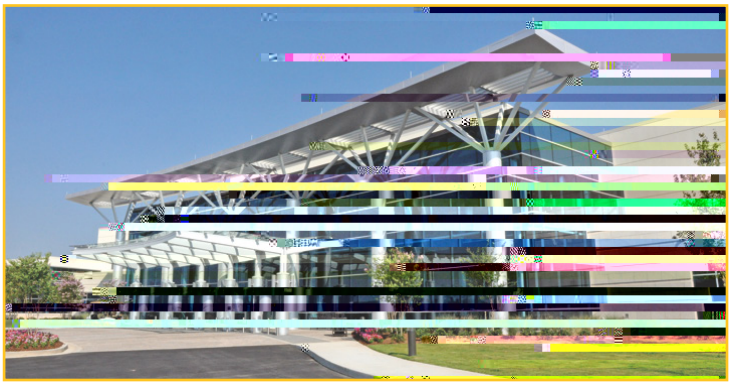
Washington, a small town located 50 miles from Athens, Georgia, is the county seat of Wilkes County; it is the first county formed under the state constitution in 1777. Both communities are often referred to as “Washington-Wilkes.” In 2007, under the leadership of the county’s board of commissioners, Washington-Wilkes leaders responded to a lack of access to education for its residents by raising funds within the local community for a new program that would be designed to fit the area’s needs. For the next several years, community leaders toured career academies across the state and considered the best model for the Washington-Wilkes

Task Force Recommendations

t #SFBL PVU

In 2007, Franklin and Hart Counties faced the closing of two failing local hospitals, forcing residents to le
the larger community for immediate and longterm healthcare needs. A study of the problem recommer
constructing a new facility, but undertaking to nance a new facility could not be more ill-timed.

In 2008, the nation experienced a tremendous economic downturn, so conventional funding was unavail
However, Franklin County and the leaders and communities of Hartwell, Lavonia, and Royston were determ
to build a new hospital: the Ty Cobb Regional Medical Center. rough partnerships and collaboration
community leaders teamed up with non-pro t organizations, government agencies, and a consortium of ov
physicians to invest in the medical center. Today, the Ty Cobb Regional Medical Center is a $72 million,
bed facility that has saved over 300 jobs, added 25 new jobs, and generated over $300 million for the reg
models the kind of partnerships and collaborations that can work when a region is determined to ful ll a r
and lead with vision.



Change the Game: Partnerships & Col

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LET'S CHANGE THE GAME!

NORTH GEORGIA

REED

Regional Education and Economic Development