Albany State University

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

The primary mission of Albany State University (ASU) is to educate students to become outstanding contributors to society. To that end, ASU offers Bachelor's, Master's and Education Specialist degrees, and post-Masters certificates. The University emphasizes the liberal arts as the foundation for all learning by exposing students to the humanities, fine arts, social sciences and the sciences. In addition, global learning is fostered through a broad-based curriculum, diverse University activities and the expanding use of technology. These programs and activities are executed in conjunction with a major goal of ASU's Strategic Plan which guiding principle maintains that "leadership in community and global partnerships and service" can impact retention through various internships and student academic and non-academic activities relative to their majors. Involvement in service learning activities instill a sense of purpose and boost self-esteem, making the student more likely to recognize personal and professional opportunities for growth.

ASU is categorized as a historically black college and university (HBCU), in that it was founded to serve the educational needs of African Americans. While the University has evolved during the past 100 years of its existence to serve an increasingly diverse population, its primary student demographic remains largely African American. In 2013-2014, ASU enrolled 4,261 students (3,661 of whom were undergraduates). There were 2,877 females (68%) and 1,384 males (32%), and the total number of males enrolled is less than half that of females. Overall enrollment dipped slightly from Fall 2012 to Fall 2013 (down by 0.3%), but there was a small increase in the overall number of first-time, full-time freshmen enrolling in 2013 (up by 2.4%). Retention from freshman to sophomore year increased to 70% in 2013, from 67% in 2012. The 6-year graduation rate also increased from 39% in 2012 to 42% in 2013, which ranked ASU third among USG Universities.

ASU has taken several campus-wide actions designed to support the goals of its Complete College Georgia (CCG) Plan. In spring of 2013, each of its 4 Colleges was asked to develop specific action plans in alignment with the goals of its CCG plan. The action plans were tied directly to the degree majors offered within the College and included dates for accomplishment as well as individuals responsible. The intention was to create a deeper sense of ownership by each College and its respective faculties. In addition, each College level plan addresses how it will support the campus-wide activities of the Academic Advising and Retention Center and the Academic Success Unit. This summer, ASU held an Education/Retention Summit during which key stakeholders discussed how to improve a number of our existing activities that impinge on retention/completion. In Spring 2014 faculty in each department developed plans for 4 goals: reduce midterm deficiencies, increase retention rates, increase graduation rates, and establish/expand partnerships. In Summer 2014, ASU had an Education Retention Summit and reviewed/refined the plans. During the Fall 2014 Faculty/Staff Conference, the plans were shared with all ASU personnel for input. In one example of an implementation strategy, each department has referred students to peer tutoring or supplemental instruction if their exam scores are not at C or higher in any class by weeks 4-5 of the semester. The Academic Advisement and Retention Center provided colleges and departments with grade distributions by course to ensure that all faculty were aware of student progress.

Each college has implemented or expanded the number of on-campus and off-campus engagement opportunities available to students in their majors. As examples: the College of Business instituted a "Cash Mob" for local and area businesses, providing students insight into the power of the average person to influence the economic success of local business. The College of Business also collaborates with area businesses to develop skills needed in their careers. Accounting students and faculty assist with completion of tax returns free of charge for the public. The College of Education has implemented study activities for area public school students, linking future teachers to methods and practices that instill a desire in public school students for success and further education, leading them to be productive citizens. The music majors from the College of Arts and Humanities perform for area schools, civic and service organizations; an example is providing musical performances at area nursing homes where students interact with residents following their performances.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Albany State University's 2013-2014 goals were to 1) reduce mid-term and final semester academic deficiencies by 2% per year over the next 5 years; 2) increase ASU's retention rate to 70% by 2017 and 3) increase ASU's graduation rate to 45% by 2017. During AY 2014, ASU reached the retention goal of 70% and increased the graduation rate to 42%. Data collected and maintained by the Academic Advising and Retention Center and showed an 11.4% decline in deficiencies from Fall 2012 to Fall 2013. However, when the position of Institutional Research was filled in December of 2013, it was decided that a different process was needed to ensure accuracy of these data, so deficiencies will be better monitored in AY 2015 by IR and by the online education director. IR in the Office of Academic Affairs will monitor the data extracted from Banner and will place the data in a centralized data system for use by departments, colleges and Academic Affairs for various

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activities and initiatives.

For 2014-2015, ASU will 1) target the increase of graduation rates of first generation college students and students from racial/ethnic minorities; 2) shorten the time to degree completion; and 3)increase the likelihood of degree completion by changes in remediation. ASU colleges and departments identified specific strategies to increase graduation rates that include timelines, responsible persons, expected outcome dates, and reporting of progress to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs as noted in the previous discussion of the College-wide CCG plans each College developed. Some of the strategies include better and more frequent academic advisement by the Academic Advising and Retention Center (AARC) and by department faculty; clearer delineation of required course offerings and scheduling and adherence to student's program of study; earlier career counseling for different majors; better use of Degree Works and Grades First to better identification of students who would benefit from tutoring and supplemental instruction; and more student–faculty engagement activities. ASU will increase the use of curriculum mapping in all majors to identify gaps in content and institute ways to close the gaps. Colleges will add to their alumni databases speakers who can share with students their models of success and also serve as student mentors. Collecting and reporting these data will help focus the activities needed for improved retention and graduation. ASU has set the retention rate to 72% and the graduation rate to 41% for 2014-2015.

ASU will shorten time to degree completion by use of dual enrollment and prior learning assessment. During 2013-2014, ASU had MOUs with the Dougherty County Early College and with Deerfield Windsor School. In the spring of 2014, ASU personnel met with the Dougherty County Curriculum Director and high school principals/assistant principals about dual enrollment. As a result of the meeting, one high school scheduled a meeting with potential students and their parents and will be participating in dual enrollment with ASU in AY 2015. Additionally, one other high school has requested a meeting between their high school counselors and ASU personnel with a goal of dual enrollment beginning in Spring 2015. ASU is determined to continue building dual enrollment relationships with the local and area high schools. Also, ASU faculty will interact with local and area middle and high school teachers in ways to better prepare public school students for college work.

ASU will increase the likelihood of degree completion by additional remediation activities. Some of the activities inclue continued identification of students requiring additional learning support and enrollment in identified English and math courses that have a supplemental learning lab in order to increase academic success. Workshops will be provided for faculty in order to share effective teaching strategies. Throughout each semester, workshops, peer tutoring and supplemental instruction in areas identified as challenging will be offered to students. In addition, organizations such as the Center for the African American Male (not restricted to males) will offer study sessions, as well as counseling and personal and professional development of students. Activities

will be evaluated at the end of Fall and Spring semesters to note the more effective activities as well as the suggestions to improve remediation which can then be incorporated in the following year.

In July 2014, Albany State University and Darton State College signed four articulation agreements (Criminal Justice, Forensic Science, Music Education, and Social Work). Beginning in Spring semester 2015, ASU faculty will teach two upper level ASU courses on the Darton campus – one each from Forensic Science and Criminal Justice. The ASU College of Business is discussing an articulation agreement with Darton State College for Supply Chain and Logistics Management (SCLM). Currently, Darton State offers a certificate program and has expressed an interest in ASU assisting Darton to build the certificate program into an associate degree in SCLM, thus allowing their associate degree graduates to transfer to ASU to earn a Bachelor's degree in SCLM. In Spring semester 2014, the College of Business added additional areas to the articulation agreement between Albany State and Albany Technical College for students with an Associate in Applied Science in Technology Management to complete the Bachelor of Applied Science in Technology Management at ASU. Beginning in 2014, the COB along with the Admissions Office began more actively recruiting at the technical colleges. Additionally, ASU and South Georgia Technical College in Americus are discussing articulation agreements in five areas: Health Care Management, Supply Chain and Logistics Management, Business Information Systems, Marketing, and Criminal Justice. Expanding the number of articulations between ASU and other institutions will lead to easier transition for students and increase the number of Georgia residents earning bachelor degrees.

SUMMARY OF GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

GOAL 1: (CCG #1) Increase the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by ASU.

ASU will target first generation college students and students from racial/ethnic minorities. Data on these students will be disaggregated from their cohort with regards toward progression toward graduation.

The high impact strategy for increasing the number of undergraduate degrees at ASU is to effectively implement the action plans developed by each department in the four colleges as well as strategies from supporting departments and organizations such as AARC and CAAM. Each department identified increased intrusive and encompassing advisement for all students.

Progress in 2014-2015: Each department developed an action plan for greater faculty-student involvement in student success. AARC increased the use of Grades First to inform faculty and department chairs of students who would benefit from involvement in supplemental instruction, peer tutoring, etc. Each college will be required to provide the Office of Academic Affairs with updates on the status of implementation of these plans and an end-of-the-year accomplishment report will be required, using the targeted

goals set. The action plans will be used for improved student success, to assess the effectiveness of the plans, and to frame revisions to the goals/actions for the following year. Data will be submitted each semester to the IR Director for analysis and dissemination of findings.

Interim measures of Progress and Measures of Success: In Fall 2011, the retention rate was 65%, increasing to 67% in Fall 2012, and to 70% in Fall 2013. The 6-year graduation rate for the freshman cohort entering in 2005 was 41%; for the 2006 cohort the rate was 39% but increased to 42% for the 2007 cohort. ASU ranks number 3 among Georgia Universities in 6 year graduation rates.

Goal 2: (CCG #6) Shorten time to degree completion through programs that allow students to earn college credit while still in high school and by awarding credit for prior learning that is verified by appropriate assessment.

In order to shorten time to degree completion, ASU is currently a) offering dual/joint enrollment programs for high school students; b) serving as a partner for the Early College; c) awarding credit based on Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate scores/exams; d) awarding credit based on assessment of prior learning via CLEP or DSST scores; and e) awarding credit based on ACE credit.

Progress in 2013-2014: Three Dougherty County Early College (DCEC) students enrolled as dual enrolled students in Fall 2012; 53 students enrolled in Fall 2013; and 34 have registered for Fall 2014. A decision by the Dougherty County School System to move the students at the DCEC from the ASU campus to one of the high schools in the county or allow the students to enroll in the high school closest to their homes may result in fewer Early College students enrolled in fall 2014, thus providing the impetus for ASU reaching out to the Dougherty County high schools as well as other high schools in the region to establish new Dual Enrollment agreements. An ASU team with representatives from Admissions, Financial Aid, Online Learning and Academic Affairs met with principals or counselors from all 4 Dougherty County high schools as well as the School System's Curriculum Director during the spring. Thus far, an agreement has been reached with one of the high schools, and eligible students are to enroll in spring 2015. In July 2014 an additional county high school and a private church school have contacted ASU about dual enrollment opportunities in the coming year. Five of the Early College students who graduated in May of 2014 have enrolled as regular college students at ASU either during the Summer or for the Fall 2014 semester. ASU will continue to maintain data on the dual enrolled students.

Deerfield Windsor School (DWS) continues to actively work with ASU in dual enrollment of their students. In Fall 2012, 22 DWS students were dual enrolled at ASU; 26 in Fall 2013; and 18 DWS students were admitted for Fall 2014. A meeting with DWS administration, parents and students in June 2014 saw an increased interest in dual enrollment.

ASU needs to better track the number of students receiving credit for CLEP or DSST scores, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate credit, and for students who are awarded credit based on ACE scores. Beginning Fall Semester 2014, staff in Institutional Research began to work with the Office of Academic Services and Registrar to identify, disaggregate and track students with these credits and a report will be sent to the Office of Academic Affairs.

Goal 3: (CCG #7) Increase the likelihood of degree completion by transforming the way that remediation is accomplished.

ASU is currently pursuing the following strategies to address degree completion by initiating the USG guidelines for how remediation is accomplished: a) enrolling students most in need of remediation in gateway collegiate courses in English and mathematics, with corequisite Learning Support; b) combining remediation in English and reading; c) ensuring that all remediation is targeted toward supporting students in the skills they need to pass the collegiate course; and d) ensuring that students have unlimited "attempts" to complete corequisite remediation.

In Fall 2012, ASU students' mid-term course success rate was at 78.9% with a final success rate of 77.3% for the semester. Grades First was used by AARC and faculty to contact students and recommend additional support. AARC sends early alerts to faculty of freshmen students, students on probation, students re-admitted after academic suspensions, and student athletes for advisement and academic support. In Spring 2014, all faculty were required to use Desire-2-Learn (D2L) in all courses, both online and face-to-face, for reporting attendance and grades and posting course syllabi and supplemental materials. D2L allows for tracking of attendance as well as monitoring of the academic progress of students. AARC generates e-reports on student progress for each student's advisor, department chair, designated instructors and the Provost/VPAA one quarter of the way through each semester. Data on student use of supplemental instruction were collected by AARC in 2013-2014, and those areas offering the greatest usage and support for students were identified. In the Fall of 2013, the Academic Success Unit (formerly Learning Support) implemented credit-bearing courses in English and math and also developed a Learning Community designed to instill skills necessary to succeed in and complete college. In the fall of 2013, 177 students required remediation in English (or combined English/reading), reading, and mathematics [English or combined English/Reading]; 155 students received corequisite remediation in English (or combined English or combined English/reading), reading, and mathematics. In the Fall of 2014, the Academic Success Unit will continue with the credit-bearing courses with a required supplemental lab added. Student progress through these courses will be tracked and reported to the Office of Academic Affairs by each department and college.

OBSERVATIONS

The increase in the graduation rate from 39% to 42% reflects the combined efforts of the faculty and administration in supporting the students to complete their degrees. The efforts of the Academic Advising and Retention Center in implementing additional supplemental activities as well as increased efforts by the AARC and the faculty in student

advisement have also impacted the increase.

Dual enrollment increased during 2013-2014 due to efforts by Academic Affairs and incorporating a team approach (Admissions, Financial Aid, Online Learning, and Academic Affairs) should increase the dual enrollment numbers more in the coming year. Based on the number of students enrolled in Fall semester courses as well as those who are completing the admission process, ASU has 43 dual enrolled students in the Fall 2014 with additional students enrolling in Spring 2015.

One area needing greater attention is prior learning assessment. While only two faculty members have been trained and no portfolios have been evaluated in the past year, additional faculty members will be trained in portfolio assessment, and ASU will increase the dissemination of portfolio assessment to students and potential students. Prior learning assessment should be most attractive to adult learners with some previous college coursework and with work experience, especially in those areas with certification opportunities (such as in IT or Business areas). Military personnel are also targeted group as ASU has been designated as a military-friendly campus. The College of Business has offered programs at the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany, and military spouses have enrolled in other programs such as nursing and education. Additionally, the University has a Military Liaison who works with veterans and their families.

ASU signed a statewide articulation agreement with the Technical College System of Georgia for the Fire Service Program in 2013 and continues to add MOUs with area technical colleges. As noted earlier in this report, in July 2014, ASU signed four articulation agreements with Darton State College and is working on admissions and reverse transfer opportunities with Darton. The ASU President is pushing a coordinated local effort to address issues such as the local graduation rate. That collaboration of this effort among the ASU President, the Darton State College President, the Albany Technical College President, and the Dougherty County School Superintendent may well be the area's best chance for creating a realistic yet ambitious blueprint for moving forward in a positive direction. Already the four educational leaders have held planning and information sharing sessions with different citizen groups.