

- 2.5** The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

### Judgment of Compliance

Compliance

### Narrative

Albany State University (ASU) engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals and outcomes; result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. The university has a systematic planning process. The university evaluates all units annually to determine effectiveness. The university assesses progress annually and makes informed decisions to improve effectiveness.

### The Planning Process as it Relates to the Institutional Mission

As a member of the University System of Georgia (USG), ASU complies with Board of Regents (BOR) Policy 205, which requires each university in the system to maintain a mission-based strategic planning process and a USG approved strategic plan. Each university within the system is required to submit a strategic plan for board approval that defines priorities in line with the system's mission and the strategic directions [1]. ASU's strategic planning processes provide the framework that establishes priorities and direction for the University's operation. In ASU's 1993-1997 strategic plan, entitled *Higher Education Delivery in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Changing Paradigm* [2], each department aligned its goals and objectives with the priorities of the plan. As a part of the Long Range Planning Process, each unit/department was evaluated during the first semester of each academic year. During the monitoring process, the ASU Institutional Effectiveness Committee assessed the level of achievement of each objective and issued an institutional report. The same report style is used to day for evaluating achievement of objectives [3]. When a new president arrived in 1996, a series of mini-retreats involving a large cross section of faculty staff, alumni, and administrators were held to examine and revise the ASU mission, goals and strategic initiatives. Through these deliberations over several days, the 1997-1999 strategic plan [4] was developed. This plan was folded into the 2000-2005 [5] plan in order to ensure continuity and contingency in planning. Subsequently, each department aligned its goals with the new plan. Nichols's Model was used to assess achievements through an electronic reporting system; each department identified how the results would be used [6].

The university's eighth president came to ASU in October of 2005 and inaugurated during the university's spring 2006 commencement. An early activity of this new administration was the commissioning of an "ASU Community Survey" of faculty, staff and students. The survey posed six open-ended questions to provoke discussion among students, staff, faculty, and the community about ways to improve the internal and external operation of the university [7].

The president then formed the Strategic Planning Committee, guided by an external consultant to coordinate this effort. The consultant led nine focus group sessions made up of faculty, staff, students, administrators and community leaders [8]. The responses of 521 participants were shared in an ASU Community Forum in January 2006 and used to develop a new strategic plan to guide the university through 2011. Using the data collected in these sessions and the 2005 questionnaire, the Strategic Plan Committee developed the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan [9]. The 2006-2011 Goals and Strategies center on four major priorities: 1) Strengthen the Historic Mission; 2) Advance Southwest Georgia; 3) Build a Stronger University Community; and 4) Provide State of the Art Technology. The Core Values underlying these priorities are: 1) Diversity; 2) Learning Communities; 3) Quality Learning, Teaching, Research and Service; 4) University Culture; and 5) Accountability. The Plan contains goals and objectives with an action plan that includes measurable performance indicators, which make assessment more manageable and quantifiable. The Plan was presented at the 2006 Faculty and Staff Conference [10]. The plan is based on a vision for ASU to be “recognized as a preeminent institution of higher education in the University System of Georgia and in the Southeastern United States” [11].

After the plan was approved and disseminated to the campus stakeholders, a Strategic Plan Oversight Committee was appointed to oversee the implementation of the plan. An external consultant continues to work with this committee. Year One Initiatives (2006-2007) were identified for implementation, and the Oversight Committee was charged with assessing the results [12]. The committee will meet with the person accountable for successful implementation of each initiative to discuss the evaluation and determine how the assessment results will be used. A Report on Year One Initiatives was distributed to campus constituents by hardcopy and on the ASU Web site in spring 2006 [13]. Continuing this cycle, the committee has identified the Year Two (2007) initiatives [14], and presented them to faculty and staff at the 2007 Faculty and Staff Conference.

### **Planning Based Budgeting**

ASU's budget planning process is aligned with the Board of Regents strategic planning and budget development process [15]. Each year, planning begins during the fall semester prior to the new fiscal year by distributing budget guidelines, state determined timelines [16], and holding campus-wide training sessions and budget hearings for existing and new funding requests for internal and external funding. Requests are prioritized according to the University System of Georgia Board of Regents Strategic Plan [17] and the campus strategic plan in place at the time the budget is developed. The newly developed FY2008 BOR budget process is much more data driven than in the past. New Institutional Measures intended to assess performance & efficiency against benchmarked goals and desired outcome levels are provided.

ASU begins its official annual budget planning process once the President has received instructions and/or guidelines from the Chancellor. The President provides directives to Cabinet members (Vice Presidents, Executive Assistant to the President, and CIO) who subsequently analyze performance measures, review various assessment tools and align requests with the strategic goals for their respective area(s) of responsibility. All unit goals must support the university's strategic plan and mission. The Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Fiscal Affairs use the Annual Academic and Budget Reports to assess and evaluate past institutional outcomes. Budget requests are then submitted

which may include new initiatives and other budget information required to provide appropriate budget responses to the Board of Regents. The planning information and budget requests are received, modified and consolidated by the Vice Presidents and other appropriate designees and forwarded to the Vice President for Fiscal Affairs. The materials are assembled with the assistance of the Director of Budgets and Contracts and presented to the President for review, consolidation and approval. The President transmits his approved University request to the Chancellor for review and/or modification, then submittal to the BOR.

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

ASU engages in an on-going cycle of evaluation and assessment that incorporates a systematic review of planning, programs, services, and personnel that result in continuing improvement and demonstrate that ASU is effectively accomplishing its mission.

### **Assessment of the Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan Oversight Committee—composed of administrators, faculty, staff, and students—assesses the University's Strategic Plan. Each year, and starting this fall each semester, the committee analyzes on-going progress on each of the identified initiatives. Reports by responsible entities detail: 1) the key performance indicators for assessing the success of the initiative; 2) the intended outcomes and benchmarks; and 3) how the initiative will facilitate change in the current status and the indicators showing that change actually occurred. The committee then reviews the reports and makes suggestions for continued progress. During review, the committee examines related trends and determines major factors important in advancing the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Strategic budgeting and process improvement are then applied. The committee also reviews the mission and vision in terms of stakeholders. This process was described in detail with supporting documentation earlier in this Core Requirement narrative.

### **Annual Assessment Plans and Reports**

All units are required to document annually that continuous mission related assessment is ongoing [18]. Beginning in 2004, the University requires each unit to write an Assessment Plan to evaluate planning, assessment, and learning outcomes at the unit level [19]. These reports and assessments are used to indicate progress for the year covered and require that each unit provide goals and objectives directly linked to the mission of the unit and the mission and strategic plan of the university. This process was established in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Outreach. The unit worked with the Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs to adapt the Nichols Model of assessment planning to the university. Institutional Research, Planning, and Outreach staff members led training sessions for campus administrators and provided resources to support the project. The re-organized office, Institutional Research and Planning, now guides the annual assessment plan [20] update process and collects annual assessment reports [21]. The annual assessment reports require each unit to document how results will be used for continuous improvement within the unit in support of the university mission.

### ***Academic Program Review***

At ASU, each academic department must undergo a continuous cycle of Academic Program Review as mandated by the Board of Regents [22]. These five-year comprehensive reviews of academic units look at trends in the program, student outcomes, statements of educational goals, descriptions of curricula, background information on programs, student exit assessments, student and alumni surveys, and overall evaluations by outside evaluators. Programs with low enrollment or graduation rates maybe reviewed more frequently. The process includes an analysis of the program and its self study by internal and external evaluators. External evaluators must have appropriate credentials in the discipline to be reviewed. External evaluators are also used in preparation of new program proposals and to ensure compliance with new and existing Board of Regents' initiatives and procedures. External Reviewers evaluate the self-study reports, meet with members of the department, related units and key administrators and write a report incorporating findings. Department and program faculty members present the report to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, as well as Institutional Research. The University's Committee on Academic Program Review oversees the program review process [23]. The committee examines both internal and external evaluations and makes appropriate recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans and Chairs of the programs reviewed.

The President has ultimate responsibility for approving all program reviews, based on recommendations from the Vice President for Academic Affairs and other Cabinet members. ASU submits an annual program review report to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Fiscal Affairs of the USG Office, including a list of academic programs reviewed and a summary of findings for programs reviewed during the previous year. The report identifies: (1) academic program quality, viability, and productivity; (2) findings relative to internal standards and the University's strategic plan; and (3) ways that findings will be utilized to improve the academic program. Yearly summary evaluation reports are made to the BOR Office [24]. The Board of Regents Department of Academic Affairs then writes a detailed response, which academic units use to make changes in programs. A full list of programs reviewed each year is available in the annual guidelines described above although the list is always subject to change based on program enrollment and graduation rates.

### **Annual Reports**

All unit heads at the University are required by the Board of Regents to write an Annual Report of Institutional Progress. Review and approval the report moves from the head or supervisor of each unit to his supervisor in a chain of accountability that results in the President's annual report [25]. The Annual Report of Institutional Progress consists of three sections: 1) (required) Annual Progress in Assessing Institutional Effectiveness, 2) (required) Overall Institutional Health; and 3) (optional) Summary of Major Institutional Accomplishments. Prior to 2006, only major University units were required to file these reports. From the 2005-2006 academic year forward all units have been required to file the reports.

### **Internal and External Evaluations**

In addition to evaluation and assessment of its strategic plan and scheduled reviews of all academic and administrative unites, ASU engages in an on-going, research-based,

assessment and evaluation of academic programs, administrators, faculty, staff, and support units using a variety of instruments [26]. Internal personnel [27] and financial [28] evaluations are conducted in compliance with policies set by the BOR. Academic and academic support units are evaluated consistent with these same BOR guidelines but also contain survey and other statistical data compiled of the Office of Institutional Research. Inter and intra departmental committees serve as an additional layer of oversight in most University and unit level evaluations.

### **External Discipline Specific Accreditation**

Academic programs with specialized professional accreditation may use the self-study and external review processes of reaffirmation to satisfy the academic review requirements, pending satisfaction of academic review guidelines. These include: Forensic Science, Undergraduate and Graduate Business Programs, Public Administration, Nursing, Social Work and Teacher Education. A detailed discussion of accreditation procedures may be found at the accrediting bodies' respective websites; for example : Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission [29]; Association for Collegiate Business Schools and Programs [30]; National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration [31]; National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission, Inc. [32]; Council on Social Work Education [33]; and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [34]. Generally, all of the above accreditation processes involve similar steps including: Application for Accreditation; Self-Study; Evaluation Team Site Visit; Post-Visit Review and Response; and Action by a Governing Board.

### **Internal Evaluation of Personnel**

The BOR policy stipulates that "senior administrators shall be evaluated by the administrator's supervisor, using a performance management instrument which emphasizes leadership qualities, management style, planning and organizing capacities, effective communication skills, accountability for diversity efforts and results, and success at meeting goals and objectives." Albany State complies with the policy and senior administrators are evaluated by their administrator's supervisor, i.e., the vice presidents and other members of the president's cabinet are evaluated by the president and the Deans are evaluated by the Vice- President for Academic Affairs and the department heads are evaluated by the deans [35] using standard evaluation forms [36]. The president of Albany State is also evaluated annually by the chancellor of the University system. The Albany State University Faculty Senate is currently revising the evaluation of administrators by faculty process, and a new evaluation instrument will be implemented in spring 2008. The written summaries of evaluations are maintained on file in the respective offices of the administrators' supervisors and in Human Resources.

Students' evaluations of teaching faculty are conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning each fall and spring semester using either paper or online forms [37]. Cumulative results and any written comments are reported to the department chair and the faculty member [38]. Each academic year, faculty members are evaluated by their department chair [39]. Both student and department chair evaluations are important elements in decisions about retaining faculty, promotion and tenure reviews, post-tenure reviews, and merit pay allocation. The faculty senate and the individual colleges are currently in the process of revising the evaluation instruments.

Educational support employees are hired and evaluated based on the position description. Educational support units are evaluated utilizing appropriate staff and supervisory staff evaluation forms. Personnel are evaluated by their immediate supervisor with input from the personnel and the completed evaluations are signed by the employee and the evaluating supervisor [40]. Administrators and staff are evaluated each spring and completed evaluation instruments are due in Human Resources by March 31 each year for permanent filing.

### **Internal Academic Unit Assessments**

At ASU surveys and other forms of assessment have historically been collected at the department level, and these data have not always been shared with the Office of Institutional Research. The data were used for annual and program accreditation reports, and there was not a central location for storing information until recently. For example, the Department of Nursing submits an annual report on student numbers, retention, graduation, and NCLEX-RN (National Council Licensing Exam for Registered Nurses) success to the Georgia Board of Nursing, but a copy has not always been submitted to Institutional Research. A website is being developed as a repository of assessment and survey data such as the Nursing Annual Report to the Georgia Board of Nursing.

### **Survey-based Assessments**

The University began conducting a survey of graduating senior in the spring of 2007 using Educational Testing Service's Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) as a means of determining the effectiveness of the core program of study. ASU is also reviewing other surveys to obtain data on exiting students. The 2007-08 core evaluation process will use the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to harvest information from graduating students about the core. The results indicate what students gain from their college experience, especially the quality of the core program experience. Since the survey items reflect confirmed "good practice" in undergraduate education, the survey is especially helpful for evaluating the core experience.

### **University System Driven Assessments**

ASU is a participant in the BOR system-wide initiative for Retention, Progression and Graduation (RPG). In August 2005 a team was formed to design a plan for improving retention and graduation at ASU, which was submitted to the BOR in November, 2006; central to the plan for change was the examination of existing data tracking student progress and successful completion to graduation. The planning team then gathered data and ideas to develop a model for guiding ASU into a systematic, data-driven process to improve rates of student success from enrollment to graduation [41]. An important component of the plan calls for developing learning communities in the freshman class, which will begin with the fall 2007 semester. A student focus group provided data for the RPG planning process in October 2005. Student responses most frequently indicated three institutional factors influencing retention: 1) student challenges with faculty language competencies; 2) student difficulties securing housing; and 3) student problems with course availability to meet their program needs. National research theories suggest that usually commitment to the institution and a solid high school grade point average are stronger indicators of college success than a high SAT or ACT score. Personal qualities that suggest commitment are a high maturity level

and/or good communication skills.

As an outcome of the planning process, the team also compared first-time, full-time students who entered Fall 2004 regarding SAT scores, high school GPA, credits earned, credits attempted, financial aid status, rural or urban origins and major program of study. The trend analysis outcomes were presented to a meeting of the Deans of the ASU Colleges. More comprehensive and continual data collection is necessary; for example, further analyses to complete the two-year trend analysis will be pursued with new data from future semesters.

### **Researched Based Planning and Evaluation**

Institutional research at ASU has been decentralized among several units that support university wide research based planning and evaluation. Copies of Institutional research internal and external reports, surveys and institutional documents are housed in the Office of Institutional Research. In 2006 ASU began to strengthen and centralize the university's institutional research function so that it could provide data to support planning and evaluation. The director is an active member of the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee. The office has established an online fact book [42] to provide consistent and accurate data for use in campus decision-making. The department also provides standard reports used in advising [43], enrollment management [44], and benchmarking [45].

Advising reports are generated each semester and distributed to deans. The deans in turn distribute the reports to departments and individual advisors. Reports document enrolled students in the major, students with registration holds of any kind, and assigned advisors. The reports are used to inform advisors of their student load and to let them know if students are required to take specific actions to smooth the registration process by resolving registration holds.

Enrollment management is supported by a variety of retention [46], graduation [47], and enrollment [48] reports produced regularly and systematically by the Office of Institutional Research. The reports are used to document success and to identify needs for improvement. Extensive documentation on student success is developed every summer for distribution at the President's Strategic Management Retreat [49] held in September.

Strategic planning is supported by peer benchmarking data as well as routine reports listed above. In 2006 the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee prepared a list of criteria for selecting peer institutions [50]. Institutional Research and Planning identified peers who most closely met the criteria for selection [51] and provided benchmarking data for the selected institutions. Additionally, criteria have been identified for selection of aspirational peers and non-minority serving institution peers, two peer groups that the university had not established prior to 2007 [52].

The USG has substantial data sets and standard reports available for collecting information to support planning. The data are located on a web site called "USG by the Numbers" [53]. These data are used regularly to develop consistent reports by the university for determination of successes and needs for improvement.

## **Systematic Review of Institutional Mission, Goals, and Outcomes**

As a member of the USG, ASU builds on the mission and strategic plan established by the Chancellor and his administration at the state level. This state-wide process includes a mandatory review and revision of the university's mission, strategic plan, and master plan at scheduled intervals. Accordingly, ASU's planning and priorities continue to evolve to meet the challenge of "creating a more educated Georgia" as an independently accredited institution within the governing structure of the USG [54].

The university mission statement is reviewed each time the University System of Georgia revises the mission at the system level. This occurs every 8-10 years. The current university mission is based on a system-wide mission review that culminated in approval of new mission statements for all system colleges and universities in 1999 [55]. The mission statement of the system was next reviewed and updated in December of 2006 [56] and is the source of the system's new strategic plan [57]. Based on the new mission statement, Albany State University is now reviewing its mission statement and is required by the state to bring its strategic plan in congruence with the state level strategic plan [58].

## **Results in Continuing Improvement in Institutional Quality**

As a result of planning, evaluation and assessment, ASU has a strong commitment to continuous, data-driven improvement in institutional effectiveness. The current strategic planning process is designed to evolve as Year Two Initiatives are modified by data collected in Year One. Faculty, administrator, and staff evaluations identify strengths and weaknesses and this data drives improvement through professional development and merit raises. Academic Reviews and Assessment Plans also generate information to improve effectiveness at the unit level. Institutional Research, in conjunction with BOR Initiative on Retention, conducts surveys and distributes reports that inform decisions making in the areas of department, core curriculum, and program strength or weakness, retention, progression, and graduation, and improvement of advising.

The Office of Financial Aid has used information from student surveys [59] to create a more user friendly website, to update brochures, and to improve communication by adding more staff. Students expressed a preference for office visits over phone calls. The Office of Housing and Residence Life has responded to student satisfaction surveys [60] with several initiatives; one is designed to shorten response time for building and maintenance repair; another created a Dining Hall Focus Group to meet student expectations in the dining hall.

These are some examples of how the institutional effectiveness model at ASU results in continuous improvement. As the current Strategic Plan continues to interact and merge with other elements of the University's planning, evaluation and assessment, especially through data collection, ASU will continue the process of improvement.

## **Effectively Accomplishes its Mission**

The institution's primary mission is to educate students. Albany State University documents accomplishment of this mission through data collected regarding student success [49] and degrees conferred [47] in addition to documented excellence based on discipline-specific accreditations [29], [30], [31], [32], [33], [34]. Additionally, the

university's rigorous follow-up process regarding mission-based strategic planning ensures effective accomplishment of the mission.

### **Supporting Documentation**

- [1] [Institutional Effectiveness: Planning and Assessment, Board of Regents Policy 205](#)
- [2] [Planning History, 1993-1997 Strategic Plan](#)
- [3] [Effectiveness Review Document, Institutional Effectiveness Committee Report](#)
- [4] [Planning History, 1997-1999 Strategic Plan](#)
- [5] [Planning History, 2000-2005 Strategic Plan](#)
- [6] [Nichols Model, ASU Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Workbook](#)
- [7] [Survey Results, ASU Community Survey](#)
- [8] [Participatory Planning Process, Strategic Planning Administrator Focus Group Notes \(sample\)](#)
- [9] [Planning History, 2006-2011 Strategic Plan](#)
- [10] [Strategic Plan Presentation, 2006 Faculty Staff Conference Agenda](#)
- [11] [ASU Vision Statement, 2006-2011 Strategic Plan Brochure](#)
- [12] [Systematic Review of the Plan, Assessing the Plan](#)
- [13] [Systematic Review of the Plan, Year One Report](#)
- [14] [Systematic Review of the Plan, Year Two Initiatives](#)
- [15] [Planning-based Budgeting, University System of Georgia Budget Process, pages 8-8 to 8-14](#)
- [16] [Budgeting Process, FY 2008 USG Budget Timeline](#)
- [17] [System Planning, Board of Regents Strategic Plan](#)
- [18] [Mission-related Assessment, Assessment Model](#)
- [19] [Guidelines for Assessment Plans, Assessment Guidelines](#)
- [20] [Assessment Plan Sample, 2005-2006 MS in Nursing Assessment Plan](#)
- [21] [Assessment Report Sample, 2005-2006 MS in Nursing Assessment Report](#)
- [22] [Comprehensive Academic Program Review, Board of Regents Policy 205.01](#)

- [23] [Program Review Guidelines, Albany State University's Program Review Model](#)
- [24] [Sample Program Review Summary Report, 2005-2006 Summary Report](#)
- [25] [Annual Report Sample, 2005-2006 Annual Report](#)
- [26] [Office of Institutional Research Assessment Summary, Assessment Instruments](#)
- [27] [Personnel Evaluation Policy Sample, Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 803.07](#)
- [28] [Financial Evaluations Policy, Board of Regents Fiscal Affairs Policy Manual, Section 20](#)
- [29] [Forensic Science Accrediting Body, Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission](#)
- [30] [College of Business Accrediting Body, Association for Collegiate Business Schools and Programs](#)
- [31] [Public Administration Accrediting Body, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, page 5](#)
- [32] [Nursing Accrediting Body, National League of Nursing](#)
- [33] [Social Work Accrediting Body, Council on Social Work Education](#)
- [34] [Teacher Education Accrediting Body, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education](#)
- [35] [Administrator Evaluation Policy, BOR 803.07, paragraph 4](#)
- [36] [Administrator Evaluation Form, Albany State University Employee Performance Review Supervisory Staff](#)
- [37] [Course Evaluation Form, Sample Form](#)
- [38] [Summary Report, Evaluation of Faculty Report](#)
- [39] [Faculty Evaluation by Department Chair, Sample Evaluation of Faculty](#)
- [40] [Employee Performance Review Support Staff, Evaluation Form](#)
- [41] [Retention, Progression, and Graduation Plan, USG Report](#)
- [42] [Online Factbook](#)
- [43] [Sample Advising Report, Holds Report](#)

- [44] [Sample Enrollment Management Report, Fall 2006 Enrollment Update](#)
- [45] [Sample Benchmarking Report, NSSE Benchmarks](#)
- [46] [Retention and Graduation Spring Update](#)
- [47] [Graduation, Degrees Conferred Trends, Fact Book page 32](#)
- [48] [Enrollment Trends](#)
- [49] [President's Management Retreat, Student Success](#)
- [50] [ASU Peer Institutions](#)
- [51] [ASU Peer Selection Criteria](#)
- [52] [Selection Criteria for aspirational and non-minority serving institution peer groups](#)
- [53] [USG by the Numbers, Entry Page](#)
- [54] [ASU Operates Within the USG, Core Mission Statement for all State Universities Within the USG](#)
- [55] [Approval of the Mission, 1999 Mission Document](#)
- [56] [2006 Mission of the University System of Georgia](#)
- [57] [2007 Strategic Plan of the University System of Georgia](#)
- [58] [Georgia Universities to Revise Plans, last two paragraphs](#)
- [59] [Survey Informing Continuous Improvement, Financial Aid Survey Summary Report](#)
- [60] [Survey Informing Continuous Improvement, Residence Life Survey Summary Report](#)