

- 3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

Judgment of Compliance

Compliance

Narrative

Albany State University (ASU) identifies expected outcomes for its academic and educational support units. The University considers assessing expected outcomes as one of the cornerstones of its planning and institutional effectiveness processes. The planning and evaluation of the educational activities of the University are performed systematically and intended to assess whether it achieves its mission and provides evidence of improvement based on data-driven analysis of those results.

Expected Outcome of a Quality Educational Experience

The thrust of ASU's institutional effectiveness processes has been to provide students with a "first rate quality educational experience" consistent with the University System of Georgia (USG) and Albany State University's (ASU) mission and strategic priorities [\[1\]](#). However, building a strong quality educational program at the university could not have been achieved without the substantive planning, evaluation, and improvement processes outlined in Core Requirement 2.5. The university's effectiveness process continues to evolve in order to meet the challenges of providing valuable objective data with which to evaluate the quality of its educational and administrative services. These efforts are also strengthened by ASU's compliance with Board-mandated policies regarding the establishment of strategic planning process through which the system institution's mission and goals are evaluated and evidence of improvement documented [\[2\]](#).

Although Albany State University shares much in common with other state universities, "Providing quality educational experiences for under served populations in the region, state and nation" distinguishes it from most other system institutions [\[3a\]](#). The new president of ASU has also broadened this vision to have ASU recognized as a pre-eminent institution of higher learning in Georgia and the Southeastern United States, where students and faculty are committed to outcomes-based learning and intellectual challenge [\[3b\]](#). This guiding principle is reinforced in the recent updating of the university 2006-2011 strategic plan Goal 1., which states that ASU's strives to "maintain the role of the University as a leader in providing quality educational experiences for the academic development of students" [\[4\]](#).

Benchmark data from the National Survey of Students (NSSE) [\[5\]](#) regarding what ASU students express about their educational experiences clearly support these assertions:

- 87% of both first-year students and 85% of seniors described their educational experience at ASU as "good" or "excellent."
- 85% of both first-year students and 66% of seniors would "probably" or "definitely" attend ASU if they could start over again.

- 81% of first-year students and 76% of seniors reported that academic advising at ASU was “good” or “excellent.”

By enhancing the quality of the educational experience, the University is better positioned to design academic programs that equip students with the skills, dispositions and other qualities to succeed in an increasingly complex and technologically demanding world.

NSSE benchmark data on Enriching Educational Experiences suggest that ASU students are well within national norms with respect to how they rank the degree of enrichment of their ASU educational experiences [5]. For example,

- 59% of first-year students and 70% of seniors at ASU used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment “often” or “very often.” Comparable percentages for Master’s institutions are 51% and 61%.
- 45% of first-year students and 54% of seniors at ASU reported that they had serious conversations with students who are very different from them in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values “often” or “very often.” This compares with 55% of first-year students and 55% of seniors at Master’s institutions.
- 53% of first-year students and 47% of seniors at ASU seniors reported they had encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds “often” or “very often.” This compares with 52% and 45%, respectively, at Master’s institutions.

The University has also attracted attention for being a consistently top producer of African American college graduates. Recognition of these accomplishments have appeared in such national publications as Diverse Issues in Higher Education magazine’s list of “Top 100 Degree Producers,” where ASU was ranked 36th of all universities granting baccalaureate degrees to African American students. ASU was also ranked 7th in the number of mathematics and statistics degrees produced, and received a No. 16 ranking in business management and marketing. Six of the University’s individual programs were also listed among the nation’s top 50 degree producers [6]. These rankings and other data attest to the growing quality of ASU, its faculty, and the performance of its graduates. The growing list of programs that have successfully met national accreditation standards also speaks to the growth, maturation and increasing quality of ASU’s educational programming [7].

Assessing Expected Student Learning and Support Outcomes

In order to systematically evaluate the quality of academic programming, ASU has focused on two general areas of expected outcomes:

1. Student learning outcomes
2. Administrative and Academic support outcomes.

Summaries of Comprehensive Program Reviews dating back to 2002 show that assessment of academic and non-academic expected outcomes directly shape planning and broad-based evaluation processes [8a], [8b]). Recently, the university put a new system-wide unit-based assessment process in place (2005-2006) based on the Nichol’s [9a], [9b] five-column reporting

format, which requires all academic and non-academic units to submit and report assessment results annually [10], [11]. This new assessment process is one in a number of interrelated procedures that provide valuable and objective data to be used for making improvements to programs that are not covered by Board-mandated program reviews.

Among the more notable changes initiated by this new process is the inclusion of academic support units in the annual assessment process, more centralized and institution-wide effectiveness planning and procedures, and the documentation of “closing the loop” at the unit level [12a], [12b], [12c]. Presently, the University has identified expected outcomes for its entire baccalaureate, masters and education specialist degree programs and for most its administrative and educational support units [10], [11]. Unit goals and expected outcomes are aligned with both unit mission and broad institutional priorities and all academic and non-academic units have developed plans to monitor and implement needed improvements on an annual basis. Assessment instruments selected by educational programs, administrative programs and education support units range from direct measures, including standardized tests, course performance indicators, intern performance, capstone course performance, research projects for administrative skill, department exit exams, specific course assessments, and Praxis Certification I and II to more indirect measures of assessment, including student surveys, alumni surveys, employer surveys, and course grades.

Complementing the new more centralized, continuous and institutional-wide unit-based assessment process is the periodic assessments of expected outcome of undergraduate and graduate programs. Among them are BOR and externally mandated assessment, program accreditation reviews and other procedures drawn from virtually all aspects of the evaluation of the university’s academic programs. For example, all undergraduate majors in business are required to complete the major Field Achievement Test (MFAT) and a senior portfolio which includes letters of correspondence and any other display of accomplishments during the student’s matriculation in the Business Information Systems (BIS) program [13]. PRAXIS pass rates are utilized by the College of Education to determine quality of its academic program. Data collected on PRAXIS pass rates is used by the University to make improvements to its academic programs [14]. The Department of Nursing relies on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) to determine the most effective method of instructional delivery as well as to respond to the specific skill set needs of the health care industry [15]. Programs in the College of Education also utilize assessment rubrics to assess and evaluate learning outcomes. The MBA program use the results of more direct measures of student outcomes from Alumni surveys, which indicate that MBA alumni have been satisfied with the MBA Program, its faculty and courses, and that their degrees have served them well in progressing in their careers. Employers, too, have noted their satisfaction, as have current students [16]. In assessing *Quality of Service to student*, the Accounting Program, results from the survey suggested that students have positive feelings about the quality of the accounting program. About 95.6% (n=143) of the students surveyed thought that the quality of instruction in accounting is “excellent or good” [17]. Taken together, these processes have resulted in measurable improvement in the level of ASU students’ academic performance.

Comprehensive Program Reviews

Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) is a BOR initiative that was established in 2000-2001 to periodically assess the strengths and weaknesses of academic degree programs based on a comprehensive set of quality and productivity indicators [18a] [18b]. Program review has been a powerful tool in assessing expected outcomes and academic decision making. The results of

those reviews confirmed that a large majority of ASU's degree programs are viable and strong in terms of both quality and productivity. Significant program improvements have resulted from ASU's involvement of Comprehensive Program Review. Evidence of those improvements is documented below.

Excerpts from Albany State University Academic Program Review Summaries 2004 - 2005

Major	Learning objectives x = goals articulated x* = excellent	Indirect Assessment 1- student surveys 2 - alumni surveys 3 – employer survey 4 - Grades	Direct Assessment	Plans for Programs Improvement Noted	Curriculum / Learning Objectives Improvements Noted
Public Administration (Masters)	x*	1,2,3	Course performance; Intern performance; Capstone course performance; Research project for administrative skill	Use of best practice survey for entry Need for internship/ WebTV	Plan to review effectiveness of objectives
Psychology	x* (listed as goals) Practical, Technical, Internship Education, Service	1	MFAT or GRE (subject) Dept Exit Exam in PSYC 4499	x new technology to improve communication; program faculty needed & professional development	Plan to evaluate curriculum and use writing across the curriculum
Sociology	x* integrity, career advancement, innovation in technology, productivity (critical thinking, research, quantitative, qualitative skills)	1		x Various – related to program and faculty review	Plan to design surveys for student learning
Early Childhood (Bachelors)	x professional knowledge skills and technology	4 Satisfaction surveys also	Praxis Certification	Increase publications and pass rate on Praxis exam	
Early Childhood (Graduate)	x		Praxis II	Continuing Professional Education / Research for Faculty, etc.	Need to disaggregate data for assessment
Middle Grades Education (Undergraduate)	x		Praxis I	Increase Faculty Scholarship Add student mentoring	Need to disaggregate data for assessment

More notable examples of program improvements include the following. The College of Education made five curriculum changes as a result of the review. The College of Business utilizes discipline specific assessments to derive student learning outcome, including the MFAT. Results have enabled the College of Business to reframe its course syllabi in response to results of assessments. Nursing Masters graduates have demonstrated a ten-year average pass rate of 92% on national certification examination for Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) as a

result of program improvements. Furthermore, the FNP program received the 2005 Board of Regents Award for Excellence in Teaching.

The following excerpt from the 2006 program review of the Accounting Program provides a solid example of how the data gained from program reviews can be used to make programmatic changes and improvements (see [\[17\]](#) 2006 Accounting Program Review, pg 5).

- Enhance faculty development through personal initiatives, institutional activities/support and participation in professional activities using the support of actual resources pledged by presidential support.
- Develop systematic program review initiatives--with the objective of bringing the curriculum in line with national disciplinary developments (i.e., motivate graduates to pursue post-undergraduate study in order to take the CPA (Certified Public Accountant) exam. Accounting faculty members have already been tasked to write a proposal that would include cost and implementation strategies for a fifth-year accounting degree program—due fall 2007.
- Continue to review curriculum with the aim of diversifying and internationalizing the curriculum.

Specialized National Accreditation

One of the goals of specialized national accreditation is the validation of program quality particularly because they tend to be discipline specific, relatively more rigorous and target areas for improvement that are often overlooked during broader institutional accreditation reviews. In fact, meeting accreditation standards typically requires extensive evaluation and reviews from external evaluators, self-study of a comprehensive array of quality indicators and periodic reaccreditation efforts. Albany State recognizes that improvement in assessing student learning outcomes in order to satisfy raised national expectations invariably result in qualitative improvement of educational programming.

Several ASU programs have earned national accreditation, but more importantly, have used the results of these self study and external reviews to make programmatic improvements (see list of accredited programs [\[19\]](#)). Most notably, the College of Business ACBSP accreditation was renewed in June 2004. Importantly, external reviewers rated the program to be “excellent” or “strong” in terms of its adherence to generally acceptable academic standards in undergraduate management education. In the 2003-2004 academic year, the College of Education underwent accreditation reviews by the Georgia Professional Standard Commission (GAPSC) and the National Council off Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE). Initiatives are underway to address those areas in need of improvement that were highlighted in the accreditation reports. The College was required to develop a systematic process for assessing student learning (content and pedagogically knowledge), field experiences, and quality of faculty and unit resources. The College has adopted an electronic assessment for collecting data that will guide the assessment process, known as the Professional Education Unit (PEU) Teaching from Kindergarten to Grade 20 (Tk-20) Assessment System. The undergraduate and graduate program in nursing is also accredited by the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC) [\[20\]](#).

Numerous program improvements have resulted from or were initiated by specialized national accreditations over the past decade. The following example of ASU's Nursing program is indicative of such use of results for improvements.

Albany State University Educational Program Accreditations – 2004 – 2005

Program Accreditation	Goal/Objectives	Assessments	Evidence of Improvement	Accreditation Reaffirmation / Reaffirmation Body
Nursing - Bachelor of Nursing Program (BSN Program)	Yes	Review Faculty Portfolios, Annual Faculty Evaluations and Students of Classroom, Clinical and Lab Instructors, and Agency, Evaluations of Faculty for teaching competence, scholarship, service , and practice/ professional development	Yes	Reaffirmed By the National League of Nursing (NLN) In 2005 (accredited initially in 1983; first reaffirmation in 1997)
Master of Nursing Program	Yes	Same as BSN Program	Yes	Reaffirmed By the National League of Nursing (NLN) In 2005 (accredited initially in 1983; first reaffirmation in 1997)

University System of Georgia Annual Progress Report

ASU also compiles a summary of its achievements into an Annual Report, which is submitted to the Board and distributed to faculty, administrators and other key academic decision makers (e.g. see [\[21\]](#), [\[22\]](#), [\[23\]](#), [\[24\]](#)). Each annual report contains sections that assess progress in institutional effectiveness. Assessments and accomplishments in the areas of graduation rates, retention, summaries of specialized accreditation and other performance indicators are usually featured. These reports are used, in conjunction with other performance indicators, by the Board as a basis for shaping system-wide policies. ASU's annual report tends to be data-driven and focus, among other things, on summarizing the results of expected outcomes, measurable and quantifiable indicators governing them and the documented use of results for

improvements. For example, the 2004 Annual Report showed that, on required standardized tests, Albany State University's spring (2004) pass rates for first-time Regents' test examinees were: Reading 72.82% and Essay 76.35%. Among regional universities, the highest score was 90.67% and the lowest was 53.99%. In the Regents' Test repeaters category, the ASU reading and essay pass rates were: Reading 44.92% and Essay 62.03%. Among regional universities, the highest reading and essay pass rates were 65.22% and 82.86% respectively.

Although the Board has no policy authorization periodic reviews of academic support programs, ASU has taken additional steps to periodically review all non-academic programs to ensure that the service needs of students are adequately being met. Some use of results for improvements by academic support units reported in the Annual Reports included:

- The refinement of Banner modules for specific departments at the University
- Office of Public Information used the results of intuitional surveys to improve dissemination of information to faculty, staff and students.
- The Office of Student Affairs used the results of exit interviews, evaluation of services and survey results to improve recruitment, admissions, computer-based testing and counseling

Other examples of assessment-driven improvements by academic support units are also featured in ASU Annual Reports. The Honors Program established the goal "To increase the first to second year retention rate by 1% per year over the course of the 5-year period beginning with 76% as the benchmarked figure for the Fall 2004 entering class" and as a result of the assessment it was reported that this unit worked collaboratively with three other campus units to increase student retention [\[24\]](#).

Supplemental Instruction—The Supplemental Instruction Program is an academic support program for students and is implemented by faculty in courses with high rates of failing grades. The goal of SI is to improve students' performance in targeted undergraduate core courses, which have a high number of failing grades, a high number of D grades, and a high number of withdrawals (FDW). An analysis of their data show measurable gains to participants as a result of the supplemental instruction they received:

- College Algebra- of the 129 students with recorded grades – 67% received passing grades of A, B, or C.
- Pre- Calculus – of the 32 students with recorded grades – 88% received passing grades of A, B, or C.
- Calculus – of the 18 students with recorded grades – 61% received passing grades of A, B, or C
- Anatomy and Physiology – of the 12 students with recorded grades – 100% received passing grades of A, B, or C. (see [\[25a\]](#) and [\[25b\]](#) CETLA Annual Reports)

Sample Evidence of Improvements in Educational Programs and Administrative and Academic Support Units 2003 – 2004 (from Annual Report).

Educational Programs	Administrative / Academic Support Units
<p>College of Arts and Sciences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Justice and Forensic Science – To enhance professional experiences, an internship was added to the curriculum for forensic science majors. • History and Political Science – To build additional knowledge and increase global awareness, HIST 1002 Introduction to the African Diaspora was added as a mandated course for all Albany State University students. • Math and Computer Science – Due to low enrollment, new hardware and software was established for electronic classrooms and program revitalization; online web support and WebCT were also implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Advisement – Tutorial support was added, along with the continuation of the liaison role for students on probation. • Alumni Affairs – A new alumni tracking system was developed. Feedback from survey data was also used to improve the electronic dissemination of external funding information to alumni, faculty and students. • Bookstore – The bookstore software was upgraded to enhance in-store processes. • Center for the African American Male – Mentoring, tutoring, service learning and emotional support were added to provide student support and increase student retention.
<p>College of Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Management and Business Information Systems) • WebBAS program was added in collaboration with area institutions to enhance learning opportunities and to enrich course offering for the service area; the MFAT (Major Field Aptitude Test) was continued and incorporated in the Business Policy course to increase performance levels. This curricular change was made base on previous MFAT scores that were below the desired level. New computers were also installed with state of the art software to enhance student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing Education - Customer surveys were used to conduct process evaluations and implement continuous improvement procedures. • Facilities Management –A service evaluation was conducted which led to improved maintenance. • Financial Aid – New payment gateway was established which allowed for electronic – online bill payment. • Institutional Advancement - Surveys were used to conduct process evaluations and implement continuous improvement procedures. • Instructional Technology – Online WebTV was upgraded to WebTV Vista. The Banner Student System was also upgraded. • -Library – Customer surveys were used to conduct process evaluations and implement continuous improvement procedures.

Monitoring of Closing the Loop

Organizationally, there are four major monitoring/oversight committees involved in the oversight, coordination and monitoring of the assessment activities at the university. The Strategic Plan Oversight Committee composed of administrators, faculty, staff, and students provides a channel for assessing and communicating the institutional effectiveness of the university's strategic goals and mission effectiveness [26]. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee is an assessment policy-forming committee that monitors compliance and other issues related specifically to the assessment of unit-based academic and non academic outcomes [27]. The Core Curriculum Committee, made up of multidisciplinary academic administrators and faculty with representatives from all the university's colleges, reviews the learning outcomes established for the core curriculum makes recommendations for improvements to the University's Curriculum and New Programs Committee. Finally, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning organizes and coordinates all planning and effectiveness activities, including the overseeing of ASU's systematic planning and evaluation processes.

Of the four major monitoring/oversight committees, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning plays a key role in facilitating institutional and unit-level planning and assessment activities [28]. Working collaboratively with academic and non-academic units, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning is responsible for managing and coordinating the comprehensive unit-based annual assessment process. It also serves as a repository for the

archival, retrieval and management of information, reports, surveys and other data elements needed for evaluating, planning and assessing expected outcomes. For example, it maintains a website where fact book and other institutional data are housed and updated to facilitate planning, evaluation, marketing and other aspects of the university operations. It also conducts periodic surveys, assessment and other evaluation using an assortment of metrics and performance indicators [29].

Sample of Office of Institutional Research and Planning Description of Assessment Instruments

No.	Instrument Name	Purpose of Instrument	Administration Dates	Population Surveyed	Summary Report Description
1.	Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)	A nationally-normed survey instrument that measures students' performance on tasks that require them to think critically, reason analytically, solve realistic problems, and write clearly.	Fall 2005 & Spring 2006	54 incoming freshmen (fall 2005) 63 graduating seniors (spring 2006)	Paper report provided by CLA including normative data for comparative institutions.
2.	Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)	A nationally normed survey instrument designed to assess the characteristics, attitudes, values, and aspirations of entering freshmen.	Fall 2005	395 incoming freshmen	Paper report on percentage breakdown by gender for each question and by comparative percentage from institutions of similar type..
3.	College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ)	A nationally normed survey instrument that evaluates new student expectations for college including their goals, motivations, and future plans.	Fall 2006	393 new freshmen	Paper report provided by the research center. Results are reported using frequency distributions, means, descriptives.
4.	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	A nationally-normed survey instrument designed to obtain information about students' participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development.	Spring 2005 Next administration scheduled Spring 2008	74 first-year freshmen & 68 seniors Total of 142 students.	Results are based on five categories: (1) Level of Academic Challenge, (2) Active and Collaborative Learning, (3) Student-Faculty Interaction, (4) Enriching Educational Experiences, and (5) Supportive Campus Environment.
5.	Student Satisfaction Survey	Institutional survey designed to explore enrolled undergraduate students' satisfaction with programs, services, and environmental factors that affect their experience at the University.	Fall Semesters 2001 and 2002	221 students; fall 2001 218 students; fall 2002	Frequency distribution report on responses from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. Questions range from satisfaction of academic support services to overall satisfaction with the University.
6.	Evaluation of Chairs and Deans	Institutional survey that elicits faculty views on administrative performance of academic leadership at a departmental level and unit level. Survey and evaluation process currently under review.	Spring Semesters 2002 & 2004	Faculty	Frequency distribution report on responses which includes comments made for open-ended written comments on the survey instrument.

Undoubtedly, providing a quality educational programming could not be achieved without the attention to systematically assessing and evaluating expected outcomes at the unit level and across the university. The plan and procedures outlined above show that ASU is prepared to meet the challenges of complying with Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.

Supporting Documentation

- [1] [BOR Strategic Plan](#),
- [2] [Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 205, Institutional Effectiveness: Planning and Assessment](#)
- [3a] [ASU Mission](#)
- [3b] [ASU Annual Report 2005-2006, page 1](#)
- [4] [ASU Strategic Goals](#)
- [5] [National Survey of Student Engagement Report on ASU Benchmarks](#)
- [6] [ASU Annual Report, 2006-2006, pg 2](#)
- [7] [Albany State University Accredited Programs List](#)
- [8a] [Comprehensive Program Review](#)
- [8b] [BOR Letter on Comprehensive Program Review](#)
- [9a] *Nichols, K. and Nichols, J. (2000). The Department Head's Guide to Assessment Implementation in Administrative and Educational Support Units, New York: Agathon Press*
- [9b] [Model of Five-Column Academic and Administrative Assessment format](#)
- [10] [05-06 Academic Assessment report](#)
- [11] [05-06 Administrative Assessment Report](#)
- [12a] [Institutional Effectiveness Workbook](#)
- [12b] [Minutes of Institutional Effectiveness Committee Regarding Assessment](#)
- [12c] [Minutes of Institutional Effectiveness Committee Regarding Assessment](#)
- [13] [Academic Program Review, Business Information Systems \(BIS\) 2006, pg 5](#)
- [14] [Praxis Pass Rates, Governor's Office of Student Achievement \(Graduation Rates\)](#)
- [15] [Georgia Board of Nursing \(NCLEX pass rates\)](#)
- [16] [Academic Program Review Master of Business Administration, 2006, page 5](#)
- [17] [Academic Program Review Accounting 2006, page 5](#)

- [18a] [BOR Comprehensive Program Review Policy](#)
- [18b] [ASU Program Review Model](#)
- [19] [List of Accredited Programs at ASU](#)
- [20] [NLNAC Self Study Report. \(2005, August\). Albany State University, College of Health Professions, Baccalaureate Nursing Program / Masters Nursing Program](#)
- [21] [Annual Report 2002-2003](#)
- [22] [Annual Report 2003-2004](#)
- [23] [Annual Report 2004-2005](#)
- [24] [Annual Report 2005-2006](#)
- [25a] [CETLA, Annual Report, 2005-2006](#)
- [25b] [CETLA Annual Report 2006-2007](#)
- [26] [Strategic Plan Presentation, 2006 Faculty Staff Conference Agenda](#)
- [27] [Institutional Effectiveness Committee Minutes – Assessment Process](#)
- [28] [IRP Services](#)
- [29] [IRP Homepage](#)