3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies. (College-level competencies)

Judgment of Compliance

☒ Compliance

Narrative

Albany State Universities (ASU) identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies. The Core Curriculum of, Albany State, as are all University System of Georgia institutions, is the general education foundation upon which all degree programs are built [1].

The Board has identified ten principles, which each institution must follow in developing its core. These principles are as follows:

1. Encourage the development of written and oral communication skills and critical thinking within the broader academic context;
2. Permit opportunities for interdisciplinary learning;
3. Include offerings that reflect the special characteristics of the institution;
4. Feature international components that increase global awareness and introduce the student to different cultural perspectives;
5. Include an informed use of information technology;
6. Employ pedagogy designed to increase intellectual curiosity and to initiate a continuing interest in the subject matter;
7. Feature courses that are challenging and rigorous and provide learning experiences that distinguish a field;
8. Introduce the methods used by technical and scientific professionals such as the evaluation of empirical data, problem recognition, problem definition, the application of scientific principles, and logical problem solving;
9. Be cohesive and provide entry to both specialized studies in the student's chosen field and remaining courses (whether upper or lower division) in the institution's general education curriculum; and
10. Be designed with the assumption that students have met all admissions standards to the institution (with appropriate academic support provided for those who have not).

Consistent with the university’s mission, the following Core Curriculum areas are common to all degree programs of Albany State University:

1. Area A (Essential Skills),
2. Area B (Institutional Options),
3. Area C (Humanities/Fine Arts),
4. Area D (Science, Mathematics, and Technology),
5. Area E (Social Sciences)
6. and Above the Core. Core Curriculum Area F (courses related to the program of study and is uniquely specific for each program) [2].
Albany State University views continuous assessment of its core to be of vital importance for assurance of relevancy and effectiveness, while at the same time remaining consistent with USG policy. The University’s multidisciplinary Core Curriculum Evaluation Committee is charged with regular review of the core, its content, expected outcomes, and assessment of student learning. This body makes its decisions and recommendations to the University’s Curriculum and New Programs Committee based on regular and systematic assessments implemented, analyzed and summarized for the Committee by the Office of Institutional Research.

Assessing General Education and Core Curriculum

The Core Curriculum Committee routinely assesses the success of students at achieving the expected learning skill sets from the various courses of the core. The Committee utilizes results from national benchmark exams such as MAPP [3] and NSSE [4] designed to measure students’ progress and competencies in writing, reading, arts and humanities, math, science, social science, and critical thinking.

Results from the NSSE data regarding General Educational Benchmarks show:

- 80% of ASU seniors report developing their ability to use computing and informational technology “quite a bit” or “very much.”
- 78% of ASU seniors report acquiring a broad, general education “quite a bit” or “very much.”
- 76% of ASU seniors report increasing their ability to work effectively with others “quite a bit” or “very much.”
- 88% of ASU seniors report developing their ability to think critically and analytically “quite a bit” or very much.”
- 70% of ASU seniors report developing their ability to analyze quantitative problems “quite a bit” or “very much.”
- 91% of ASU seniors report developing their ability to write clearly and effectively “quite a bit” or “very much.”

The board requires that all graduates of system institutions must demonstrate college level achievement in reading and writing. The Regents’ Test has been developed to measure reading and writing ability [5]. The test was established in order for the University System of Georgia to document general education core competencies and all students are expected to have passed the Regents’ Test prior to completing 45 semester hours of academic course work. The Regent’s policy states that it is the responsibility of each institution of the University System of Georgia to assure the other institutions, and the System as a whole, that students obtaining a degree from the institution possess the basic competence of academic literacy; that is, certain minimum skills of reading and writing.

One of the key academic support units whose activities bear directly on supporting student learning is the Center For Excellence in teaching and Learning (CETLA). Several key improvements as a result of their assessment of new teaching strategies employed by the instructors teaching the Regents’ remedial courses have resulted in
measurable gains on pass rates on the Regents’ are particularly noteworthy:

During the fall semester, the pass-rates showed a 1% increase on the Essay section with 86% and an 11% increase for the Reading section with 74% when compared with pass-rates of the previous year’s test administration, fall 2005, of 85 % for the Essay section and 63% for the Reading section. The center’s support helped Albany State’s pass-rate equal the average pass-rate for the thirteen state universities for the fall semester. The reading pass-rate for fall improved eleven points at 44%. The greatest improvement was made with spring’s reading pass-rate increasing twenty points from 32% (spring 2006) to 52% (spring 2007) and Essay rates moved ahead by three points from 64% (spring 2006) to 67% (spring 2007) [6].

In addition to the Regents’ Test, academic departments require their students to demonstrate core competencies in a variety of ways. For example, all candidates for degrees in education must pass the Georgia Assessment for the Certification of Educators (GACE) [7] prior to acceptance into teacher education. This basic skills test consists of reading, writing, and mathematics. Students who have not been admitted to teacher education cannot enroll in upper level courses, i.e. 3000-4000 level courses until this requirement is met and documented. Additionally, all nursing graduates have to pass the Georgia Nursing Board Examination before they can practice in the field.

**Documentation of Improvement and Recommendations**

ASU’s Core Evaluation Committee in conjunction with Institutional research will review data generated from the three methods of assessment listed above to track ASU students’ progress during, through completion of, and achievement of expected outcomes after having taken the core. If improvement or lack thereof is evident, the committee will report its findings to the VPAA, and may make recommendations to the Curriculum and New Programs Committee.

**Supporting Documentation**


[3] Master's (Comprehensive) Colleges and Universities I and II (MAPP), Summary of Proficiency Classifications


[7] Georgia Assessments for Certification of Educators