2.5 Institutional Effectiveness

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.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative

As a flagship state institution, The University of Alabama (UA) operates, improves and succeeds with an array of ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes to advance the effectiveness of the institution as a whole and achieve the institution’s strategic vision, mission and goals. The University of Alabama System administration and governing board demand that such planning and evaluation processes be in place and often orchestrate their status and progress reporting.

The University engages in multiple institutional planning and evaluation processes because of the fundamental differences that exist in how a research university plans and evaluates appropriately its strategic direction, its enrollment management, its academic master plan for educational program development, its research expansion, its information technology advances, its campus master plan, its capital construction management, and its advancement/capital campaign initiatives, just to name a few of the most notable planning processes in operation. This narrative examines those institution-wide planning and evaluation processes in some depth to document their ongoing operation, their systematic integration with institutional mission and goals, and their data/research-based characteristics as well as their contributions over the last five to 10 years to improve institutional quality at the University.

Some of the most persuasive evidence that UA is continually improving in quality and effectively accomplishing its mission is the comparison of where the University is today to where it was 10 years ago. The University’s enrollment is up substantially as is the quality and national diversity of new student recruitment. UA established an Honors College that reinforces the institution’s strategic vision of attracting and retaining the best and brightest students. The University measured research benchmarks against peer institutions, and implemented initiatives with new vice presidential leadership in research and a PRIME strategy to position UA to become a top-tier research university. The exponential growth of applications and uses of information and instructional technology across the campus continues to mushroom. Keeping pace with the university’s rapid growth, the campus master plan guided the addition of nearly 3.5 million gross square feet of new or renovated facilities in the last five years alone. Thanks to ongoing and visionary capital construction planning, the University had fully renovated or newly constructed almost 70% of the Educational and General (E&G) funded space on campus in the last 25 years, shifting the UA campus facilities to a younger age profile than the profiles of peer institutions. In 2002, University Advancement launched an aggressive and well-planned $500 million capital campaign that raised over $612 million by 2009. And finally, systematic assessments of the 2004–2014 Strategic Plan’s performance measures at the end of that strategic planning cycle confirm many substantive and continuing improvements reflecting mission and goal attainment. These and other advances in institutional quality and mission attainment could not have materialized without highly effective planning and evaluation processes.
Mission-Driven Planning and Evaluation

The System Board of Trustees assigns to each of the System’s campus presidents the responsibility to engage the campus in “overall planning, resource allocation, and program evaluation.” [1] Presidents report to the System Chancellor and through the Chancellor to the Board and Board committees that review and recommend approval of various plans and their components, such as strategic plans, mission statements, campus master plans, annual capital development plans, and budgets. [2]

For example, in February 2014 the Board approved a slightly revised mission statement for UA. [3] UA’s Office for Academic Affairs initiated the revision with a request to the University’s Vice Presidents to review UA’s mission, which was first articulated in 1984 and reviewed again and largely retained in 1994 and 2004. After further review and updates from the Council of Deans and the Faculty Senate, the University President submitted a request to the Chancellor [4] for his approval and consideration of the revised statement by the Board.

The revised mission marks the near completion of the University’s 10-year strategic plan [5] that guided UA through a period of unprecedented growth in enrollment [6] and the programs and infrastructure to support it. With the ultimate goal of reducing the University’s dependence on state funding, UA embarked on a plan to grow both the quantity and quality of students. From increasing enrollment to implementing a technical infrastructure that serves over 39,000 faculty, staff, and students, the following examples, as well as other examples included in various narratives throughout the Compliance Certification, illustrate how the University’s colleges and administrative divisions collaboratively responded to this vision while meeting their mission-directed responsibilities to provide quality teaching, research, and service.

Enrollment Management Planning

In the midst of UA's 2005 SACSCOC reaffirmation and strategic plan development, the University’s President announced an ambitious goal to increase UA's enrollment from 20,333 to 28,000 by 2010 while increasing the quality of students, i.e. higher ACT scores and high school GPAs. [7] At that time, the University had six recruiters, all within the state of Alabama. In a trial run, Admissions sent recruiters to Dallas, Houston, and Atlanta with a target of increasing the incoming class from 3,300 to 4,000. The strategy worked; Admissions added more regional recruiters. The University met the 28,000 enrollment target by 2009.

Today, more than 30 regional recruiters work in states from the East to the West coasts. The University added part-time recruiters in Oregon and Washington last year. To stay ahead in both numbers and quality, Admissions continues to investigate new territories for recruiting and new methods of reaching the top students in those territories. UA Admissions invested in new computerized management systems and revised its direct mailing processes. Realizing the increasing reliance of prospects on technology, Admissions engages potential students through social networks and email. Admissions also utilizes the Internet to more quickly and accurately identify those students meeting the academic standards the University seeks in its growing enrollment, such as National Merit Scholars. This process has been very successful. Applications for admission have increased from 8,298 in 2003 to 30,975 in 2013 and enrollment for Fall 2014 is projected to be approximately 36,000.

Academic Programs Master Planning and Evaluation

Growing enrollment while increasing the academic quality of students required enhancing “the University’s learning environment to attract and retain excellent students,” one of four strategic goals in the 2004–2014 Plan. [8] Chief among actions to accomplish this goal was the creation of an Honors College. UA’s Honors College, developed in 2003, serves as an enhancement to the University’s undergraduate curriculum, providing a learning environment where exceptional students can thrive in programs that value academic achievement and service-based leadership. [9] National Merit Finalists and National Achievement Finalists are automatically admitted to Honors College. Admission for traditional first year students requires a high school GPA of 3.5 or above and an ACT Composite score of 28 and above or an SAT score of 1250 and above. As a result, the average ACT score of the freshman class has risen from 23.6 in 2003 to 26.2 in 2013 [10] and the average high school GPA has risen from 3.33 to 3.60 over the same period. [11] At the same time, the number of National Merit Finalists and National Achievement Finalists increased from 39 in 2003 to a high of 147 since the development of the Honors College.
The Honors College serves as an example of an initiative coordinated by the Office for Academic Affairs and integrated among the various academic programs that offer discipline-specific honors courses as well. More basic to the teaching mission of the University is the growth in demand for courses, especially core courses, as enrollment rapidly increased. In 2005–06, UA began a multiyear plan for adding new faculty positions in strategic areas. Approximately $13 million was budgeted for new faculty positions for the first five-year period. In 2006, the Provost issued the first call for proposals for new faculty positions. The Provost asked Deans to make a case for new faculty positions and to involve the faculty and the department chairs in the process. Deans were asked to address the following points in their proposals:

- Provide enrollment trends (number of majors, number of student credit hours, and number of degrees granted by level and discipline or department) for the last five years. Indicate realistic enrollment goals that can be achieved in the next five years, highlighting the areas where your college can grow and areas where enrollment will be limited.

- Indicate changes (recent or planned) in your curriculum that could impact student enrollment either positively or negatively.

- Provide research / scholarship trends by department for the last five years and measurable research goals that can be achieved within five years by department. Highlight peaks of excellence for the college and identify areas where significant gains can be made.

- Indicate the priority for new faculty position(s) and explain the impact that the position(s) will have on teaching and research.

Since 2006, the Provost provides deans the opportunity to make additional requests. While the points requested initially remained constant, additional information has been requested in subsequent years. For example, the Provost added the requirement that the proposals address the progress that the deans and department heads made insuring that the teaching load of the current faculty is appropriate and that the faculty time reassigned to research is commensurate with research accomplishments. Then, in 2009, the Provost asked for information relative to the percentage of the salary budget by department that is spent on teaching, research, and administration. Each college is responsible for responding to and meeting the teaching, research, and service obligations of the University’s mission. In order to do so, the University financially supported the departments’ efforts to address high-demand courses through the employment of contract full-time or part-time faculty and extra graduate assistants to teach extra sections.

All colleges also engage in three overlapping and integrated approaches to demonstrate and monitor educational program effectiveness: annual outcomes assessment; discipline-specific accreditation; and regular, periodic program review. The University expects every degree program to identify student learning outcomes and operational outcomes (if appropriate) and to employ direct and indirect measures to assess the extent to which the outcomes are attained in assessment plans. Programs submit summaries and analyses of assessment results annually through WEAVE, software for online management of assessment processes. Programs develop plans for improvement if outcomes do not meet targets established in the assessment plans and evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented improvements during an ongoing cycle of regular, periodic assessment.

UA expects educational programs to attain accreditation if a discipline-specific accreditation exists. The Discipline Accreditation Summary Table [12] identifies the educational programs accredited at UA, the name of the respective accrediting agency, when the program was last accredited, and when the next accreditation reaffirmation is scheduled. In addition to verifying that the accredited disciplines offered at UA meet national standards, discipline-specific accreditation also requires the identification of student learning outcomes (or competencies), how they are assessed, and the results of assessment practices.

The University’s program review process calls for each academic department to conduct an extensive self-study every eight years. An internal review committee and an external consultant identify strengths and potential areas for improvement, including attention to educational program outcomes and student learning outcomes. The Religious Studies Program Review [13] from 2012–13 provides an example of critiques [14] of the department’s assessment activities from UA’s Assistant to the Provost for Assessment and an external consultant. The department, in collaboration with the college dean, develops action plans in response to recommendations that emerge from the review. As an example, the English Program [15] was one of several programs to undergo a review in 2013–14 with an action plan [16] to be reported on in three years. Accredited programs complete a modified program review, such as the one completed by the Department of Psychology in 2011. [17]
These planning and review processes provide information to support petitions for additional resources to support the mission-directed and strategic priorities, such as retaining and recruiting outstanding faculty and staff to support the teaching, research, and service mission of the University. In addition, each summer, colleges submit annual reports to the Provost that detail the college's accomplishments. The Provost, President and other members of the Executive Council consider this information collectively and integrate with other planning processes, such as fundraising to provide infrastructure for instruction or increase endowments for professorships.

Research Planning and Evaluation

UA's vision is to “be a student-centered research university.” In Fall 2012, the University’s President and Provost charged the Research Advisory Committee (RAC), [18] to prepare a report on ways of increasing the University’s research profile. In November 2013 the RAC submitted to the Vice President for Research the report, PRIME: A Strategy to Advance Research at The University of Alabama. [19] The report reviewed the University's current research environment, compared UA to peer institutions, outlined recommendations to promote research on campus, and advanced “the position that a strong research program at The University of Alabama is inextricably tied to a high-quality undergraduate experience and statewide economic growth, both of which benefit the citizens of Alabama.”

Despite the University’s “record of setting a vision, identifying resources, implementing a plan, and achieving ambitious goals,” RAC noted that UA lags behind its peers on common benchmarks that measure research success, e.g. research expenditures, NSF ranking, and Carnegie Foundation Classification. To advance research at UA, RAC proposes a strategic research plan based on the following core recommendations:

- Promote research and graduate programs;
- Recognize and invest in key research areas;
- Increase the ratio of graduate to undergraduate students;
- Modernize and streamline research support systems; and
- Empower faculty for research excellence.

In response to the report, the Office of the Vice President for Research, with support from the University administration, began designing and implementing a number of initiatives, including:

- Initiating a search an associate vice president for research to serve as the liaison between the Vice President for Research and faculty involved in research program development; [20]
- Designing an avenue for greater recognition of research and scholarship excellence among faculty;
- Developing an award mechanism by 2015 to recognize research faculty in all colleges and schools;
- Strengthening undergraduate research opportunities through such programs as the Emerging Scholars, [21] the Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity Conference, [22] and the Randall Outstanding Undergraduate Research Awards. [23]
- Initiating a search for a campus-wide director of undergraduate research [24] to coordinate current campus undergraduate research initiatives and develop additional opportunities and programs.

Some of the additional plans for reaching the University’s strategic goal of becoming a top-tier research institution are based on the continuous evaluation of UA’s research strengths, opportunities and strategic priorities. These three items are summarized each year in a report to System Office. [25]
Another recent example of the ongoing evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses in the University’s research programs is the Research Stimulation Program (RSP). In an effort to stimulate externally-funded research, the University initiated the RSP in 2010 to provide post-doctoral support to research programs poised to grow. Based on NSF tracking and The Top American Research Universities Survey, UA was trailing peers in the number of post-doctoral fellows and in overall research funding. The RSP funded 40 postdoctoral fellows between 2010 and 2013. However, the Vice President for Research conducted a recent evaluation, looking primarily at extramural grant applications and subsequent grant funding associated with each award between 2010 and 2013 before funding new awards in 2014. [26]

The evaluation included totaling, by year, the number and dollar amount of proposals for external funding submitted by each faculty member included in an RSP award. The numbers and amounts for the faculty involved in each RSP award were then summed and the totals in the year prior to and each year after receipt of the RSP award were compared. The averages in the year preceding an RSP award were 52.9 proposals for $20.8 million and the averages after receipt of an RSP award were 48.4 proposals for $16.4 million per year. When proposals include multiple PIs, the numbers and amounts are allocated between Co-PIs based on the shared credit, agreed upon prior to submission of the proposal, often resulting in fractional less than whole awards allocated to RSP awardees. Awards of external funding also decreased, on average, in the years after receipt of an RSP award; from 21.6 awards for $3.0 million in the year prior to receipt to an average of 16.8 awards for $2.0 million in the years subsequent to receipt of an RSP award. While the sponsored research activity of some awardees increased after receipt of RSP funding, on average the faculty benefiting from the RSP awards submitted fewer proposals for less external funding and received fewer awards for less external funding for research.

Although this type of program can take some time to have a measurable impact, the results did not wholly support continuing the program at the previous level and the number of awards each year was reduced. During 2014, six new proposals requesting postdoctoral fellow support were awarded funding. Results of the program will continue to be reviewed and the program adjusted as appropriate. However, in reviewing the results with faculty-led committees and the Associate Deans for Research, it was clear that continuing the current stand-alone RSP program might not leverage funding as anticipated. Therefore, the current 2015 consensus appears to include merging the RSP program with The Research Grants Committee (RGC) program.

The RGC award program received increased funding over the past few years. but underwent no other major changes. Based on NSF Research and Development metrics, the University is concerned that while the research enterprise has grown considerably over the course of the last decade, it has remained at approximately the same level in relation to other comparable educational institutions. Accordingly, the OVPR is working with three groups; the RGC membership and leadership (composed of faculty members); the RAC; and, the Associate Deans for Research to restructure the RGC Program. These groups are identifying suitable metrics to characterize the types and success of the projects funded in recent years that support the Division’s long-term strategic goals of increasing sponsored program activity on campus and raising the visibility of research and creative scholarship endeavors by students and faculty. The Division envisions restructuring the RGC for greater breadth of opportunity for 2015 awards, including funding amounts, interdisciplinary research projects and instrumentation/equipment support. In 2014–15, while maintaining the original program, the Division plans on extending the opportunities and support for interdisciplinary research activities and instrumentation. The initiative will:

- Provide stronger review of proposals and working with college research administrators to build research and scholarship strengths;
- Provide greater training opportunities for early career stage faculty unfamiliar with processes associated with development, application and management of extramural awards; and
- Continue to provide review feedback for both successful and unsuccessful applications (as initiated in 2014).
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) supports the information technology and telecommunications infrastructure including networks and computer systems, and the application software that serves over 39,000 faculty, staff and students at the University. An Annual Work Plan summarizes OIT’s strategic directions and the activities, initiatives and projects that are either in progress or currently planned. It serves as the primary blueprint as the office moves forward in its effort to provide innovative and effective information technology solutions to facilitate research, enhance instruction, and support administrative operations.

To accomplish this mission, OIT identified five strategic goals:

- Ensure the quality of information technology services for all of the University community through expanded resources and infrastructure;
- Enhance the research mission of the University through technology innovations and expanded capabilities;
- Enrich educational experiences through technology to promote student success and faculty excellence;
- Engage the community beyond the University of Alabama campus and build global initiatives; and
- Establish an environment that supports the development of the technology organization.

Achieving these goals requires that OIT partner with other units (academic and administrative) to assess needs, analyze data, develop plans, and implement initiatives. OIT relies on a structure of committees that include representatives from colleges, departments, and student organizations to create opportunities for collaboration when considering technology investments, to promote transparency and involvement in technology decision making, to ensure resources are available to support initiatives, to improve service, and to manage the impact of change on individuals. The IT Governance Structure, in place since 2009, includes committees focused on specific subject matter, such as Technology and Learning, Support & Software Licensing, Technology and Research, the Web, and Security. These technical coordinating committees review and advise on implementations, modification, and upgrades; develop and recommend policies and procedures; and resolve technical issues. Among other things, the Planning and Policy Committee vets recommendations from the technical coordinating committees to ensure they support the mission and vision of the University. The Planning and Policy Committee includes the chief information officer, associate vice presidents, deans, directors, and legal counsel. The Executive Steering Committee includes the vice presidents and legal counsel and provides guidance and strategic oversight for the University’s information technology environment.

With UA’s current growth in enrollment, the increasing use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning, and the ever-changing technology itself, the Technology Learning Committee (TLC) is the most active of the technical coordinating committees. It is chaired by the Director of the Faculty Resource Center (FRC), which provides faculty development and support for instructional technologies to enhance teaching and learning. The FRC is one of four groups in the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT).

In 2009, the University’s learning management system (LMS) had a maximum concurrent capacity of 3,000 users when 7,376 course sections were utilizing the system in some form. Today over 75% of faculty use the LMS, creating 11,741 course sections in 2013. Recognizing that increases in enrollment, growth in user expectations and associated tools, and a changing role for the LMS and affiliated tools for academic continuity in the face of pandemic or other emergencies, the TLC proposed a five-year initiative to improve the performance, stability and support of the University’s LMS. Today the University has a stable, scalable LMS that provides for enrollment, grading, class activities, and other necessary academic functions and that serves as a vital resource and tool to assist with academic continuity. In a project that took place from October 2011 to May 2013, the University migrated from a self-hosted LMS in use since 2007 to a vendor-hosted LMS. The migration, the largest and most complex of any UA LMS migrations, required the collaborative planning and implementation of CIT and its groups, OIT and its groups, the TLC and other campus-wide IT committees, the colleges and schools, Office of the Registrar, and others.

The LMS Initiative was not the TLC’s only plan developed and implement in the last five years. Nor will it be the last. After assessing classroom audio-visual usage and surveying faculty, the TLC proposes to upgrade technology in the classrooms.
Campus Master Planning

Enrollment at UA reached a record high of 34,852 students in the fall of 2013, an increase of 7,800 students or 28.8% over the five-year period from 2008 to 2013. In order to maintain pace with the increasing enrollment, the University added approximately 3,477,206 in either new or renovated gross square footage (GSF). Of this total, approximately 778,678 GSF is for academic purposes; 1,218,551 GSF is for general residential facilities; and 706,172 GSF is for parking facilities. The remaining 773,805 in GSF is for other purposes, including infrastructure.

The University’s Planning and Design Department is responsible for the collaborative planning to meet UA’s physical campus needs. The Department maintains and updates the Campus Master Plan, which provides design guidelines and concepts for development of the University’s buildings, grounds, and infrastructure. The current Campus Master Plan also helps the University realize its strategic goals, particularly Goal 3, enhancing the University’s learning environment to attract and retain excellent students. The Campus Master Plan is based on principles adopted by the Board with the primary purpose of providing appropriate settings for teaching, research, creative activity, and services. The design’s purpose is to create a complete learning environment with the core of the campus for learning and for selected supporting spaces and services essential to learning. The surroundings of the core (to the north and south of the academic campus area) are for student residences and student life activities. The Campus Master Plan establishes direction for accommodating planned growth and serves as a guide for infrastructure development and capital improvements.

Development of the Campus Master Plan was a collaborative, comprehensive effort completed in 2007, [38] and amended and updated in November 2012 [39] to incorporate the University's 2010 purchase of 168 acres of adjoining property (Bryce Hospital). The University developed the plan with broad participation from campus constituents, including administration, faculty, staff, students and alumni. Participation included interviews, focus group sessions, and committees. The completed plan represents one endorsement measure by campus constituencies that the institution’s current and planned facilities are adequate to meet the needs of its mission-related activities. The Campus Master Plan Committee [40] advises the President and University administration to ensure that the Master Plan continues to meet the needs of the campus constituents. Any activity that may necessitate an update to the Master Plan originates through these channels and is ultimately submitted for Board approval.

Capital Construction Planning and Evaluation

Construction Administration develops comprehensive plans for the purpose of ensuring the continuing functionality, expansion, and improvement of the learning environment for the students, faculty, and staff. The main documents generated to support the University’s planning efforts are the Annual Capital Development Plan, the Annual Deferred Maintenance Plan, the Utilities and Infrastructure Management and Growth Plan and other major program specific plans, such as the Bryce Capital Development Plan. [41]

Board Rule 415, Section IIIB [42] requires that the University update and present the Five-Year Facilities Development Plan to the Board for approval at each September meeting. This report projects for a minimum five-year time period space requirements to support campus academic and administrative programs. Information required in this plan includes a description of the project, estimated date(s) for development, estimated cost and source of funds, and the priority of each project based on documented academic or facility needs. This plan serves as a basis for the Annual Capital Development Plan. Board Rule 415, Section IIIC [43] requires the University to also update and present the Annual Capital Development Plan (ACDP) to the Board for approval at the September meeting. The Plan includes a list of prioritized capital projects presented in the context of the campus’ annual planning and budgeting process, and outlines how these projects relate to and enhance the University’s programs. The Plan is subdivided into project categories including, but not limited to, education and general, real estate, auxiliary, infrastructure, equipment and athletics. The ACDP is accompanied by a long-term capital financing report showing current long-term debt and additional liabilities (long-term debt requirements) for proposed new projects.
Also, in accordance with Board Rule 415, Section IIIC and the University’s Deferred Maintenance Policy, the University prepares a Deferred Maintenance Plan (DMP) on an annual basis to cover a five-year period. The DMP focuses on upgrades to bring all buildings to current safety standards, and to ensure environmentally stable exterior conditions and stable interior environments. Representatives from three areas - Construction Administration, Facilities and Grounds, and Planning and Design - meet bi-weekly to assess and prioritize deferred maintenance of the Education and General funded items, along with various other issues pertinent to planning, construction, and maintenance of facilities and grounds.

After obtaining necessary approvals, the appropriate UA units consolidate the Five-Year Facilities Capital Development Plan, ACDP, and the DMP into one report, the Annual Consolidated Capital Projects and Facilities Report. Additionally, as the individual projects progress, the Board requires intermittent stage approvals. These approvals ensure ongoing compliance with the Campus Master Plan and budget availability, and include design reviews for visual impact and scope intent as the project evolves.

The University submits the Annual Consolidated Capital Projects and Facilities Report each June for the Board’s initial review and consideration. The report is placed on the September agenda each year for Board approval. The Academic Affairs and Planning Committee of the Board reviews the proposed projects to determine if they are consistent with campus mission statements and long-term academic program planning needs, and whether the proposed projects duplicate existing facilities. The Physical Properties Committee reviews proposed projects in terms of: general conformance with the Campus Master Plan; review of project scope, campus priority and impact on reducing deferred maintenance/facility renewal liabilities; the appropriateness of proposed construction costs (per building square foot); and projected annual and five-year operations and maintenance costs for the planned space. The Finance Committee reviews the long-term debt structure of each campus in conjunction with the proposed Annual Capital Development Plan and determines if the funding proposed for projects in the Annual Capital Development Plan is consistent with prudent financial planning and within the financial capabilities of each campus within the Alabama System.

The Division of Financial Affairs develops the Utility and Infrastructure Management and Growth Plan (U&I) to communicate a framework for the Division of Financial Affairs to meet and support the dynamics of a growing campus and to recognize the challenges and opportunities. Financial Affairs updates this report periodically and distributes it to University administration. In anticipation of the University’s continued growth and as necessary for efficient management of University systems, staff proactively address plans to meet defined and projected campus needs across all areas within the Financial Affairs Division, including operation and maintenance of facilities, construction administration, planning, public safety, finance, ancillary services, human resources, auxiliary services and other business activities. The issues and projects addressed are carefully coordinated through the structure and principles provided by the Campus Master Plan and an integrated evaluation model to ensure the most effective execution and to eliminate any potential rework. The Growth Plan Report provides information regarding the different campus systems including general background information, current efforts, system constraints and issues, and long term plans.

Various University divisions and departments routinely seek feedback and objective analysis of the adequacy of their physical resources, including consistent measurement protocols and competitive benchmarking with designated peers. For example, UA contracts with Sightlines, LLC. to obtain independent analysis of its campus facilities. According to Sightlines’ April 10, 2014 FY 2013 ROPA Presentation, key findings include:

- Almost 70% of the University’s Education and General (E&G) funded space has been fully renovated or newly constructed in the last 25 years shifting the campus to a younger age profile over its peers.
- The University’s entire campus consumed less total energy than peers in FY13 at a higher unit cost. As a result, millions of dollars is yielded in cost avoidance savings.
- Operations output is strong with similar staffing levels outperforming peers in each functional area. In-house project work has decreased and proactive planned/preventative maintenance has increased.

As an example of the integration of the planning and evaluation processes, UA’s Office of the University Registrar (a unit of the Office for Academic Affairs) generates and monitors the reports that measure enrollment capacity and resource allocation to ensure that resources are adequate and fully utilized. The Registrar uses Ad Astra Information Systems’ instructional space scheduling software, implemented in 2006, to generate reports, which are distributed to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, who disseminates the information to the appropriate parties in the colleges and departments.
Ad Astra concluded its most recent strategic check-up using Fall 2013 data. The PowerPoint presentation summarizing the process and results from the study offers a comparison of UA to designated peers who also use Ad Astra software. While the University experienced unprecedented enrollment growth, the results of the Ad Astra study indicate that the University has adequate resources and is efficiently allocating its existing resources in comparison to its designated peer universities. Conversely, the results also identify opportunities for the University to develop scheduling strategies and policies to ensure optimum resource allocation. To that end, University Administration approved the licensing of WEN, which is a product offered by Leepfrog Technologies. The University currently uses CourseLeaf Solutions’ Catalog Management System and Course Inventory System. WEN is the third product in the CourseLeaf Suite and is used in the creation, verification, and publication of class schedules. It allows for front end enforcement of scheduling policies, creates approval workflows through which exceptions to scheduling policies are managed, and, through a customization to the software, provides a physical address requirement for off-campus courses. The licensing of this software used in conjunction with other CourseLeaf Suite products and Ad Astra’s room scheduling capabilities is the first step in a strategic proposal to optimize allocation of the University’s instructional space. A Spring 2014 presentation of Scheduling Recommendations to the President, Provost and Deans outlines the complete scheduling proposal.

In Spring 2011, the University’s Housing and Residential Communities (reporting to the Division of Student Affairs) engaged Brailsford & Dunlavey (B&D) for a Student Housing Master Plan Update (Study). The Study is an update to a previous Student Housing Master Plan completed in 2005 and later updated in 2006. The purpose of the Study was to evaluate the feasibility of the planned student housing developments as well as the demand for additional projects in the future. B&D’s scope of work included student focus groups, a student survey, off-campus (private-sector) housing market analysis, and a system-wide financial model. Based on the survey analysis, B&D constructed a housing demand model. The model quantifies the demand for the proposed units at specific rental rates in the context of the University’s enrollment figures. Focus group findings indicated students were overall happy with their experience at the University and are glad they made the decision to attend UA. Concerns voiced from non-freshmen included the rapid growth of the University and its possible impact on academic quality, and housing and parking availability. Students expressed concerns about rising costs associated with new housing facilities and also expressed preferences regarding privacy related to bedrooms and bathrooms. The University can illustrate its responsiveness to these concerns as evidenced by completion of the Presidential Village I residential facility, which opened in August 2012 and provides housing for up to 971 students. Additionally, Presidential Village II is scheduled to be completed Fall 2014 and will house an additional 871 students. Also, since the survey was completed, a new parking deck, Riverside Parking Deck, was approved for construction and is scheduled for completion later in 2014. This parking deck will provide an additional 779 parking spaces.

As the Housing and Residential Communities Occupancy History Report indicates, as of Fall 2013, 26.04% or 7,667 of the undergraduate student population lives in campus housing. Occupancy is at 96.27 percent of availability. Additionally, the Educational Benchmarking, Inc. Satisfaction Survey is used annually by the Housing and Residential Communities Department as well to evaluate housing needs.

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics contracted with Davis Architects to develop an Athletic Facilities Master Plan to guide capital construction. Among the Phase I and Phase II athletic facility projects is a proposed renovation to the Bryant Hall Academic Center, which was built in 2005 and provides academic resources to UA athletes, including tutoring and mentoring services, classrooms, independent study rooms, conference rooms, and state of the art computer labs.

**Advancement Campaign Planning**

To provide scholarship support for anticipated increases in enrollment and to offer facilities that provide students with quality educational experiences, UA embarked in 2002 on an aggressive capital campaign to raise $500 million by 2009. The goal was met in 2008. By the end of the campaign, the University raised over $612 million in the “Our Students. Our Future” campaign, which included $250 million for student scholarships.
Because the System allows only one of its three institutions to conduct a capital campaign at a time, UA’s Office of University Advancement entered a silent phase in March 2012 to raise funds for scholarships and endowed professorships and chairs. Since the “Reverberations” campaign began, Advancement secured over $67 million in new scholarship dollars and over $5 million for endowed professorships and chairs. Advancement plans to announce the campaign in late Fall 2014 with a goal of $300 million.

The Vice President for University Advancement and the President introduced a draft of the Reverberations Plan to UA’s college deans in July 2014, noting the previous work with the University’s administration and colleges to grow the scholarship endowment through ad hoc structures. The newest plan provides an intentional and integrated approach that syncs with the University’s goals. The Reverberation initiative seeks to secure at least $300 million in gifts and commitments by December 31, 2017 for the following priority areas:

- General University Endowed Scholarships $175 million
- General University Annual Scholarships $ 50 million
- College/Unit Based Endowed Scholarships $ 50 million
- College/Unit Based Annual Scholarships $ 25 million

In addition to the fundraising totals, the plan also identifies other targets of success that include:

- Increasing the number of volunteer leaders who play active roles in major gift fundraising;
- Increasing the number of major donor suspects and prospects;
- Increasing the fundraising dollars in years following the initiative.

**Review of Achievement of the 2004–14 Strategic Plan**

The most recent strategic planning cycle began in 2004. The Office of Continuous Quality Improvement and Planning organized the process and conducted listening sessions with members of the Senior Management Council, the Student Leaders Council, the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, and the Council of Assistant and Associate Deans. The Faculty Senate’s Steering Committee and the University’s Council of Deans reviewed initial drafts of the strategic plan and, with subsequent modifications, submitted it to the executive staff. The President and vice presidents endorsed the 2004–14 Strategic Plan, which focuses the institution on the following goals:

- Advance the University’s academic, research, scholarship and service priorities, consistent with a top tier university, and continue to promote growth and national prominence in these areas.
- Enhance the teaching, research and service mission of the University by retaining and recruiting outstanding faculty and staff.
- Enhance the University’s learning environment to attract and retain excellent students.
- Develop a University-wide emphasis on leadership as a primary role of the flagship university of the State of Alabama.

Within this strategic plan, the University identified numerous specific action plans to prompt strategic initiatives within the University’s divisions, colleges, schools and departments. The University also identified institutional performance measures intended to gauge the University’s achievements and attainment of its mission, vision and strategic goals. As the 2004–2014 strategic planning cycle concludes, the University makes a systematic and research-based review of the accomplished achievements on these performance measures as follows:

- **Average ACT for first time first year students.** As the table and chart in the attachment reveals, with the exception of one year in 2008, there was continuous improvement each year of the average ACT scores of entering first-time full-time freshmen, rising from 23.6 in Fall 2003 to 26.2 in Fall 2013. Clearly, substantial progress was made over the last decade in realizing the vision of attracting the brightest and best students and the strategic goal of attracting excellent students. Enrollment management plans were
• **Average high school GPA for entering first year students.** Similarly, the table and chart in the attachment reveals [11], with the exception of two years in 2007 and 2008, there was continuous improvement of the high school GPA of entering freshmen, rising from 3.33 in Fall 2003 to 3.60 in Fall 2013. Again, this is more evidence that the institution’s vision and one of its strategic goals were being achieved, and that enrollment management plans were working.

• **Transfer students from other in-state institutions.** There was no consistent trend in these transfer numbers over the last decade except that they appear to be falling off in recent years. [59] The priority given to national recruitment of freshmen may have led to a lack of concentrated attention on the recruitment of transfer students.

• **Total undergraduate enrollment.** Total undergraduate enrollment continued to improve annually, nearly doubling from 15,392 in Fall 2003 to 29,443 in Fall 2013. [60] Clearly, the strategic goal that called for the promotion of growth in the University’s academic mission was achieved at a level of greatly exceeding expectations.

• **Undergraduate retention rate.** The first year retention rate of First-Time Full-Time Freshmen was somewhat variable, but showed an improvement trend over the decade, rising from 83.5% in Fall 2003 to 86.4% in Fall 2013. [61] It is difficult for first-year retention rates this high to improve much over time. Nevertheless, this modest upward trend supports the strategic goal of retaining excellent students.

• **Percent African American students.** The number of African American students grew annually from 2,058 in Fall 2004 to 3,554 in Fall 2013, a 73% improvement. [62] This measure suggests that the vision of enhancing the quality of life for all Alabamians and citizens of the nation and world has been advanced positively.

• **Six-year graduation rate.** The six-year graduation rate for First-Time Full-Time Freshmen cohorts improved from 62.4% for Fall 1997 to 66.7% for Fall 2007. [63] Given that this measure has a built in delayed effect from the rising quality of new freshman cohorts, the academically stronger freshman cohorts for Fall 2008 through Fall 2013 should continue to fuel further improvement in these graduation rates for the next six years. This is another indication that the strategic goal of retaining excellent students (through to graduation in this instance) has improved.

• **Undergraduate degrees awarded.** The number of undergraduate degrees awarded has increased annually from 2,815 in 2005–06 to 5,048 in 2013–14, improving 92%. [64] Here too, there is a built-in delayed effect of the growth of undergraduate student bodies on annual degrees conferred, so the growth in the student body in the last six years should fuel continued growth in annual degrees conferred for some time to come. This upward trend supports mission achievement of advancing the intellectual condition of the people of the State, the nation and the world, and demonstrates improvement in the strategic goal of advancing the University’s academic priorities.

• **Credit hour production.** Credit hour production increased in all levels over the last decade and the total continuously improved annually from 558,499 in 2003–04 to 961,008 in 2013–14, an increase of 72%. [65] Again, the strategic goal of advancing growth of the University’s academic priorities was achieved in this measure.

• **Passage rates on selected licensure exams.** When 100% of the teacher education students pass their certification tests every year for the last 10 years and when law and nursing graduates pass their licensing exams in the mid–90s%, there is not much room for continuous improvement. [66] But what we do have in these test results is evidence that the mission of offering quality programs and the vision of students finding excellent educational opportunities at UA are being achieved.

• **Out-of-state first-time undergraduates.** The number of new out-of-state freshmen continuously improved annually from 775 in Fall 2003 to 3,714 in Fall 2013, a 379% increase. [67] Clearly, the mission of advancing the intellectual condition of the nation, the vision of enhancing the quality of life for the nation, and the strategic goal of advancing the national prominence of the university’s academic programs were all achieved on this measure.

• **International first-time undergraduates.** The growth from 25 international students in Fall 2007 to 162 in Fall 2013 is noteworthy, albeit modest in absolute terms. [68] The mission of advancing the intellectual
condition of the world, and the vision of enhancing the quality of life for the world have been achieved to a limited extent on this measure.

- **Residential students.** The number of residential students in on-campus housing has more than doubled in the last 10 years, growing from 3,685 in Fall 2003 to 7,697 in Fall 2013. [69] This notable improvement supports the vision of enhancing the quality of life of students and the mission of advancing their social condition.

- **Nationally-recognized scholarships.** The strategic goal of advancing the University’s national prominence in academics was fueled somewhat by the number of nationally recognized scholarship recipients in the middle of the last decade. Two of the national scholarships that had the most UA recipients years ago have been discontinued, diminishing this measure’s current value. [70]

- **National Merit and Achievement Scholars.** The strategic goal of advancing UA’s national prominence academically was boosted throughout most of the last decade by growth in these numbers, increasing from 39 in Fall 2003 to 281 in Fall 2012 and then dropping precipitously in Fall 2013 to 147. [71]

- **National rankings.** This measure shows a modest upward trend over the past decade, supporting modest improvement in national prominence. [72]

- **Faculty salaries.** The average UA faculty salaries for professors and associate professors improved substantially from $14,000 and $4,600 below the Southern University Group averages respectively in 2003–04 to $8,800 and $4,900 above the SUG averages, respectively in 2013–13. The average salaries for assistant professors and new assistant professors remained below the SUG averages for most of the decade. [73] Assuming the faculty in the senior ranks are the most outstanding, this substantial improvement in the salaries of senior faculty should serve the strategic goal of retaining and recruiting outstanding faculty.

- **Graduate assistant funding.** Beginning after 2007–08 when funding for graduate assistants stood at $13.5 million, funding improved dramatically to $25.2 million by 2013–14. [74] Such increased investment is designed to enhance the attraction and retention of excellent graduate students (a strategic goal).

- **Secondary school students participating in leadership programs.** The notable growth of secondary student participation in Alabama Boys State, Girls State, and Youth Summit from 226 in 2008–09 to 426 in 2013–14 supports achievement of the University’s strategic goal of emphasizing leadership. [75]

- **Participants in leadership development.** The remarkable growth of UA participation in leadership development programs from 89 in 2008–09 to 982 in 2013–14 supports achievement of the University’s strategic goal of emphasizing leadership. [76]

As the University moves into the next phase of strategic planning, the performance measures provide a foundation upon which to assess progress and to identify strategic goals for the next 10 years. Additional measures identified through the ongoing institutional effectiveness processes across the University provide opportunities for the development of new goals and actions for improvement in the next 10 years.

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**Supporting Documents**

1. Board Manual Article V Section 3 (PDF)
2. Board Manual Article IV Section 2 (PDF)
3. Excerpt from Board Minutes 2014 (PDF)  
   Full Document (PDF)
4. Letter from Bonner to Witt (PDF)
5. 2004–2014 Strategic Plan (PDF)
7. Strategic Plan, Page 4 (PDF)
8. Strategic Plan, Goal 3 (PDF)
9. Goal 3 Actions (PDF)
10. Average ACT Composite Scores (PDF)
11. Average High School GPA for First-Time Undergraduates (PDF)
12. Discipline Accreditation Summary Table (PDF)
13. Religious Studies Program Review (PDF)
14. Assessment Critique (PDF)
15. English Program Review (PDF)
16. English Program Action Plan (PDF)
17. Psychology Modified Program Review (PDF)
18. Research Advisory Committee Purpose (PDF)
19. PRIME 2013 (PDF)
20. Associate VP Research Position Announcement (PDF)
21. Emerging Scholars (PDF)
22. Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity Conference (PDF)
23. Randall Awards (PDF)
24. Director Undergraduate Research Position (PDF)
25. Research Priorities (PDF)
26. Research Stimulation Program Analysis (PDF)
27. OIT Annual Work Plan: 2012–13 (PDF)
28. IT Governance Structure (PDF)
29. Teaching and Learning Committee (PDF)
30. Faculty Resource Center (PDF)
31. Center for Instructional Technology (PDF)
32. LMS Applications and Classroom Growth (PDF)
33. LMS Initiative 2009 (PDF)
34. LMS Exit Report 2014 (PDF)
35. TLC Activities (PDF)
36. AVS Growth 2007–2014 (PDF)
37. Classroom Technology Survey 2014 (PDF)
38. Campus Master Plan (PDF)
39. Amended Master Plan (PDF)
40. Campus Master Plan Committee (PDF)
41. Bryce Development Plan (PDF)
42. Rule 415 Section IIIB (PDF)
    Full Document (PDF)
43. Rule 415 Section IIIC (PDF)
    Full Document (PDF)
44. Deferred Maintenance Policy (PDF)
45. Annual Consolidated Capital Projects and Facilities Reports (PDF)
46. BOT Submission and Approval Annual Consolidated Capital Projects and Facilities Reports (PDF)
47. Utilities and Infrastructure Management and Growth Plan (PDF)
48. FY 2013 Sightlines ROPA Alabama Final Presentation (PDF)
49. Ad Astra Strategic Checkup (PDF)
50. Signed Proposal Leepfrog Technologies WEN (PDF)
51. Scheduling Recommendation Presentation (PDF)
52. Brailsford and Dunalavey Student Housing Master Plan Update (PDF)
53. Housing and Residential Communities Occupancy History Report (PDF)
54. Educational Benchmarking Student Satisfaction Survey (PDF)
55. Athletic Facilities Master Plan (PDF)
56. UA News Article (PDF)
57. Reverberations Draft (PDF)
58. Performance Measures (PDF)
59. In-State Transfers (PDF)
60. Total Undergraduate Enrollment (PDF)
61. Undergraduate Retention (PDF)
62. Percent African American Students (PDF)
63. Six-Year Graduation Rate (PDF)
64. Undergraduate Degrees Awarded (PDF)
65. Credit Hour Production (PDF)
66. Passage Rates on Selected Licensure Exams (PDF)
67. Out-of-State FTFY (PDF)
68. International FTFY (PDF)
69. Residential Students (PDF)
70. Nationally Recognized Scholarships (PDF)
71. National Merit and Achievement Scholars (PDF)
72. National Rankings (PDF)
73. Faculty Salaries (PDF)
74. Graduate Assistant Funding (PDF)
75. Secondary School Students Participating in Leadership Programs (PDF)
76. Participants in Leadership Development (PDF)