3.3.1.1 Institutional Effectiveness: Educational programs

3.3.1.1 Institutional Effectiveness: Educational Programs. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: educational programs, to include student learning outcomes.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative

The University of Alabama (UA) utilizes 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. (See list below.) 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.

Program Evaluations & Improvements

UA expects educational programs to attain accreditation if a discipline-specific accreditation exists. Discipline-specific national accreditations are important measures of the quality of educational programs. Offering quality and exceptional educational programs is central to the mission, vision and strategic goals of the University. Discipline-specific accreditations involve extensive internal (self-study) and external (visiting committee of peer evaluators) assessments of the extent to which the university’s programs meet a comprehensive array of program quality indicators reflected in the standards for national accreditation. Maintenance of discipline-specific national accreditations validates high standards of program quality and yields national prominence. The Discipline Accreditation Summary Table 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.
To illustrate results and program improvements made as a function of completing internal (self-study) assessments of readiness for external review, and as a function of external evaluation by the accrediting agency; the UA Dance Program is used as an example. The Dance Program, which is part of UA's Department of Theatre and Dance, recently completed a self-study for reaccreditation by the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD). The site visit was completed in January, 2014 and a copy of the Self-Study, Visitor’s Report and Optional Response is provided. [2] [3] [4]

In the reaccreditation assessment, the size and scope of the Dance Program is reviewed to make sure that adequate facilities, resources, and faculty are available to provide quality teaching and resultant dynamic learning to students. In both the self-study and the NASD Visitor’s Report, the lack of sufficient faculty to meet the demands of a growing department was mentioned as an area of concern. The NASD Visitor’s Report notes that “the dance unit has a minimum number of faculty to cover the size and scope of the programs offered. The faculty members seem overburdened keeping pace with the program.”

At the time of the report there were four full-time and one adjunct faculty member, and the number of dance majors was 140. Because of the limited number of faculty, the program has had to limit the number of new majors accepted to the program, and faculty have been teaching course overloads at the expense of their research and their ability to stay current in the field. The NASD Visitor’s Report recommends the addition of new faculty to the program in order to restore the appropriate balance of workload and to improve the quality of programming and instruction. In response, two new tenure-track dance faculty have been hired and began working in August, 2014.

An additional concern in the NASD Visitor’s Report was that the program “seems to be outgrowing its limited studio space” citing that more studio space would be a valuable improvement and is needed to offer students who are in the same year of study different levels of technique instruction commensurate with their ability level instead of placing them all in the same studio classroom. To improve facility space and thus improve the quality of student learning, UA has hired an architecture firm and approved a plan to add a new theatre, four new dance studios, classrooms, and offices to be completed by Fall 2016.

Comprehensive program review is another important measure of the quality of UA's educational programs. 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 [5] from 2012–13 provides an example of critiques [6] 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 [7] was one of several programs to undergo a review in 2013–14 with an action plan [8] 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. [9]

**Detailed Assessment Reports on Student Learning Outcomes and Other Program Outcomes**

In 2010–11, UA transitioned from a home-grown assessment management system, UAOPS, to the commercially-produced software WEAVE. Academic programs submit reports with the results and analysis of ongoing assessment activities during the fall along with revised or new assessment plans. From this system, WEAVE users may pull Detailed Annual Reports (DAR) that provide details about ongoing assessment efforts, evidence of improvement and plans for further improvement. DARs often begin with a focus on the program’s identified Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and then conclude with Other Program Outcomes pertaining to the program’s quality, enrollment productivity and perceived value. As a matter of transparency, the University provides a complete census of academic program assessment plans and yearly reports. By clicking on the links attached to each degree program below, reviewers will find compilations of DARs from WEAVE for 2011–12, 2012–13, and 2013–14 for all of UA's educational programs. The compilations also include connected documents that do not contain personally identifiable information or large data sets. The 2013–14 DARs contain assessment plans to be addressed in the Fall 2014 reports. The Fall 2014 assessment reports are due to be reported by October 1, 2014, therefore some of the WEAVE DARs included do not yet have results posted for this cycle.
College of Arts & Sciences

- African American Studies
  - Undergraduate

- American Studies
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s

- Anthropology
  - Undergraduate
  - Doctorate

- Applied Linguistics/TESOL
  - Master’s

- Applied Mathematics
  - Doctorate

- Art History
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s

- Biology
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Chemistry
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s (non-thesis)
  - Master’s (thesis)
  - Doctorate

- Communication Disorders
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s

- Creative Writing
  - Master’s

- Criminal Justice
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s

- Dance
  - Undergraduate

- English
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

Education

- Counselor Education (Clinical Mental Health)
  - Master’s

- Counselor Education (Rehab)
  - Master’s

- Counselor Education
  - Specialist
  - Specialist (Online)
  - Doctorate (Ph.D.)

- Education Administration
  - Doctorate

- Educational Leadership
  - Master’s

- Educational Psychology
  - Master’s
  - Master’s (Online)
  - Doctorate

- Educational Research
  - Doctorate (Ph.D.)

- Elementary Education
  - Undergraduate
  - Doctorate

- Elementary/Secondary
  - Master’s (International)
  - Doctorate

- Higher Education Administration
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Human Performance
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language and Literature</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>Master's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Studies</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New College</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics and Astronomy</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Undergraduate (BA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership (Nursing)</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership (Social &amp; Cultural Studies)</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Leadership (Instructional Technology)</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Education</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Counseling</td>
<td>Master's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Psychology</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary/Reading</td>
<td>Master's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education and Multiple Abilities</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education and Multiple Abilities</td>
<td>Master's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education and Multiple Abilities</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education and Multiple Abilities</td>
<td>Doctorate (EdD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education and Multiple Abilities</td>
<td>Doctorate (Ph.D.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerospace and Mechanics</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical and Biological</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Undergraduate (BS)
- Master’s
- Doctorate

- Public Administration
  - Master’s

- Religious Studies
  - Undergraduate

- Romance Languages
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Spanish
  - Undergraduate

- Studio Art
  - Undergraduate (BA)
  - Undergraduate (BFA)
  - Master’s (MA)
  - Master’s (MFA)

- Theatre
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s

- Women’s Studies
  - Master’s

**Commerce & Business Admin**
- Accounting
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s (MAcc)
  - Master’s (MTA)
  - Doctorate

- Applied Stats
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Banking and Finance
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Business Administration
  - Undergraduate
  - Undergraduate (online)

- Civil Engineering
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Civil/Construction
  - Undergraduate

- Civil/Environmental
  - Master’s

- Computer Science
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Construction
  - Undergraduate

- Electrical and Computer
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Environmental
  - Master’s

- Mechanical
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Materials and Metallurgical
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate (with UAB)

**Human Environmental Sciences**
- Apparel and Textiles
  - Undergraduate

- Athletic Trainer
  - Undergraduate

- Clothing, Textiles and Design
  - Master’s

- Consumer Sciences
  - Undergraduate (online)

- Early Childhood Education
  - Undergraduate (online)
- Master's (EMBA)
- Master's (MBA)

- Economics
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Management
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Marketing
  - Master’s
  - Doctorate

- Operations Management
  - Master’s
  - Master’s (Online)
  - Doctorate

College of Nursing
- Nursing
  - Undergraduate (BSN)
  - Master’s
  - Master’s (online)
  - Doctorate (with UAB, UAH)

Communication & Info Sciences
- Advertising and Public Relations
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s

- Book Arts
  - Master’s (MFA)

- Communication and Information Science
  - Doctorate

- Communication Studies
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s

- Journalism
  - Undergraduate

- Food and Nutrition
  - Undergraduate

- General HES
  - Undergraduate (online)

- General HES Consumer Science
  - Master’s

- General HES Human Development and Family Studies
  - Master’s

- General Health Studies
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s

- Health Education/Promotion
  - Doctorate

- Human Development and Family Studies
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s

- Human Environmental Science
  - Master’s

- Human Nutrition
  - Master’s

- Interior Design
  - Undergraduate

- Restaurant and Hospitality Management
  - Undergraduate

School of Law
- Law (Tax)
  - LLM

- Law
  - LLM

- Law
  - JD

School of Social Work
- Social Work
  - Undergraduate
  - Master’s
  - Master’s (online)
  - Doctorate
The UA Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment administers the WEAVE system. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness chairs the University Assessment Council, a group that represents the academic and academic support units and advises the Provost on matters of assessment of academic programs, such as those outlined in the Vision Statement developed during the University Assessment Council’s most recent retreat. OIE and the University Assessment Council work with educational programs to identify effective processes for developing assessment plans and collecting data that yield meaningful results.

In addition to providing the DARs (above) for all academic entities, the following summaries highlight specific examples of assessment processes and the impact upon student learning at the University.

**School of Social Work**

The School of Social Work seeks to solve biopsychosocial problems, improve individual and social conditions, and promote justice and human dignity through teaching, research, and service. The School awards the Bachelor of Social Work degree, the Master of Social Work degree, and the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

A student learning outcome assessed each assessment cycle is the students’ ability to apply social work ethical principles to guide their professional practice. One measure used to assess this outcome is a student analysis of an actual child welfare case with multiple ethical challenges. The measure is the instructor’s assessment of the students’ demonstration that they identified at least two social works values or ethical principles that support the actions they recommend in their analysis. A target was established that 80% of the students achieve a score of at least 85% on the rubric components related to application of these ethical principles. During the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, only 60% of students completing the case study scored 80% or higher on the case study writing assignment.

Analysis of these results indicates that although some students understand the principles that undergird the profession and know how to apply them, others do not and are unable to demonstrate this understanding and knowledge. Three explanations for the lower success rates were proposed. One was that students did not understand the assignment or did not have sufficient writing skills to display their understanding. The second was that since these classes are taught early in the major curriculum, that students have not developed sufficient understanding of ethical principles by the middle of the first semester of their junior year. It is also possible that one cohort of students is different from the other in terms of ethical principles.

After considering these possibilities, an action plan was implemented to (a) increase attention to ethical principles before the senior year; (b) continue to require students who show deficiencies in written communications skill to enroll in a special writing class; and (c) develop an additional measure of ethical principles to serve as an outcome assessment.

During the 2012–2013 assessment cycle, 100% of students completing the case study scored 80% or higher on the assignment regarding ethical principles.

In the Master of Social Work program, a learning outcome of student’s ability to engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services is measured each assessment cycle by a Social Work Field Education Instructor’s ratings of student performance. A target benchmark score of 2.0 (meets requirements) out of a possible 4.0 was set.
During both the 2011–2012 and the 2012–2013 assessment cycles, even though the target of 2.0/4.0 was met (3.5/4.0 in 2011–2012, and 3.6/4.0 in 2012–2013); field instructors’ ratings of student performance in engagement in policy practice were lower than in other areas scored. Therefore, a plan for improvement was developed to improve these scores. A field instructor survey on policy practice was administered. After analysis of these survey results, it was concluded that policy practice is rarely a focus in student field education placements and is a likely explanation for the achievement of satisfactory ratings, but not outstanding ratings, regarding the policy student learning outcome. Revision of the online versions of a policy course (SW578) being made are expected to have a ripple effect on all master’s level policy courses. Results of the field education assessment will be reported in the next cycle, as will conclusions regarding the impact of the revised policy course.

In addition, an electronic version of the tool that field instructors use to report their assessment of MSW student attainment of competencies will be implemented in spring 2014. The new electronic version will enable field instructors to provide more detail regarding their assessments.

College of Commerce and Business Administration

Accounting. The mission of the Culverhouse School of Accountancy is to maintain high quality undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs that attract top students and prepare them for accounting-related careers. The Culverhouse School of Accountancy offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees, including a Ph.D. in accounting.

In the undergraduate accounting program, faculty set a goal that graduates would be able to conduct and communicate the results of professional accounting research and analysis. Students are required to prepare an individual tax return for a hypothetical taxpayer based on information provided, and write a short document (either a memo to the file or a letter to the client) discussing tax issues or tax planning opportunities. Faculty noted that students performed well on identifying the relevant tax issues, but struggled with the written communication. After discussing the errors noted in the memos and letters, faculty decided to provide students a grading rubric in advance of the written assignment, so that students could see the components of a satisfactory outline. The number of students who failed to meet expectations in the 2011–2012 assessment cycle was 19%, compared to 6% in the 2013–2014 assessment cycle. In 2012–2013, 28% of students exceeded expectations on their written communication, while in the 2013–2014 assessment cycle, a majority of students exceeded expectations. Faculty remain committed to improving written communication skills in their students and proposed a plan to implement additional assignments as measures of communication in other courses.

One of the goals of the Ph.D. program is that students will be able to design a research study. Ph.D. students are required to write research papers in both their first and second years in the program.

After review of the first year research papers, the Ph.D. committee met and decided that students in their first year were not achieving maximum benefit from the assignment because they did not have the in-depth knowledge of the literature in their research area necessary to perform well on the first year paper. The committee members decided to change the nature of the first year paper to a literature review so that students could obtain the level of knowledge needed to ask well-motivated research questions that add to the body of research in their chosen field of study. After analysis of first year papers from recent students, the faculty determined the students are better prepared to complete their second-year papers and dissertations; they continue to assess the effectiveness of the assignment.

College of Engineering

The vision of UA’s College of Engineering is to be a nationally-recognized leader in student-centered education, research and innovation. Engineering assessment activities in the College of Engineering center around the accreditation requirements of the Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc. (ABET) and the Computer Science Department assessment focuses on requirements of its accrediting board, the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET.
Electrical and Computer Engineering. The mission of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering is to serve the state, nation, and global community by advancing the boundaries of knowledge through innovative research and education of the next generation of leaders. Its vision is to be a nationally recognized leader in student centered education, research, and innovation. The Department of Electrical and computer engineering offers a Bachelor’s Degree (B.S.E.E.), a Master’s Degree (M.S.E.E.), and a Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.).

Student learning outcomes in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Department are taken from the student learning standards required by ABET. ABET’s General Criterion 3 Student Outcome (a) states that students shall demonstrate “an ability to apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering”. The Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering has expanded that outcome to read “an ability to apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering necessary to analyze and design complex electrical and electronic devices, software, and systems containing hardware and software components, as appropriate to Program Educational Objectives”.

This outcome is assessed by 9 separate measures by multiple course embedded assessments and scored by a standard rubric. In the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, assessments of this outcome include 11 unique assessments across 11 course offerings.

Course embedded assessments show that overall student was 3.31/4.00 as compared to 3.36/4.00 in 2010–2011. Even though the overall target for this assessment was met, the assessment for one measure (A7: Demonstrate knowledge of electromechanics and power principles, including three-phase circuits, magnetic circuits, transformers, dc and ac machines, and power transmission lines) was 2.75/4.00, which was below the desired threshold of 3.0.

After analyzing student work, it became apparent that extrapolating sinusoidal steady-state circuit concepts to three-phase power problems was an area of needed improvement. An action plan to review sinusoidal steady-state circuit concepts will be accomplished with out of class assignments, and more lecture time will be devoted to three-phase concepts. Also, ECE 225 (Circuits) instructors will be encouraged to focus on the primary concepts of sinusoidal steady-state analysis. Finally, more practice problems will be made available. During the 2012–2013 assessment cycle, results show that overall student performance for this outcome was 3.36/4.00. The target for this assessment was met and no individual measures showed need of corrective action.

One of the student learning outcomes assessed by the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Ph.D. program is discipline knowledge of the graduates. The outcome states that Graduates shall demonstrate and develop expert knowledge of advanced topics in electrical and computer engineering. One of the measures used to assess this outcome is a direct assessment of expert knowledge of graduates in the area of devices and materials made through multiple course embedded assessments and scored by a departmental rubric. In the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, student performance for this measure was 3.55/4.0 and 3.42/4.0 for the two courses used for measuring this outcome. In the 2012–2013 assessment cycle, the rubric average score was 3.8/4.0, measured in one course. Both years meet the target score of 3.0/4.0 average score, so no substantial changes in course instruction or assessment are planned for the next assessment cycle. This is an ongoing assessment, and will continue to be measured in the upcoming assessment cycle.

**College of Human Environmental Sciences**

The mission of the College of Human Environmental Sciences is to provide strong undergraduate and graduate programs in the field of human environmental sciences. Further the College strives to contribute to the generation of new knowledge in the field and to the application of this knowledge to improving the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities.

Health Science. The Department of Health Science’s mission is to provide strong undergraduate and graduate programs in the areas of health education and promotion and athletic training. The Department is dedicated to improving the quality of life for those in Alabama and the nation through teaching, research and service. The Department of Health Science offers two B.S. degree programs, one in General Health Studies and one in Athletic Training, an M.A. degree in General Health Studies and a Ph.D. in Health Education and Promotion.
A comprehensive oral practical exam is administered at the end of the Athletic Trainer B.S. program to assess knowledge and skill in managing risk for safe performance and function. On this exam, students are expected to be able to explain and demonstrate injury prevention techniques.

Analysis of assessment results in the 2011–2012 assessment cycle suggested that students were having difficulty synthesizing discrete elements into a successful, efficient & comprehensive patient assessment process (43% scored an average of 90% or higher, which was below a target of 80% of students scoring 90% or higher). As a result, revisions to laboratory lesson plans to include time for comprehensive patient evaluations; mini oral practical exams, in which emphasis was placed on critical thinking questions when completing clinical skill assessments, and on the simultaneous execution of clinical skills while explaining those skills were all added to the classroom experience. In the 2012–2013 assessment cycle, 80% of students scored an average of 90% or higher on the oral practical examination.

One of the student learning outcomes assessed by the Department of Health Sciences is the ability of the graduates of the General Health Studies M.A. program to be able to demonstrate knowledge and skill in assessing individual and community needs for health education. To accomplish this assessment, a paper on the topic of health program planning is assigned and scored by a departmental rubric. In the 2011–2012 assessment cycle the average score on the first draft of the paper was 80%, and on the final draft, 86%. The low scores on the first draft were attributed, in part to poor attendance by one student and no prior experience in this subject by another student. The results in the 2012–2013 assessment cycle also showed below-target performance for the first draft of the paper, with an average score of 76%, and 90% average for the final report. The poorly performing students in that cycle were frequently absent from class.

As a result, an action plan was implemented that included more class focus and discussion on the importance of attendance. In another action plan that addresses students who enroll in the course without prior basic knowledge of health behavior theory, a pre-requisite course is being assigned as a requirement. This outcome will be reassessed in the 2013–2104 assessment cycle.

College of Arts and Sciences

American Studies. The Department of American Studies supports the liberal arts mission of UA by providing quality general education courses and programs of study leading to the Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Arts degrees in American Studies.

For its undergraduate students, its academic mission is to encourage the development of strong critical thinking skills. The departmental assessment efforts follow its mission by measuring how well students perform on writing, thinking, and collaboration tasks that require strong critical thinking skills. The Department of American Studies uses a variety of measures to obtain this information in its assessment process, including direct measures of student performance on major analytical tasks, such as research-based essays. For example, during the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 assessment cycles, the analytical research and writing skills were assessed by using a rubric to score an upper level undergraduate research essay assignment. American Studies set a target of 80% or more students doing the assignment to score a 70% or higher on the rubric. In 2011–2012, this target was met with 84% of students meeting the 70% score criteria. In the 2012–2013, the target goal was not achieved, with only 75% of the students receiving a 70% or greater score. American Studies reassessed in 2013–2014. Analysis of the three-year assessment results is due with the Fall 2014 report.

At the Master’s level, American Studies encourages the deep and broad study of all facets of the complex and dynamic cultures of the United States. In the assessment of the Master’s program, student performance on the core skills necessary for strong development of critical thinking in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the graduate level are evaluated annually. Although aggregate results met targets during assessment years 2010–2013, further analysis suggested to the department that graduate students should engage in more scholarly activities, in particular, presentation of papers at scholarly conferences and submission of essays to scholarly journals. In the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, 4 out of 10 students submitted to scholarly conferences and gained acceptance. In the 2012–2013 assessment cycle, 3 out of 10 students submitted to scholarly conferences and gained acceptance. The department does not require the submission of research papers because funding for conference attendance is limited at this point.
Chemistry. The Department of Chemistry is committed to the intellectual, technological, cultural, and economic advancement of the state, region, and nation through the discovery and development of new scientific knowledge.

The Department of Chemistry assesses the ability of undergraduates to apply fundamental chemistry knowledge in solving problems related to kinetic and thermodynamic principles, chemical reactivity and synthesis, reaction stoichiometry, molecular structure and bonding, and chemical analysis. Measures used for this assessment include embedded exam questions in the first and second semester freshman level chemistry classes offered. A review of results from the 2009 and 2010 assessments revealed a significant disparity in student performance across the course sections. Discussions with course instructors revealed that the disparity across sections was not necessarily caused by varied topic emphasis or effectiveness of instruction but more significantly by a difference in student familiarity with the type or the overall difficulty of questions asked. As a result, the department required all general chemistry instructors to devise mutually agreeable targeted final exam questions at the start of each semester. Assessment findings in subsequent years indicated a reduced standard deviation in the percentage of students who mastered the concepts associated with student learning outcomes across all course sections.

The Department of Chemistry also offers graduate degrees. For the Ph.D. program, one of the areas of assessment is technical writing skills. Analysis of assessment results from graduate student Original Research Proposal (ORP) reports, Research Seminar reports, and Dissertations from 2010–2012 revealed a need for formal technical writing instruction including organization, formatting, and referencing. In 2011 and 2012, the Department began planning a new required three credit course for all graduate students in their third semester of the program. In Fall 2013, the Chemistry Department offered CH 570 Literature and Communication in Graduate Chemistry.

Initial results related to the quality of the technical reports prepared by the students enrolled in CH 570 are encouraging. The average score for student dissertation assessments with respect to grammar, organization and completeness, formatting, quality of illustrations, experimental detail/compound characterization, and appropriate citations in the 2011–2012 assessment cycle was 2.1/3.0. Faculty ratings indicated 75% were competent or exemplary. In 2013–2014, the average score was 2.6/3.0, and in 2013–2014, the average student score was 2.4/3.0. The accumulated data serve as baselines for the study of the effectiveness of CH 570 instruction. Students will be assessed in the same way when their dissertation documents can be directly compared with those from more senior students who did not receive the formal technical writing instruction.

Music. The mission of UA’s School of Music is to “preserve and enhance the finest traditions of our rich and varied musical heritage by providing a comprehensive music program that serves the educational and artistic needs of the community, state, region, and beyond; through teaching, research, creative activity, and service, by providing a comprehensive educational experience, grounded in theoretical, historical, and artistic elements, for the brightest and most talented music students from the state, region, nation, and world.”

A primary student learning outcome for undergraduate music students is the development of discipline knowledge in music theory. Students must demonstrate functional knowledge of the theory and structure of music in written, applied, and aural media. To achieve this outcome, students complete a designated block of undergraduate music theory and class piano courses. Prior to the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, School of Music faculty noted that the School of Music student retention rate was slightly lower than the overall Department of Arts and Sciences retention rate and the University-wide retention rate. Faculty members theorized that retention rates could be improved if they identified students who might require some remediation prior to entry. To that end, the percentage of matriculating students taking the School of Music Audition Diagnostic Exam was increased from 46% in 2008 to nearly 100% in 2013.
The Department of Music assesses student progress in music theory and structure by embedding questions in exams in all undergraduate theory courses. Results show that the number of students who met the benchmark in MUS 115 (Freshman Music Theory I, required of all music majors) has increased incrementally over past years, but remains lower than desirable. For example, in the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, embedded assessment data (midterm exams and final exams) demonstrated that 72% of students met the minimum benchmark of 70% for midterm examinations and 95% of students met the minimum benchmark of 70% for final examinations. In the 2012–13 cycle, embedded assessment data (midterm exams and final exams) demonstrated that 78% of students met the minimum benchmark of 70% for midterm examinations and 94% of students met the minimum benchmark of 70% for final examinations. The findings from the past two assessment cycles suggest that retention rates are likely to improve.

The D.M.A. offered by the School of Music assesses discipline knowledge, discipline methodological skills, and historical knowledge through the performance jury and performance recital. Applied jury examinations are administered at the conclusion of every semester and a graduate recital is a terminal requirement in nearly all major performance areas including, brass, keyboard, strings, voice, and woodwinds. SOM faculty decided to make the juries and recitals a primary focus of the School of Music assessment activities. As a first step, faculty developed a school-wide performance assessment rubric and student self-assessment rubric.

In the first year of implementation (Fall 2011), several challenges occurred in use of the rubric and in reporting individual results because of the size and diversity of the department. About 25% of graduate music students were not assessed.

The improvement plan included changes in distribution and collection protocols to better insure that all students were assessed. As a response to faculty feedback from a technology survey the performance assessment procedure transitioned from a hard copy system to a fully digital online format. Currently, all examinations are administered and evaluated using an iPad or laptop computer. This process has fostered an effective interactive medium between faculty members and individual students regarding their development and progress over time. In addition, all jury records are stored electronically and are available for a variety of uses including, but not limited to, the analysis of pedagogical techniques, performance ability of students relative to academic standing and specific test scores, student and faculty research, and overall program assessment of the jury and recital examination process. This system will be used again for future assessments.

School of Communication and Information Sciences

Journalism. The mission of the Department of Journalism is “to educate students in the tradition of the liberal arts in pursuit of professional, intellectual, ethical and personal goals in a democratic society; to provide leadership in the College and University in writing, reporting, editing, producing and presenting news/information in various forms; to advance the discipline through research and service.”

While analysis of internship evaluations and JN 311 (Introduction to Reporting) class blogs offered some evidence that students’ critical thinking skills were acceptable, faculty still expressed concern that students were not exhibiting strong critical thinking skills about the role of news media in society, and were not successfully applying these ideas to real-world examples. “Critical thinking” is a key requirement of ACEJMC, the accrediting body for journalism departments, and faculty and professional journalists alike value critical thinking skills highly. For example, “critical thinking” routinely appears near the top of lists of hiring criteria in surveys of news managers.
Journalism faculty assess the level of students’ critical thinking skills in JN 101, in which students are given a pre/post course survey that includes five attitudinal survey items about the role of journalism in U.S. society. Responses on understanding of the role journalism plays in democratic society, in the journalist’s role in public service, and in journalism’s professional goals of objectivity and fairness all showed positive changes. In response to the statement “Journalism plays a vital role in U.S. society” agreement increased in the 2012–2013 assessment cycle, from 4.17 to 4.34 (on a 5-point Likert response format); and in the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, from 4.23 to 4.43. In response to the statement “A journalist’s responsibility is to the public” agreement increased in 2011–2012 from 4.07 to 4.17 and in 2012–2013 from 4.07 to 4.17. And in response to the statement “Most journalists are ethical,” agreement increased in the 2011–2012 assessment cycle from 3.11 to 3.32, and in 2012–2013, from 3.12 to 3.38. However, agreement with two statements “The press has too much freedom” and “Most practicing journalists today are biased” did not change. As a result, revisions to the portion of the class about media bias and press freedom were made for 2013–2014, but survey results remained the same, with no improvement for understanding of press freedom. Faculty discussed the problem and decided one solution may be to more thoroughly integrate coursework in “real world” issues and in real world professional journalism environments. Anecdotally, faculty noticed that students who actually do journalism also tend to be more motivated to think thoroughly about journalism’s practices and purposes. It is hoped that experiencing journalism and its purposes first-hand will make journalism and its social role more vivid, personal and meaningful, which will spark and develop students’ critical thinking, understanding of press freedom, and motivation for journalism as a profession.

As a result, a plan to integrate two courses within the new Digital Media Center so that students are working with real journalists in real newsrooms (WVUA and Alabama Public Radio) as they learn the concepts, scope and skills of journalism is being implemented. In addition, a plan to have more classes produce and publish actual news media products on the web is being implemented as well. Also, two professors pursued and received a grant that will allow students’ projects and publications to be embedded within the local community, in order to interact more meaningfully with residents and local organizations, and to publish their work. Assessment in these courses for improvement in critical thinking, understanding of press freedom, and motivation for journalism’s role in society is ongoing.

In the graduate Journalism program which leads to an M.A. degree, faculty noticed students having difficulty applying theory and concepts about journalism to problems in the real world. This problem was observed through formal assessment of final papers, as well as informally in class discussions. Observations showed that students needed a more thorough and sophisticated understanding of variable concepts, relationships between variable concepts, and how to conceptualize problems and solutions in the “real world” as variable concepts. As a result, an assessment plan was implemented to measure student success in working with variable concepts after a new teaching exercise was introduced to emphasize this topic.

Students were assessed in a pre/post teaching exercise test on the following measures using the scale 0=Not successful, 1=Partial success, 2 = Successful: Are concepts variable? (pre 1.17, post 1.83); are the variable concepts tied logically to the empirical-level phenomena? (pre 1.17, post 1.33); are the variable concepts an appropriate level of abstraction? (pre 0.66, post 1.0); and is the relationship between the independent and dependent variable concepts logical? (pre 1.0, post 1.5).

Improvement across all measures was evident; faculty concluded that the changes in the instruction and curriculum were largely effective. The faculty experimented with implementation of the changes in the first two years; they plan to expand this project and to continue to assess results.

College of Education

**Curriculum and Instruction.** The Department of Curriculum and Instruction strives to offer exemplary professional programs to prepare educators to be effective decision makers who facilitate student learning. In fulfilling this mission, the College of Education seeks to recruit high quality students and encourages them to become self-directed life-long learners; provides comprehensive instructional programs; and fosters education research and service to enhance policy making and professional development at state, regional, national, and international levels. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction offers both undergraduate (B.S. Ed.) and graduate degree programs (M.A., Ed.D., Ed.S., and Ph.D.).
The Department of Kinesiology has as its mission the training of educators, researchers, and citizens who are professionally and academically prepared and are dedicated to addressing the physical activity needs of society in school, community, work-site, health, medical, or athletic environments. In this regard, the Department of Kinesiology is committed to diverse cultural, educational, scientific, and cross-disciplinary approaches that emphasize the total person. One vital aspect of these efforts is to understand and educate UA students and the public in the science and benefits of human movement.

Within the Physical Education Teacher Education track, the main changes implemented in the program were designed to handle a significant increase in enrollment due to increased interest in the subject area. A program outcome was established to build and sustain an optimal level of annual program enrollments and degree completions. In the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, enrollments were not measured, but growing enrollments were of concern to the department. Based on availability of resources, including the number of faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and the quantity and quality of the facilities on- and off-campus optimal enrollment is estimated at approximately 550 students. In 2012–2013, enrollment in the department was 637 and in the 2013–2014 assessment period, the enrollment was 728 students.

To handle the growing number of students in the program, a new clinical instructor, a new assistant professor were hired, and the hiring of another assistant professor is planned; and more instruction and advising duties have been entrusted to our graduate teaching assistants.

The increase in teaching resources has enabled more sections of the key core Kinesiological courses to be offered, while keeping the teacher-student ratios down to acceptable levels in these courses. In addition, to keep pace with growing student population, faculty members are having to change their pedagogies. For example, KIN 300 (an first year introductory course) has typically enrolled 25–30 students. More recently, enrollment in this course has been closer to 100. Consequently, the method of delivery and assessment has been changed.

As WEAVE data indicate, enrollment in the Ph.D. program has increased dramatically in recent years. In the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, 17 students were enrolled and in 2013, 44 doctoral students were enrolled. It was discussed among faculty that the quality of dissertations, comprehensive examinations, and some coursework was being adversely affected. Also, an additional exercise science faculty member was hired and there are plans to hire two more assistant professors. Additional resources are being considered if growth continues, in order to maintain program quality and student satisfaction. Assessment will continue to track whether or not these changes are having a positive impact on the quality of work produced by Ph.D. students.

The Capstone College of Nursing

The mission of the Capstone College of Nursing is to promote the health and well-being of the people of the State of Alabama, the nation, and the world through nursing education, research, scholarship, and service. The Capstone College of Nursing offers baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degree programs.

The Capstone College of Nursing tracks numerous data elements on WEAVE including program objectives, Health Education System, Inc. (HESI) exam scores from clinical courses, alumni survey and clinical agency survey data. All clinical courses have made action plans to improve any measurements that did not meet target benchmarks of 90% with a score 900 or better on the HESI exam.

In the 2013–2014 assessment cycle, tracking of critical thinking skills related to the Nursing Process (Assessment, Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation) using the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), was implemented. A target score in at least the 50th percentile on the 5 areas of the Nursing process was set. The average scores for the April 2013 test were all above the 50th percentile except those on the Evaluation portion of the test. The average scores for the October 2013 test were all above the 50th percentile except the Implementation and Evaluation portions of the test. An action plan was implemented to include more evaluation content in theory and include evaluation of care questions in the test plan across the courses that focus on outcomes of care. As the focus on evaluation is increased, it is predicted that because the two phases are closely linked, that the students’ understanding of the implementation phase will be simultaneously strengthened.

The Capstone College of Nursing tracks discipline knowledge through theory papers designed to show evidence a student’s ability to synthesize theories and principles from the natural, behavioral, social and applied sciences which support advanced nursing practice and role development. These papers are assessed by rubric scoring.
During the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, 90% of the students enrolled in NUR 501, earned a score of 80% or greater on the assigned theory paper. A target of 90% of students in NUR 501 scoring 80% or above on the theory paper was met during this assessment cycle. However, during the 2012–2013 assessment cycle, 51% of students enrolled in 3 NUR 501 sections scored 80% or above on the theory paper. A target of 90% of students in NUR 501 scoring 80% or above on the theory paper was not achieved and a major course revision was proposed to add content that should be helpful in facilitating students’ synthesis of information needed to write a thoughtful and in depth paper reflective of this synthesis.

### Supporting Documents

1. Discipline Accreditation Summary Table (PDF)
2. Dance Self-Study (PDF)
3. NASD Visitor’s Report (PDF)
4. Optional Response from Dance Department (PDF)
5. Religious Studies Program Review (PDF)
6. Assessment Critique (PDF)
7. English Program Review (PDF)
8. English Program Action Plan (PDF)
9. Psychology Modified Program Review (PDF)
10. UAC Vision (PDF)