3.3.1.3 Institutional Effectiveness: Academic and student support services

3.3.1.3 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: academic and student support services.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative

At The University of Alabama (UA), there are 30 units that provide services that support intellectual pursuits; lifelong learning; personal growth; and health, wellness, and enjoyment primarily to students or faculty. These academic and student support services maximize each UA student’s learning experience by advancing a community that cultivates inclusiveness, respect, integrity, and responsibility; while providing opportunities for participation, contribution, and a sense of belonging. [1] These academic and student support offices submit Detailed Annual Reports (DAR) that include the identification of objectives/outcomes, assessment measures used to monitor achievement of expected outcomes, results from the execution of measures and evidence of improvements prompted by assessment findings.

Since Academic Year 2011–12, UA departments have submitted assessment reports along with revised or new assessment plans each fall in the University’s online assessment system, WEAVE. Prior to 2011, the University collected assessment information through a locally-developed system, UAOPS. Attached are DARs from WEAVE for 2011–12, 2012–13, and 2013–14. The 2013–14 DAR contains assessment plans to be addressed in the Fall 2014 reports. Clicking the link next to the unit name below allows access to the DAR for that unit.

Student Affairs

- Blackburn Institute [2]
- Career Center [3]
- Counseling Center [4]
- Ferguson Student Center [5]
- First Year Experience [6]
- Graduate Student Services [7]
- Greek Affairs [8]
- Housing and Residential Life [9]
- Parent Programs [10]
The following summaries extracted from the DARs provide specific examples of expected outcomes, assessment results, and evidence of improvements based on analysis of assessment results for the services provided by UA’s academic and student support units.

**Admissions**

Undergraduate Admissions [32] recruits, admits and enrolls prospective freshmen and transfer students from Alabama and beyond while maintaining or improving quality and selectivity. The Office of Admissions centers its goals on the mission, goals, and strategic plan of UA in that the unit strives to attract and enroll excellent students. For example, one of the unit’s expected outcomes that is assessed each year is to increase or maintain the total number of Top Scholars, including National Merit and National Achievement Finalists, who enroll at UA with at least a 30 ACT or 1330 SAT and at least a 3.5 GPA compared to previous year’s scholarship and census data. The recruitment and enrollment of Top Scholars enhances the quality and prestige of the institution and directly supports its vision and strategic goals to be “the university of choice for the best and brightest students” and to “attract and retain excellent students.” [33]
As part of the plan to achieve the goal of increasing the enrollment of Top Scholars, the Office of Admissions decided to increase the number of National Merit Finalists enrolling at UA. The Office of Admissions implemented a new strategy for identifying and recruiting these students. Instead of relying solely on calling/emailing high school guidance counselors to determine if admitted students made Finalist status through the National Merit Corporation competition, recruiters now also search the Internet to review high school websites and online newspapers for announcements about scholars’ achievements. By mid-February all recruiters contact high school guidance counselors as well as review online announcements, identify the scholars, and send updated award correspondence. These improved recruitment strategies have worked well. Assessment results show that each year since 2010, the number of these Top Scholars increased - from 126 National Merit Finalists in 2010 to 186 in 2011 and to 239 in 2012. This increase in the enrollment of National Merit Finalists ranked UA number one for the number of first-time freshmanFinalists.

Blackburn Institute

The Blackburn Institute[35] is a leadership development organization that admits approximately 25 students per year. The Blackburn Institute promotes leadership and commitment through its mission dedicated to improving the State of Alabama and the nation. The Blackburn Institute addresses two main student learning outcomes that directly relate to their goals of developing leaders with social and cultural competencies especially in understanding issues facing the State of Alabama.

For example, the institute provides an immersive travel experience to both rural and urban areas in the State of Alabama, providing students the opportunity to discover issues and challenges facing these areas. The institute assesses this experience with a post-travel reflection in which students are asked whether they agree with this statement: “I feel empowered to make a positive change after participation in today’s reflection about the travel experience.” Findings in 2011–2012 showed that 69% of students answered positively, whereas 89% of students answered positively in 2012–2013. This documented improvement was attributed to an increase in staff attention to designing opportunities that allow for student reflections. Also in this survey, more than half of the students reported wanting to make a positive change, but did not know where to begin. Blackburn Institute leadership used this piece of evidence from its annual assessment results to design curriculum changes for next year. The adoption of the Social Change Model of Leadership (an institutional model of leadership that is based on the philosophy that leadership is a process) as part of the Blackburn Institute’s curriculum was adopted in 2013 for the 2013–2014 year to improve students’ knowledge of leadership and social change skills.

Capstone International Center

The Capstone International Center (CIC) consists of Capstone International Academic Programs (Study Abroad), Capstone International Services, and the English Language Institute (ELI reports separately within WEAVE).[36]

Capstone International Academic Programs: The University of Alabama Capstone International Academic Programs (CIAP) is committed to providing students with a variety of overseas study options to further their personal and academic growth.[37] CIAP seeks to improve its visibility to the UA campus population including students, faculty, staff, and administration making it a known entity and resource available to the campus at large thereby increasing the number of students and faculty who participate in study-abroad.

In 2010, CIAP reviewed ease of access to information regarding study-abroad programming and the study-abroad application process at UA as compared to peer institutions in the SEC and to standards in the field. This review and assessment process revealed that generally both students and faculty were frustrated with the amount of information available from the CIAP website and the paper application process that was in use at that time. In addition, the number of staff and advisors in the office was not adequate to meet the growing demand for study-abroad. After additional engagement of various faculty and student constituencies, the following steps were taken:

- Following review of available options, the decision was made to acquire and implement Studio Abroad, a software system that automates the study abroad application process and integrates with UA’s student information system (Banner).
An assistant director was hired in 2011 to implement Studio Abroad.

The system was launched in Spring of 2012.

In addition, another advisor was hired in 2011 to deal with the increasing number of students seeking study-abroad opportunities.

Discussions with faculty and students indicate that they are pleased with the implementation of Studio Abroad; however, a review of the on-line process along with an analysis of the information provided on the website is on-going with changes and additions slated for Fall 2014.

**Capstone International Services**: The mission of Capstone International Services (CIS) is to provide essential services and innovative programs for UA international students, scholars, and their families to enable them to achieve their educational, professional and social goals. CIS seeks to foster diversity and strengthen inter-cultural relationships throughout the UA campus and community; and commits to the promotion of understanding and respect for the world’s many cultures.

In 2012, CIS assessed the existing website of CIS and students’ and faculty members’ access to immigration forms. No forms were being provided through the website. All forms had to be picked up in the office, completed (by hand), and then returned to the office. This was a very time-consuming and inconvenient process for both students and faculty. Also, similar to the situation in CIAP, there had been rapid growth in the number of both students served (from AY10–11 to 11–12 there was 19.9% growth; from AY11–12 to 12–13 there was 19.6% growth) and faculty served, but there had been no increase in advisors. In response, the following steps were taken:

- The CIS website was completely redesigned.
- All forms were made available through the website in pdf format with instructions.
- An additional advisor was hired.
- Open advising hours were instituted throughout the week.

Analysis of the information provided on the website is on-going with changes and additions slated for Fall 2014. A feedback form regarding services provided by the office is also under development.

**Career Center**

The mission of the Career Center is to “maximize student and alumni potential to achieve personal goals and learn life-long career management skills leading to gainful employment through comprehensive workshops, mutually successful partnerships with employers, and innovative career resource information.” To support this mission, the Career Center has a goal to develop population-specific activities that help students discover career-related services and resources. Additionally, they seek to facilitate competence in students’ career skills and decisions. In order to achieve this goal, attendance at educational programs during the 2011–2012 assessment cycle was tracked. The disaggregation of the total attendance numbers into educational programs and promotional programs was a necessary part of this assessment. When examining these numbers, it was noticed that the promotional programs yielded the highest number of attendees. In order to increase educational program attendees, the Career Center focused efforts on introducing its services and programs and building strong relationships with academic units. A new program involving the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration was introduced in 2012. As a result of this improvement, educational attendees increased by 9% during the 2012–2013 assessment cycle and by another 22% during the 2013–2014 assessment cycle.

**Center for Academic Success**

The mission of the Center for Academic Success (CAS) is to support the University’s strategic goals of advancing academic and service priorities, as well as of enhancing learning environments, through the creation and implementation of high-quality academic support services.
Analysis of the appointment-based tutorial service data over the past 2–3 years revealed that a number of tutorial appointment slots were going unfilled. This resulted in tutors not having anything to do during the hour time slot that was not filled. Yet, at certain times of the semester, primarily before tests, the demand for tutorial appointments was greater than the available appointments. As a result of this analysis, and to better serve the student population, the CAS staff piloted “walk-in” tutorial sessions for selected math and science classes. Staff members continued to monitor attendance at both individual and walk-in appointment sessions and determined that with the walk-in sessions, a number of students could be served by one or two tutors whereas, with one-on-one tutoring, only a single student could be served in each hour tutorial slot and the majority of those appointments involved students asking for specific assistance. Specific times were set up for each math class, usually in the evening hours, where any number of students could come without an appointment. Two tutors were scheduled for each walk-in session. These tutors were able to help all of the students who came to the walk-in sessions. As a result of the increased number of walk-in sessions the following changes were observed: - More students could be served than was possible under the previous system of individual appointments. - Tutors were no longer idle during times when they did not have a tutorial appointment. - Student patrons now know that at regularly scheduled times throughout the week there will be a tutor available to help them. - The CAS is now able to serve a greater number of students with fewer tutors. - Students are able to help one another with difficult concepts. - As the walk-in sessions have proved to be successful, additional sessions have been added. In the fall of 2013 walk-in services expanded to students in Accounting and Economics courses. Working closely with instructors, staff and peer tutors have been able to use a modified supplemental instruction model to assist students.

Going forward into 2014/15 it is expected that more tutorial session will be offered on a walk-in basis.

**Center for Instructional Technology**

The mission of the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) is to provide the standardized resources as well as the vision, support and leadership to UA in the effective uses of those technologies for enhancing learning as well as facilitating specific strategic initiatives. CIT fulfills its mission by fostering collaboration and innovation with faculty and University stakeholders in the design, development, and effective use of both physical and online learning environments and the production of educational media.

Over the past several years, the CIT has led major instructional technology transitions to meet campus academic needs as determined by support requests, surveys, and technology evaluations. One examples of assessment-driven improvements to services and technological support CIT offers is described below.

In Fall 2010, the existing Learning Management System (LMS) vendor, Blackboard, announced that the LMS in use at UA since Spring 2007, Blackboard Vista, would no longer be supported at the end of 2013. Faculty and student surveys, conducted in Spring 2010, reflected a need for a more modern and flexible system. The discontinuation of Blackboard Vista support and the opinions expressed in the faculty and student surveys, combined with a growth in system usage prompted CIT to evaluate other LMS options.

The evaluation showed Blackboard Learn as the only option that would meet UA’s technical and administrative needs, such as content migration from Vista, integration with UA’s student information system, and scalability to meet usage of 35,000+ students. The transition took place from Fall 2011 to May 2013 with the last active Vista courses ending December 2012. All courses using an LMS were on Blackboard Learn as of January 2013.

Based on requests from more than 1400 instructors and administrators, CIT migrated the content of more than 4000 courses’ from Vista to Blackboard Learn. Because of this transition, UA has a stable, scalable learning management system 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.
Counseling Center

The Counseling Center’s mission is to help UA students achieve academic success and personal growth through quality brief counseling and psychological services, outreach and consultative services, and training of mental health professionals. The Counseling Center focuses assessment efforts on better attention to the mission of the Center. As a result, greater numbers of students are being reached and are providing evaluations of Center services. During the 2011–2012, 2012–2013, and 2013–2014 assessment cycles, the Counseling Center undertook a number of initiatives to improve their services and increase the number of evaluations achieved. Two examples follow.

During 2011–2012, the number of outreach contacts (9,327) fell below the target of 10,000 contacts. An action plan was implemented in which a staff member was identified to take the lead on increasing the number of student contacts, as well as overseeing the recording and reporting of the data that resulted. This led to a doubling of evaluations obtained over three cycles (20,301 contacts achieved in 2013–2014). Another issue of concern raised by the Center’s accreditor in their recent evaluation involved inadequate delivery of psychological testing. The corrective action taken included assigning a staff psychologist whose first task was to increase the number of instruments available for the Center’s use. The next step in this improvement plan is to encourage the increased use of the tests. This is still an ongoing action plan and will be discussed further at meetings in fall 2014.

Creative Campus

The mission of Creative Campus is to build a collaborative environment where students can connect with each other, faculty, and their community in turning innovative ideas into action. In support of the University’s emphasis on quality teaching, research, and service, Creative Campus includes in its vision: to provide a student internship experience that enhances curriculum, leadership, and creative thinking, allowing students to become the best possible individuals. As a result of these experiences, “interns will be empowered to explore new ideas that result in powerful experiences.”

Creative Campus measures this outcome with pre/post surveys administered during project implementation. Interns completed pre-internship surveys in August 2012 and post-internship surveys in May 2013. During that period, interns also met regularly with Creative Campus staff to discuss their experience and for mentoring. They also met with staff to discuss their year-end self-evaluations as a part of an exit interview. Among other self-reflective questions, students described the most important learning that had taken place through their involvement with Creative Campus. The most consistent result was that they learned how to work collaboratively with a group, to let others learn from the process, and to trust others to do their best with a better understanding of group dynamics. Event planning, organizational and time management skills were also consistently reported as being improved.

Even though this objective was seemingly met, interns expressed the frustration through end-of-year evaluations and discussions that the continuation of their work on large, well-established projects took too much time away from students generating new creative and innovative ideas, which is in direct support of their mission to nurture creative thinkers who turn ideas into action. Therefore, to encourage and foster new student ideas, the management of some established projects is being turned over to other organizations or student-led initiatives.

As always, Creative Campus is a work-in-progress. From the 2011–12 experiences, it was learned that an over-reliance on major events such as Quidditch on the Quad (Quidditch) and Druid City Arts Festival (DCAF) defining Creative Campus is not in support of the original mission of Creative Campus. Interns, particularly new interns, took too long to grasp the opportunities and methodologies of Creative Campus as they waited for these big events to happen. And since Creative Campus is not in the business of repetition, work has begun to pass on the organization and management of Quidditch and DCAF to other organizations so that interns will be free to put new (big) ideas into action.
Disability Services

UA is committed to providing physical and programmatic access to otherwise qualified students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) serves as the central contact point for students with disabilities to provide a physically and educationally accessible University environment that ensures an individual is viewed on the basis of ability, not disability. ODS works individually with students to determine appropriate and reasonable academic accommodations and to ensure that a student’s academic performance is evaluated apart from the limiting effects of disability.

Students with disabilities may find that their needs have not been considered in applications of technology to course design and the result can mean the course is inaccessible and students are left to solve difficulties on their own. The Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has recognized such problems and has made rulings in the last few years that more clearly define what postsecondary institutions must do to accommodate students with disabilities. In response to these rulings, ODS’ efforts to improve services have focused on providing accessibility to technology as well as training of faculty and staff regarding technology availability to disabled students.

As a result, opportunities for collaboration between ODS and academic support units have increased. Some technology improvements have reduced the need for students to make multiple trips to the ODS office, thus making things more convenient for them.

Some of the improvements made during the last three to five years in an effort to achieve this goal are as follows:

- **To improve student satisfaction with alternative text distribution and training:**
  - Switched from delivering alternative text on CDs to an online delivery method.
  - Developed “help” documents for alternative text access and software.
  - Created short videos on common alternative text software use.

- **To improve student access to assistive technology:**
  - Collaborated with University Libraries to install alternative text software on public computers.
  - Developed an ongoing collaboration with the Center for Instructional Technology to identify assistive technology.
  - Identified resources and needs across campus.
  - Began the process of obtaining assistive technology software to widely distribute across campus.

- **To inform students of ways technology can be used to reach academic goals, the following events, programs or services are offered:**
  - Technology Fair, open to faculty and staff also.
  - Workshops on technology as academic tools.
  - Workshops (ongoing) on personal device assistive technology features.

- **Also, several initiatives have been implemented to train faculty and staff on accommodating students with disabilities:**
  - Presentation of an accommodations training session at the Faculty Resource Center.
  - Hosting a MATH ML webinar.
  - Participation in “Universal Design” panels at the College of Continuing Studies and at the Scholars Institute.
  - Presentation of an “Accessible Document” workshop at the Scholars Institute.
  - Development of an ongoing collaboration with SupeStore personnel to increase faculty awareness of textbook accessibility options.
English Language Institute

The mission of the English Language Institute (ELI), which was established in 1982, is to provide top quality instruction in English as a second language (ESL) and orientation in US culture to international students who are nonnative speakers of English. ELI regularly assesses its programs and based on the results of this assessment the following changes have been made to the ELI’s Intensive English Program over the past three years: Because of interest expressed by students via program evaluations, and needs-based assessment done by the Curriculum Committee, several elective classes were added to the curriculum. After this curriculum improvement, ELI students at advanced levels are able to choose content-based courses that help to prepare them for University coursework. Through informal discussions of needs, ELI students and teachers expressed a desire that more technologically up-to-date means of delivering instruction be used. As a result, a facility improvement to install multi-media technology in all ELI-controlled classrooms was made, allowing content delivery via current technological and media platforms. An additional curriculum improvement was made after analysis of ELI Placement Exam scores showed that true beginning-level students have been enrolling in the ELI and that these students are at too low an English-speaking proficiency level for existing Level 1 courses. The improvement made to the curriculum was the addition of Pre-Level 1 courses for students with extremely low English proficiency. Students who have taken the Pre-Level 1 course have received instruction at the appropriate proficiency level and, as a result, the majority of the students are ready for Level 1 instruction at the end of their Pre-Level 1 courses.

Ferguson Student Center

Ferguson Center’s mission is to support, supplement and complement the overall academic, research, and service mission of UA by offering a wide variety of high-quality services, collaborative programming, and leisure time activities. To this end, Ferguson Center administrators find it critical to assess the level of awareness of programs and services offered by the Ferguson Center. Tracking the number of programs and services that patrons use is how awareness is assessed.

One method utilized is the EMS Reservation System, which tracks the number of University departments and external group hours reserved for activities and events. The number of users (as event hours) was tracked as well as the number of requests turned down (potential event hours) because of space unavailability. From 2011–2012 data, 11,535.86 hours were reserved by student organizations, and 15,064.36 event hours were reserved by UA departments and external groups. In 2012–2013, 10,655.33 event hours were reserved by student organizations, and 18,845 event hours were reserved by UA departments and external groups. In 2011–2012, 2,065.25 reserved hours were turned down because of unavailable space. In 2012–2013, this number increased to 2,312 requested hours turned down because of unavailable space. These findings indicate a need for more meeting spaces in The Ferguson Center. One remedy underway includes the addition of six meeting rooms and more general seating areas for student use in the current renovation of Ferguson Center.

Financial Aid

The mission of the UA Office of Student Financial Aid is to assist students in reaching their academic goals by serving as a primary advocate for students and families in the removal of barriers to financial assistance. Financial Aid accomplishes this by embracing technology, reviewing and improving procedures, and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and institutional regulations.

An example of Financial Aid’s assessment process for improvement of efficiency is the troubleshooting of the concatenation of FAFSA files by transaction number.

Historically, the Banner system used by UA was not able to load multiple transactions submitted by Central Processing System in the same files. Multiple transactions load into suspense and the suspense files must be manually reviewed and loaded.
For example an initial data load for this process typically consist of over 10,000 records. Of these 10,000 records, approximately 3000 (30%) are suspended and require 5 days of continual manual processing to resolve discrepancies sufficient for continued processing.

Student Financial Aid created a process to facilitate the loading of duplicate records. The UA technology office created a program to concatenate these records in an automated format. After the implementation of this improvement, the initial data load for the 2011–12 processing consisted of 10,644 transactions. Using the concatenation process, the suspended record count was reduced to 500 records and manual processing was reduced to a single day.

The creation of this process epitomizes process improvement beyond the scope of the Banner system’s tech support’s ability to provide solutions to national higher education institutions. The process was presented at the Alabama Banner User Group (ALBUG) annual meeting as an outstanding processing procedure. There was an overwhelming interest from other institutions with desire to implement the process. Banner representatives have indicated an interest in this process being offered as training at the national Banner conference (SUMMIT).

First Year Experience

The mission of First Year Experience [49] is to support the successful academic and social transition of new students to the UA community. One of the First Year Experience goals is that “programs and services…will support students’ connection to the University community.” In a 2012–13 survey of participants, 73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with “As a result of participating in Freshman Forum I have been able to connect with faculty.” The number of positive responses fell short of the 80% target. As a result, First Year Experience implemented changes in 2013–14 that included introducing students to the leadership advisory team who guided them in their leadership quest, and having faculty engage in dialogue with students through this session; and including faculty in the freshman forum curriculum. Results from the 2013–2014 Freshman Forum survey showed that only 75% of students indicated agreement.

Connecting students with faculty members through a new program developed in 2013, the Out 2 Lunch program, which connects students and faculty through an informal lunch setting was also assessed for student agreement or disagreement with a similar statement “After Out 2 Lunch, I am more likely to communicate with my faculty/staff member about my academic goals”. Results for the 2013–2014 assessment cycle, showed that 84% of respondents indicated agreement (strongly agree or agree) with the statement.

The results of the Out 2 Lunch survey indicate that events that provide students with a more personal contact with faculty are more effective in helping students connect with faculty. This conclusion provides an opportunity to improve meeting student needs through increasing participation in smaller, more personal programs like Out 2 Lunch, as well as developing new programs with a similar format.

Graduate School

The Graduate School, [50] through graduate offerings of the various colleges and schools, prepares students for careers in a wide range of teaching, research, creative, and service activities. The Graduate School assists the graduate faculty in offering programs of study leading to masters, educational specialist, and doctoral degrees. It works with the Executive Vice President and Provost to coordinate the ongoing program review of all academic departments and programs of the University. Personnel of the Graduate School work with departments to identify prospective graduate students and enroll a graduate student population consistent with the enrollment objectives of the University. The objectives include not only overall enrollment, but also enrollment of a diverse student body. The Graduate School operates in cooperation with the other colleges and schools of the University to foster the development of teaching by Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs).
One of the services the Graduate School offers in support of the various colleges and schools is its Graduate Teaching Assistant Training Program offered each August. In August 2014, the 28th annual GTA Workshop will be conducted. The assessment of the effectiveness of this program includes a satisfaction survey of attendees of the GTA Workshop on four key dimensions. It entails evaluations of the: 1) breakout videotaping sessions for all of the new GTAs, playing back representative segments of their teaching performance, and providing written and verbal critiques from experienced GTAs; 2), primary presenters at the workshop; 3) handout materials; and 4) the overall workshop experience. Open-ended suggestions for workshop feedback are solicited as well. The Workshop program is fine-tuned each year as a result of the assessment feedback from the previous year’s participants. The assessment results for the 2012, 2013 GTA Workshop are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Attendees Satisfied</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Videotaping breakout session</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Presenters</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handout Materials</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Workshop Experience</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the respondents in 2013, only 80.3% said they were satisfied with the videotaping and teaching evaluations of the eight breakout sessions, citing high attendance in each breakout session that resulted in too little time spent on individual reviews. This result fell below the targeted satisfaction rate of 85%. As a follow-up action, the Graduate School has increased the number of breakout sessions from 8 to 9 for the 2014 GTA Workshop in order to better accommodate all of the new GTAs. To do so required extra space, additional recording equipment, and another instructor for that session. As the 2014 assessment results are reported those results will be used to confirm or not confirm improvement of satisfaction with the addition of breakout videotaping sessions.

**Graduate Student Services**

The mission of Graduate Student Services [51] is to increase and support the academic, personal, and professional growth of graduate and professional students. Graduate Student Services offers many programs, including a program called GSS Dissertation Boot Camp, an immersion experience designed to assist any graduate student at any stage of research or writing with making progress toward self-defined writing and/or project goals. An outcome of this program is that graduate students will demonstrate effective goal-setting strategies and will see an increase in their level of productivity. This outcome is measured with an evaluation of previous work habits and productivity prior to Boot Camp and a survey after Boot Camp is completed.

Graduate students participating in Boot Camp are asked to set personal goals designed to increase productivity at the beginning of Boot Camp. At the conclusion of the camp, participants are asked to indicate whether their goals had been reached or not. Pre-camp survey results from 2011–2012 showed that only 30% of participants were minimally successful in reaching their goals prior to attending Boot Camp, while 71.4% were successful at setting and accomplishing their target goal areas by the end of the program.

In 2012–2013, results of the same survey showed that 76% of students were successful in completing their workshop goals. For the 2013–2014 year, Graduate Student Services improved the camp by changing the program to include more detailed instruction on goals selection and implementation strategies by adding SMART goals procedures and guidelines pre-workshop training and a more detailed description of the timeline for Boot Camp. Assessment results from 2013–2014 resulted in 93% of students who participated in Boot Camp stating that they met at least 2 of their designated goals by the end of the camp, and 87% were “very satisfied” with their progress on a personal level at the conclusion of the camp.
Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life

The Office of Fraternity & Sorority Life is responsible for advising the four councils and 63 fraternities and sororities that comprise the UA Greek community. In summer of 2014, the Office of Greek Affairs was rebranded the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. Specifically, the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life provides active oversight of chapter events, serves as a liaison between faculty, alumni advisors, national offices, and parents, develops values-based leadership development programming, provides training in areas such as chapter operations, diversity, risk management, health and safety and membership recruitment, monitors the academic performance of fraternity and sorority members, and recognizes the positive achievements and contributions of community members.

The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life tracks the number of women participating in fall Panhellenic sorority recruitment. During Fall 2012, 86% of women participating in the formal recruitment process received bids and were placed in a sorority. However, in 2012–2013, the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life received information through discussions with constituents regarding difficulty they were having with negotiating the online recruitment system which captured information from intake through the close of the recruitment process. The staff reviewed the system and found that there was a need to change systems. The new system offers better reliability for organizations and staff, new features not available with the previous system, such as the ability to collect statistics on each individual applicant, and a special feature that allows chapters to identify and track their legacies.

Data collected during fall 2013 formal recruitment showed an increased overall match rate from 86% in Fall 2012 to 90% in Fall 2013. The national average for women receiving a bid during formal recruitment is 79%, placing UA well above the average.

Health Promotion and Wellness

The mission of the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness is to be a nationally recognized leader of university health and wellness programs. One of the core functions of the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness is to work collaboratively with key stakeholders in order to communicate and coordinate the highest quality health and wellness programs, resources, and opportunities in order to reduce health risks, prevent disease, and manage chronic conditions. In support of this core function, the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness offers a program to all UA faculty and staff called the WellBama program. The goal for participation is 50% of all eligible UA faculty and staff called the WellBama program. The goal for participation is 50% of all eligible UA faculty and staff. In 2011–2012, only 30% of faculty and staff participated in the WellBama program. The Office of Health Promotion and Wellness engaged in a more intense promotion of the WellBama program, i.e., creating the WellBama Ambassadors program and recruiting new ambassadors, and targeting other partners such as Human Resources, University Recreation, and the University Medical Center. In 2012–2013, participation was up 6% to an overall participation rate of 36%. In 2014, the WellBama Rewards program was rolled out campus-wide and the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness will continue to measure participation in this program. Testimonials, success stories and photographs will be used to further promote the success of employees who have embraced the culture of wellness in order to inspire others to do the same. Participation rate figures for the 2013–2014 assessment year are expected to be reported in October, 2014.

Honors College

The Honors College provides an enhanced undergraduate experience to UA’s most highly qualified students through innovative scholarship, advanced research, cultural interaction, and civic engagement.
During the last few years, the Honors College took an in-depth look at the assessment plan that existed in previous annual cycles and determined that the plan did not sufficiently encompass all functions of the Honors College and lacked structures to report operations efficiently. As a result, starting in the 2013–2014 assessment cycle, almost all existing outcomes and measures were adjusted or retired while new objectives and measures were created to more directly align with the goals and processes of the Honors College. These changes centered on our four primary areas of focus, innovative scholarship, civic engagement, advanced research, and intercultural interaction, and also included other administrative strategic operational agendas. A specific outgrowth of those conversations and assessment data suggested that Honors needed to increase capacity and modify structures across multiple areas in order to effectively serve significant realized enrollment growth.

The Honors College increased in total enrollment from 3965 in 2009 to 6374 in 2013 (61%), with the incoming freshmen class size increasing from 1204 to 1951 (62%). The most significant resultant decisions were effectively utilizing technology to build web-based applications and mechanisms to leverage existing data while also adjusting policies and procedures to accommodate for the degree of growth. Admission, retention, and graduation policies were changed, and new systems were developed to streamline or fundamentally change processes relating to everything from admissions, course registration, and graduation to scholarship awarding, independent project monitoring, and involvement program applications. Structures for gathering new data from the systems were put in place, and new longitudinal data is being collected to determine the impact of these changes over time, but initial feedback mechanisms show significant progress and promise.

**Housing and Residential Communities**

Housing and Residential Communities’ (HRC) mission is to support students’ development, learning, and engagement through intentionally designed environments, programs, and services.

Over the previous two academic years, HRC has initiated several programs and services as a result of assessment findings and activities. Two illustrative examples include the prioritization of leadership development and increasing sustainability programming within the residence halls. Since 2012, HRC has undertaken two large-scale assessments for decision-making purposes: in the spring of 2012, HRC administered the EBI MAP-Works Residence Life Survey (EBI); and in the fall of 2012, HRC administered the Mid-Year-Resident-Assessment (MYRA). The EBI is a nationally-recognized benchmarking survey calibrated to professional performance standards of student affairs administrators, allowing residence life units to evaluate the on-campus experience of students as compared to approximately 1,500 other participating institutions, a Carnegie Class comparator, and third benchmark to six additional institutions of choice. The MYRA is an internally-developed survey, comparable to the EBI, designed to capture resident’s perceptions of the on-campus living experience. Both assessment efforts were initiated in order to provide evidence and understanding of how HRC positively contributes to the Student Affairs Division, the larger University, and the individual student.

**Leadership Development.** From the 2012 EBI results, HRC’s Residential Communities Staff (ResCom) were able to identify leadership development as a student-learning priority area for the upcoming academic year. More specifically, EBI response factors related to “Sense of Community” in the residence halls; factors related to perceived “Sense of Respect” in the residence halls; and factors related to satisfaction with interactions with “Hall/Student Staff” were benchmarked comparably or slightly below comparison-group institutions. In response to these results, HRC ResCom developed Capstone Academy, a four-week leadership development program, to increase the efficiency of staff selection efforts; more effectively train future HRC student-staff; and expose nearly 300 students to leadership-related themes and concepts. Although the EBI was not administered during the 2012–2013 academic year, an assessment of the program yielded overwhelmingly positive results, with 96.7% of respondents to the Capstone Academy Assessment indicating they Agree or Strongly Agree with the statement "I will apply the skills and concepts acquired during Capstone Academy to leadership positions I hold in the future.” Based on this response, the effect of participation in Capstone Academy seems to have contributed to the ability of students to understand leadership and apply the newly acquired skills to future leadership positions.
Sustainability in the Residence Halls. From the 2012 MYRA results, HRC was able to identify increasing sustainability programming as a potential improvement area for the upcoming academic year. Measures within the MYRA captured data on resident’s participation in sustainability programming, with 48.9% of survey respondents indicating that they regularly participate in the recycling programming within their residence hall. While this measure showed attainment, HRC was interested in improving the measures related to recycling programming throughout the 2013–2014 academic year. To accomplish this, HRC developed a sustainability committee/task force; purchased recycling bins for each on-campus residential space in an effort to increase awareness of recycling options and to decrease potential barriers to sustainable behaviors. 75% of students responding to the 2013–2014 MYRA indicated participation in the recycling program within the residence halls. This measure is improved compared to the 2012–2013 academic year, where 48.9% of survey respondents indicated that they had participated in the recycling program within their residence hall. This result suggests that students are more involved in sustainability programming as compared to the 2012–2013 academic year.

Parent Programs

The Office of Parent Programs supports the successful academic and social transition of new students into the UA community as well as educates, provides resources, and promotes continuous relationships among students, parents, families and the University. Parent Ambassadors are selected from UA students to serve as hosts for visiting parents. The Office of Parent Programs believes that “as a result of serving as a Parent Ambassador, students will demonstrate an increased understanding of personal, interpersonal, and intercultural competence.” The Office of Parent Programs reviews the results of a survey statement, “Parent Ambassador Training has helped me identify and understand my strengths and weaknesses as a student leader.” During the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 assessment cycles, 91% of students in both groups responded that they either agree or strongly agree with that statement. Upon review of the assessment results, the Office of Parent Programs planned to add a more in-depth definition of leadership into assessment and the training curriculum, to include specific characteristics or qualities, including but not limited to: communication skills, active listening, and problem solving techniques, and to incorporate additional measures related to the leadership development experience of students. Results from the survey from the 2013–2014 assessment report shows improvement in that 96.2% of students responded that they could identify their strengths and 92.3% of respondents said they could identify their weaknesses as leaders.

Registrar

The mission of the Office of the University Registrar is to help students enroll at UA and succeed by providing world-class customer service to faculty, staff, students, and their families. To support this mission, the Office of the Registrar places emphasis on maintaining and improving those processes related to academic records, academic progress, enrollment data, classroom support, and academic certification.

One of the core functions of the Office of the Registrar is to provide data services to collect, process, and provide access to information in support of academic advising, instruction, and institutional decision-making. To that end, the Office of the Registrar assessed in 2011–12 an expected outcome to seamlessly implement DegreeWorks into 50% of all graduate academic units by May 31, 2012. At that time, the Office of the Registrar found that only 49% of units were live in DegreeWorks, therefore continued to input graduate programs into the DegreeWorks program. By the end of the 2012–13 assessment cycle, 80% of masters programs were in DegreeWorks. The Office of the Registrar will continue assessing progress on this expected outcome until all academic programs are active in DegreeWorks.

Student Care and Well Being

The Dean of Students established Student Care and Well Being to provide assistance to students in crisis and outreach to parents and families. One of the outcomes that the Office of Student Care and Well Being assesses each year is “As a result of participating in programs and services, students will demonstrate an increased understanding of their responsibility as a member of the UA Community by engaging in behaviors that demonstrate self-advocacy, self-care and self-efficacy in their personal lives.”
To assess one aspect of the achievement of this outcome, Student Care and Well Being analyzes student use and request for assistance with meals through the GotMeals program. During 2011–2012 and 2012–2013, requests for meals increased from 290 to 704 requests. As a result, Student Care and Well Being implemented a new program, Cooking at BAMA, an event designed to provide students with knowledge and skills for longer term impact than simply providing meals. After the first year pilot study, 66% of the 18 participants responded to surveys regarding the impact the program had made on their lives. Of the respondents, 100% agreed or strongly agreed with the statements, “…I am more confident in my ability to prepare low cost, nutritious meal options,” and “…I am able to identify ways the event was personally beneficial.” Responses to open-ended questions also suggested gains in life skills and knowledge of resources.

**Student Involvement**

The Office of Student Involvement provides opportunities for each UA student to achieve personal excellence by encouraging open exploration and engagement with the campus learning environment and by fostering individual growth and development. The Office of Student Involvement registers and tracks student organizations. As a result of increased awareness of the LGBTQ community at UA, the Office of Student Involvement has sought to remain cutting edge and up-to-date with resources and services designed to support the LGBTQ+ community. After an assessment of resources offered to the LGBTQ community, an improvement in programming and training opportunities have been made in the form of the establishment of several new groups on campus. The programs established included the Safe Zone 2.0 program, and the Trans Support Group.

Safe Zone training is a series of sessions designed to provide information regarding basic LGBTQ+ vocabulary and topics specific to working with the trans-identified community. An assessment of the interest in Safe Zone 2.0 was conducted to determine if there was enough interest in this program to continue offering it.

Through Safe Zone 2.0, participants receive a more in-depth primer on LGBTQ+ issues and will begin to apply those ideas to the UA campus climate in hopes of sparking more opportunities of inclusion and service development for LGBTQ+ students. Safe Zone 2.0 had 96 participants in the training. Even though this number was just shy of the 100+ goal for the first session, support for the program will continue.

The Trans Support Group is an important information repository for trans-identified students to use to aid them in navigating campus resources and services. In its first year, the goal of assessment was to measure its effectiveness as a support group by asking students involved if their experience with the group provided them with a feeling of support as they go through their journey at UA. 80% of the respondents answered positively.

**Student Conduct**

The Office of Student Conduct (formerly The Office of Judicial Affairs) seeks to develop students in a manner that provides a foundation of success, a commitment to responsible citizenship and a desire to make positive lifestyle choices based on the Capstone Creed values of fairness, honesty, accountability, integrity and respect.

The overall goal of the Office of Student Conduct is to be active in the development and continuous education of the University’s student body and to work in collaboration with other departments.

An example of an area of service that is being monitored for improvement need is making sure a student involved in a student conduct conference or hearing understands his or her rights, clearly understands the charge(s) being brought against them and understands the process involved in the hearing.

A post-hearing survey asked students whether or not they are in agreement with these statements: “The letters sent to me were clear in conveying the charges against me and the process involved”; and “I was given a clear explanation of my rights prior to the conference or hearing”. In 2011–2012, 81.9% agreed with these statements, establishing a baseline for development of action planning and assessment. The results of this survey will be reported again during review of the 2013–2014 assessment cycle data. These data will be used to gather additional information on the effectiveness of outcomes and system efficacy in order to compare performance with the benchmark data.
Student Media

The Office of Student Media distributes news and information, serves the UA campus, and facilitates learning. Their mission is: “By upholding students’ authority to guide their media, Student Media provides outlets for creative work and the exchange of ideas, fosters career success, upholds First Amendment privileges, and supports the academic community through a variety of media.”

The Office of Student Media targets 75% agreement with the statement, “As a result of my work and experience in Student Media, I have been able to clarify my values, attitudes, and beliefs”, as an indication of achievement of one of its student learning outcomes. A new training session, SMELT (Student Media Emerging Leader Training), was introduced in the spring of 2011–2012 and meets every other week for up to nine students who the full-time staff identifies as emerging leaders. SMELT is intended to improve the leadership skills of the student staff working in various areas within student media as well as the student leader’s ability to clarify ethical values and beliefs. Findings for the first two years of assessment of this outcome met the 75% target. In the 2011–2012 assessment cycle, 84% of students reported that they were better able to clarify their values, attitudes and beliefs as a result of their involvement with student media; and in 2012–2013, 92% of students agreed with this statement. However, in the 2013–2014 assessment cycle, only 73% of the students reported that they were better able to clarify their values, attitudes and beliefs as a result of their involvement with student media. Even though this result is close to the target set, the curriculum for the SMELT training sessions will be improved in order to place additional emphasis on helping students clarify their values, attitudes and beliefs in sessions conducted during the year.

Testing Services and Technical Support

The Offices of Testing Services and Technology Support Services serve UA students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding businesses and community with (1) test administration, test scoring and reporting, survey services, scanning services and data input and (2) flexible IT services, resources, technical assistance, and equipment to assist UA Enrollment Management departments.

The Offices of Testing Services and Technology Support Services sought to measure customer satisfaction of scanning services for exam Scantron sheets. In 2011, 99.3% of customers were satisfied with the turn-around time for processing SCANTRON test sheets. In 2012, customer surveys revealed that of the respondents to this survey, 98.6% were satisfied with the turn-around time for scanned exam sheets.

Even though the results show good customer satisfaction, The Offices of Testing Services and Technology Support Services decided that changes could be made to their system to improve turnaround time.

Two improvements that were made in 2014 to the system of processing exams in an effort to increase the efficiency of processing were:

The ExamApp system was moved to a virtual environment and integrated with MyBama, making it easier for both instructors and students to access test results. The improved system shortened response time.

A new exam scanning database was developed in which the staff select the term and course when entering exams for processing, which auto populates the instructor of record. Once the scanning is completed, an automated email is send to the instructor of record with notification that the exam results are available in the ExamApp system for editing and publishing to students.

University Libraries

The UA Libraries support the University’s mission, vision, and goals by anticipating library information, technology, and service requirements; by providing timely access to needed resources; by responding to changing user needs; and by promoting effective use of information by students, faculty, and staff. The UA Libraries strive for excellence in service, instruction, and building collections and seek new and better ways of serving the academic community.
To further this mission, UA Libraries measures library usage in order to assess which libraries on campus are used during certain hours. It was proposed that the Rodgers Library, which is located closest to most of the dorms on campus, might be used during extended hours if that service were offered. Library services then opened the Rodgers Library for extended hours during the academic year (24 hours a day/5 days a week). The Rodgers Library has been open for extended hours for 5 years and the assessment data on usage that is captured in WEAVE reports shows that extended hour usage for fall, 2011 was 11,438 users, which averaged 32 users for every hour of extended service. During spring 2012, there were 11,393 extended hour users, for an average of 29 users for every hour of extended service. During 2012–2013, extended hour users averaged 38 and 30 users per hour of extended service for the fall and spring semesters. Conclusions based on this assessment are that students do desire the extended hour service offered by the Rodgers Library. As a result Rodgers Library will remain open for the extended hours during the academic year.

University Recreation

University Recreation [65] encourages healthy interaction through active and safe lifestyle opportunities for students and the greater University community to strengthen learning and personal growth. University Recreation analyzes StudentVoice Survey results to monitor student satisfaction with and participation in University Recreation opportunities. The findings of surveys administered every other year since 2008 guided a recent decision to construct an additional facility for student recreation and fitness at Presidential Village, a new residential area. The findings also guided the layout, design, and equipment selection for the facility to be opened in 2014. StudentVoice results continue to guide discussions of planned upgrades and facility improvements at other sites.

Veteran and Military Affairs

The mission of The Center for Veteran and Military Affairs [66] is to provide, facilitate, or coordinate programs and services to meet the special needs of veterans, service members, dependents, and survivors in order to ease their transition to college life and fulfill their educational goals. The vision of the Office for Veteran and Military Affairs is to ensure that UA is the “University of Choice” for all student veterans, service members, dependents, and survivors by being recognized nationally as a “Military and Veteran Friendly University.”

Assessment activities during the 2011–2012 assessment cycle were established to gather data on current programs and services but to also gather data on the community’s knowledge of this growing population. During the 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 assessment cycles, staff members added outcomes and measures that were designed to help inform service growth as well as service delivery. As an example of assessment activities, the Office for Veteran and Military Affairs makes it a priority to process paperwork that qualifies veterans for benefits and scholarships in a timely manner. For the 2012–2013 assessment cycle the staff sought to reduce the processing time for students seeking certification to within 10 days of receipt. To assess this outcome, the Office for Veteran and Military Affairs tracks the number of processing days for GI Bill paperwork from the submission date to completion of certification. VA ONCE and Banner Systems are used for tracking.

In Fall 2012, 97% of the GI Bill paperwork was certified within 10 days. The Fall 2013 data indicated that paperwork for 89% of students submitting certifications through the Office of Veteran and Military Affairs was processed within 10 days.

The Women’s Resource Center [67] maximizes the learning experience of UA students and the greater UA community through outreach, services, and advocacy to empower women and encourage their active and equal participation. The Women’s Resource Center offers Client Counseling Services that are free, confidential, and available to faculty, staff, and students. One of the goals of the Client Counseling Services is to raise awareness of the importance of working through goals.

During the 2013- 2014 academic year, Women’s Resource Center staff provided counseling and advocacy for survivors of interpersonal violence which includes sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, stalking, and adult survivors of child abuse. Client services are designed to assist survivors of interpersonal violence in effectively addressing presenting issues that directly stem from victimization. Client services are free, confidential, and available to faculty, staff, and students at The University of Alabama.
When the direct client service staff (one full-time licensed staff therapist, two staff members in the victim advocate role, and at least one counseling intern-graduate student who is directly supervised by staff therapist) meet with a client, goals are set in relation to the presenting issues and problem solving strategies are discussed to assist in addressing the presenting issues. By the completion of the 3 counseling and/or advocacy session, clients should sign a goal sheet with their counselor and/or advocate.

These goals are mutually agreed upon between the counselor/advocate and client. Therefore, direct client staff were particularly interested in gathering data on the client’s ability to identify that they have established and are progressing through at least one goal with their counselor and/or advocate. Results from the survey indicated that 70% of clients checked at least one goal that they have established and are progressing through in advocacy and counseling sessions. In order to improve this result, the staff intends to be more specific in its intentional language when presenting the importance of goal setting to clients and when revisiting goals that are established with the clients.

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**Supporting Documents**

1. Division of Student Affairs (PDF)
2. Blackburn Institute (PDF)
3. Career Center (PDF)
4. Counseling Center (PDF)
5. Ferguson Student Center (PDF)
6. First Year Experience (PDF)
7. Graduate Student Services (PDF)
8. Greek Affairs (PDF)
9. Housing and Residential Life (PDF)
10. Parent Programs (PDF)
11. Student Care and Well Being (PDF)
12. Student Involvement (PDF)
13. Student Conduct (PDF)
14. Student Media (PDF)
15. University Recreation (PDF)
16. Veteran And Military Affairs (PDF)
17. Women’s Resource Center (PDF)
18. Admissions (PDF)
19. Capstone International (PDF)
20. Center for Academic Success (PDF)
21. Center for Instructional Technology (PDF)
22. Creative Campus (PDF)
23. Disability Services (PDF)
24. English Language Institute (PDF)
25. Financial Aid (PDF)
26. Graduate School (PDF)
27. Health Promotion and Wellness (PDF)
28. Honors College (PDF)
29. Registrar (PDF)
30. Testing Services and Tech Support (PDF)
31. University Libraries (PDF)
32. UA Admissions (PDF)
33. UA Mission Vision Strategic Goals (PDF)
34. UA Ranks First Among Public Universities in Enrollment of National Merit Scholar (PDF)
35. Blackburn Institute (PDF)
36. Capstone International Center (PDF)
37. Capstone International Programs_webpage (PDF)
38. Capstone International Services_webpage (PDF)
39. Career Center (PDF)
40. Center for Academic Success (PDF)
41. CAS Tutorial Appointments (PDF)
42. Center for Instructional Technology webpage (PDF)
43. Counseling Center (PDF)
44. Creative Campus (PDF)
45. Disability Services (PDF)
46. English Language Institute Webpage (PDF)
47. Ferguson Center (PDF)
48. Financial Aid (PDF)
49. First Year Experience (PDF)
50. Graduate School (PDF)
51. Graduate Student Services (PDF)
52. Greek Affairs (PDF)
53. Health Promotion & Wellness (PDF)
54. Honors College (PDF)
55. Housing & Residential Communities (PDF)
56. Parent Programs (PDF)
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58. Student Care and Well Being (PDF)
59. Student Involvement (PDF)
60. Student Conduct (PDF)
61. Student Media (PDF)
62. Testing Services (PDF)
63. Testing Services Survey (PDF)
64. University Libraries (PDF)
65. University Recreation (PDF)
66. Veteran and Military Affairs (PDF)
67. Women’s Resource Center (PDF)