3.4.9 Academic support services

3.4.9 The institution provides appropriate academic support services.

Judgment of Compliance

In Compliance

Narrative of Compliance

Consistent with its mission and vision as a student-centered research university with an emphasis on quality programs of teaching, research, and service, UA (UA) provides numerous appropriate academic support services for the specific purpose of enhancing the overall academic success of students and the effectiveness of the faculty in teaching and research. UA bases the delivery of academic support services on the premise that learning is not linear and is enhanced by providing students with formally structured academic support services that broaden dimensions of learning both within and beyond the classroom. Although the majority of the academic support services described below are student-oriented, many complement the faculty’s instructional efforts and in that way support faculty success as well.

Appropriate academic support services at UA transcend divisional lines, and involve the collaborative efforts of staff and faculty across the institution to provide services that accentuate the successful academic transition and progression of students to graduation. The Center for Instructional Technology, the Office of Information Technology and the Libraries are academic support services that have a major focus on the academic success of the faculty in the enhancement of teaching and research.

Orientation

UA tailors orientation programs [1] to meet the needs of entering students, primarily first year students, but also transfer students, graduate students, international students, online and off-campus students, and students at UA’s School Of Law. The University structures all orientation sessions to help students navigate their new learning environment by assisting them in the acquisition and integration of knowledge about programs, services, and resources. Orientation sessions provide students the opportunity to explore institutional fit and to assist them in learning to manage their personal affairs while providing the practical competencies to pursue their academic goals as well.

UA’s collaborative approach to student success extends to the families of students in transition. The Office of Parent Programs [2] provides parents/guardians an overview of the campus resources and support services available to parents/guardians and their students. Sibling Orientation allows high school-aged family members of UA students an opportunity to get to know the campus, too.
The success of UA's Orientation programs is evident in results from the Bama Bound New Student Orientation Reports, [3] spanning the years from 2011 to 2013. Over 90% of student respondents indicated that their questions were answered regarding academic advising. Over 98% of students responded positively to the general helpfulness of Orientation staff and 95% of students indicated they were likely to enroll at UA after attending orientation. Similarly, results of the Parent Orientation Survey [4] indicate that more than 95% of parents/guardians learned strategies to support their student’s success and transition to UA. Over 91% of parents and guardians indicated they felt as though their questions and concerns about their student attending UA were addressed during Parent Orientation. Results from New Graduate Student Orientation Reports [5] indicate that over 90% of students who participated in sessions designed to provide them with information on resources planned to use at least one resource or service. Over the last two years more than 90% of participants indicated they were able to identify strategies for my own personal health and management with a graduate student at UA.

**Advising**

Academic advising is available to all students in each of UA's colleges and schools. Professional advisors and faculty members assist students with course selection, program specific advising, and monitoring academic progress. Staff in the College of Continuing Studies (CCS) assist students in on-line and distance programs [6] to ensure that they are assigned to an academic advisor. Advising assistance is provided to on-line and distance students through telephone discussions, [7] email communication, and web conferencing.

Each degree program at the Gadsden Center [8] designates an academic advisor for students. The degree programs conduct information sessions and academic advising sessions regularly for face-to-face advising. Students may access videoconferencing systems to arrange “virtual meetings.” Gadsden staff members facilitate conference calls and other appointments for students to talk with advisors and faculty in Tuscaloosa. Faculty members who teach at the Gadsden location provide face-to-face academic advising during office hours prior to their classes. Students in other off-campus locations are advised by faculty members who travel to the location to teach and by email and phone calls to on-campus advisors. Additionally, all students - regardless of their enrollment location - have access to DegreeWorks, [9] a web-based academic planning tool that includes a degree planner, degree audit function, GPA calculator, and a “what if” option for students who may consider changing majors.

Each spring semester the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment assists the Academic Advisors Association with the administration of the Advising Survey. [10] The survey captures data on students’ impressions of and experience with the advising process. Results [11] from the past three administrations indicate that students used a wider variety of advising delivery options than they had in 2011 and students’ overall satisfaction with their advising experience increased each year.

**Registration**

The Office of the University Registrar [12] provides academic and administrative infrastructure necessary for continued service to students and the campus community, beyond registration, with an emphasis on student success. Staff work to ensure that students, regardless of their campus location (on site, distance or branch campus), complete their courses in a timely manner and in accordance with their educational plans and goals. Policies, programs and services allow students to take an active role in managing their academic progress. Staff maintain electronic access to record information that is secure and efficient, providing student record information (degree audit, transcripts, etc.), enrollment and degree verification, up-to-date catalog and timetable information (including classroom scheduling), enrollment services (including web enrollment), and determination of residency for tuition purposes for the University. Staff assist UA Athletics in maintaining academic eligibility for student athletes. Staff also ensure that access to student records is in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The University Registrar implemented Degree Works in May 2009. Trend data [11] from the Academic Advising Survey for the last three years indicates that use of DegreeWorks as a planning tool continues to grow with 55.7% of the survey’s respondents indicating they had created an academic plan in 2011 and 65.6% of students responding in 2013 that they had created an academic plan.
The Center for Academic Success

The Center for Academic Success (CAS) maintains a dual-service orientation to advance learning strategies for academically gifted students and to enhance learning strategies for students who need to strengthen academic performance. CAS provides services and programs to help students succeed in UA courses, improve study techniques and reading proficiencies, and prepare for professional school and graduate school entrance examinations. Students enrolled in distance courses, or pursuing coursework from a distance location may schedule appointments for assistance via phone, Skype or a Blackboard Collaborate session. CAS services and programs include:

**The Learning Resource Center.** The Learning Resource Lab provides students with access to instructional materials and resources. Computer programs, digitized media, and course textbooks are available to students, as well as review materials for students preparing to take professional and graduate school entrance exams. These materials are also available online to students regardless of their location via the CAS website. Learning Resource Lab visits increased from 2,598 visits in 2010–2011 to the 2012–2013 academic year with usable data captured on 4,595 visits to the lab, or an approximate 5.0% increase in visits from the previous year and a 76.8% increase over the past two years.

**Study Skills Courses and Workshops.** In collaboration with New College and the College of Education, CAS offers two Study Skills Courses. In NEW 222 Academic Potential, students learn efficient ways to pursue academic activities. BEP 110 Introduction to Learning Strategies and Skills is a three-hour course designed to improve learning skills and strategies. In addition, non-credit Reading and Study Skills Workshops cover topics like time management, speed reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary enhancement, note taking, memory methods, test preparation, test taking and motivation. CAS staff also provide study skills assessments on an individual basis to help students identify strategies to improve their academic performance. CAS provides the workshops and study skill assessments on campus. They are available by appointment to distance students as well.

**Freshman Compass Course.** CAS and the College of Education collaborate to offer BCE 101 Freshman Compass Course, which focuses on student success by helping first-year students:

- acquire an orientation to the functions and resources of the University;
- adjust to the University environment;
- establish relationships through interaction with faculty, advisers and other students; and
- develop essential academic skills.

The most recent retention snapshot from the spring of 2014 indicates that 92.3 % of provisionally admitted students completing the BCE 101 course in the fall of 2013 were retained through the spring semester.

**Tutorial Services and Supplemental Instruction.** The Tutorial Assistance Program also provides students with supplementary academic support. There is no charge for these services and students can take advantage of Review and Help Sessions, which are available to students for a variety of math, chemistry and physics classes. Students may drop-in to ask questions and seek assistance. Supplemental Instruction Sessions facilitated by peer-leaders, offer students the opportunity to integrate study strategies with specific course content. Small Group Tutorial Appointments, which are available to students in select courses, are peer lead and structured to give students more individual attention. Individual Tutorial Appointments are available to students who would like individual help with specific classes. Students can access the schedule of tutorial offerings via mybama, the CAS’s website or UA’s Calendar of Events. The most recent tutorial service report indicates that Small Group Tutorial Services for Chemistry 104 and Chemistry 105 continue to grow. Chemistry 105 small group appointments have grown from 20 students attending 48 appointments, averaging 2.4 appointments in the spring of 2011 to 223 students attending 1,568 appointments, averaging 7.03 appointments in the spring of 2014. This represents a 3,166% increase in small group Chemistry 105 appointments in the spring. Chemistry 104 small group appointments are seeing much more measured growth with a 160.2% increase in appointments from fall 2011 to the fall of 2013 (209 to 544).
**Student Support Services Trio Program.** Student Support Services (SSS) [20] is a comprehensive, federally-funded TRIO program that offers academic assistance to qualified undergraduate students at UA. The program assists first generation college students, students with limited incomes and/or students with disabilities. SSS provides an array of individualized academic and personal support services to help increase student persistence and graduation rates. Retention and graduation rates for the program have consistently remained high. Summary data [21] over the last three years indicates that students in the program are meeting and/or exceeding the University’s retention rate. For the last three reporting cycles, over 87% of SSS participants completed their degrees in six years or less.

**University Libraries**

Students and faculty have access to more than three million print and electronic resources through the University Libraries. The library system includes five separate disciplined-related libraries which provide both traditional resources and cutting-edge technology to the academic community. Three additional libraries are attached to their respective administrative units (Health, Law, and Maps).

The University Libraries’ website, [22] which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week from any computer, provides all library users with access to integrated collections, services, and information resources. Currently, the University Libraries system provides access to 124,145 full text print and electronic journals. In addition, almost 400 databases, including indexes, abstracts and other reference resources, are linked from the Libraries’ website. The collection of electronic books continues to grow with 1.2 million e-books in all disciplines now available.

The Libraries’ catalog [23] contains records for more than three million items in all formats (print, microfilm, archival, serials) and can also be accessed via the Libraries’ website. Digital collections from the W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library are linked through a separate catalog on the home page. Links to books and electronic materials on reserve, Interlibrary Loan services and other self-initiated services, [24] such as renewing books and requesting materials from the Libraries’ Annex, are also available. Faculty and students also have access to research collections encompassing more than one million titles from the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) via Interlibrary Loan.

In 2013, the Libraries joined HathiTrust, [25] a partnership of major research institutions around the world. By participating in HathiTrust, the Libraries now have access to over 5.7 million digitized titles and 10.8 million volumes as well as a research center available to scholars.

The University Libraries system offers academic software [26] to support student assignments and class projects. Software is upgraded and added annually. Students can find locations of the current programs available on library computers by accessing the Libraries’ website. Computers are available to patrons in a variety of locations. Patrons can check the availability of computers [27] via the libraries main website.

Subject specialists [28] work closely with students and faculty to assist them in ordering or locating materials and in advising students and faculty who need specialized assistance with research projects. A list of subject specialists is available on the Libraries’ website. Reference services are available in person, over the phone and online through the Ask-a-Librarian service. [29]

The Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library contains the social sciences, arts and humanities collection and features a state-of-the-art Learning Commons. Located on the first floor are the Music Library and the Digital Humanities Center. Reference assistance is also available on the first floor and online. For students needing digital media for class projects or individual papers, expert assistance is provided in the Sanford Media Center. [30] Gorgas Library has study rooms as well. CAS and the Writing Center often provide services in Gorgas Library.
The 2010 acquisition of the A.S. Williams III Americana Collection [31] added 20,000 volumes, over 14,000 photographs, hundreds of maps, and other valuable historical artifacts. The book collection published between the late 17th century and 2009 pertain to the US presidents and the history and culture of the South. The Civil War is particularly well represented with some 6,000 volumes, published from the earliest days of Secession to the present, reflecting the observations and opinions of the Union, the Confederacy, European visitors during the War, veterans and subsequent generations of scholars. Unpublished portions of the collection contain archival materials ranging from 19th-century letters, diaries and newspapers to business records and a wide variety of documents recording the American experience of both the famous and the unknown from the mid–18th century to the Great Depression. Particularly noteworthy are some 12,000 photographs of the South taken between the 1850s and the mid–1930s.

The Angelo Bruno Business Library [32] serves the business information needs of UA, and in particular the students and faculty of the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration (C&BA) and the Manderson Graduate School of Business. The 64,000-square-foot facility also houses the College’s Sloan Y. Bashinsky Sr. Computer Center. Combining business library services and business computer laboratory services in the same facility provides seamless access to information services for business students.

Serving primarily the faculty, students, and staff of the College of Education and the Graduate School of Education, McLure Library [33] includes the School Library and Curriculum Materials Center on the lower level, reference and periodical areas and public computer areas on the main floor, and study rooms, presentation practice rooms, and a computer lab on the third floor. The main collection of the library includes professional books related to education (including sports and physical education). A reference collection is on the main floor. The School Library collection contains approximately 20,000 trade books for preschool through young adult readers. The Curriculum Materials Center holds about 10,000 items, including K–12 textbooks, curriculum guides, supplemental classroom materials, and educational media, including CD’s, DVD’s, videos, kits, games and other items.

Rodgers Library for Science and Engineering [34] serves students and faculty in the sciences, engineering and nursing programs. Rodgers is the first departmental library built with the intent of taking maximum advantage of computer-based information systems for teaching and research. Several study rooms are available in Rodgers for groups and include state-of-the-art technology, including a 3D manufacturing maker space studio. Rodgers is open 24 hours, Monday-Thursday, for late night study hours.

W. S. Hoole Special Collections Library [35] contains materials related to Alabama and the Deep South (including manuscripts, rare editions, Confederate imprints, pamphlets and maps, and archives of the University and Alabama state publications.

Under separate administration are the Health Sciences Library in the University Medical Center, the Bounds Law Library in the Law Center and the Map Library in Farrah Hall.

Each year the University Libraries monitors gate counts. These counts form one of the basic pictures of library facility use. Between August 2012-July 2013, 1,792,393 users visited the University Libraries:

- Gorgas - 903,701 visits
- Bruno - 537,709 visits
- Rodgers - 274,762 visits
- McLure - 74,339 visits
- Hoole - 1,882 visits.

Average facility use rates were found to be 54 visits per user (students and faculty). Visits to University Library facilities were up 4.8%. The greatest increase in building use was at Rodgers Library (36%) which underwent extensive renovation, is open 24 hours per day 5 days per week during the academic year, and is close to the residence halls.
Mathematics Technology Learning Center

Mathematics Technology Learning Center (MTLC) is a state-of-the-art program that assists students in the active learning of mathematics. This is accomplished through a computer lab/tutoring center open over 60 hours per week for one-on-one tutoring and technology that allows students to work at their own pace, receive instant feedback as they learn mathematics by doing mathematics, learn from a variety of formats, and receive encouragement from their instructors regarding course progress.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center helps students improve various aspects of their writing. Writing consultations are available by appointment or on a walk-in basis to both undergraduate and graduate students. Distance consulting is available to students who are physically unable to visit the UA Writing Center due to prohibitive driving distance or physical disability. Writing resources are available online via the Writing Center’s Website on the Resources page. Summary data indicates consultations grew from 5,505 in 2009–2010 to 7,020 in 2013–2014. Selected data from the Writing Center’s most recent Client Survey indicates that 94% of students felt that they had their questions answered during their consultation; 81% of students indicated their consultant helped them set goals; and 82% of survey respondents indicated they gained confidence in their writing ability.

Additional services to students, instructors, and faculty include:

- Promotional presentations (staff visit a class, pass out flyers and pens, model tutorials, and take questions);
- Writing intensive workshops (staff visit a class and review specific writing skills and strategies with students. Topics include summary/analysis, avoiding plagiarism, constructing arguments, editing for clarity, netiquette, personal statements, and scientific writing.);
- Consultation with faculty to discuss strategies for including more writing in courses and/or assessing student writing.

During 2013–2014, the Writing Center staff engaged more than 1,000 students in 40 workshops.

Office of Disability Services

UA is committed to making academic programs and other services accessible to qualified students with disabilities. UA’s goal is to provide students with disabilities equal opportunities to develop and demonstrate their academic skills while maintaining the academic integrity of University programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) serves as the central contact point for students with disabilities. ODS works individually with students and collaboratively with the University community to determine appropriate and reasonable academic accommodations and ensure that students’ academic performance is evaluated apart from the limiting effects of disability.

Trend data from the fall of 2011 to summer of 2014 indicate consistent increases in registrations and requests for accommodations. In the fall of 2011, 758 students completed the registration process and were provided with accommodation letters. That number grew to 961 in the fall of 2013, a 26.7% increase in students seeking services in consecutive fall semesters. Accommodations for testing continue to be the most frequently utilized accommodation. Data indicate consistent growth in requests for evening services, increasing from 21.6% of all requests in 2011–2012 to 33.7% in 2013–2014.

The Graduate School The Graduate School 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 master’s, educational specialist, and doctoral degrees. The Graduate School’s Graduate School Programs Director works closely with The Office of Graduate Student Services housed in the Division of Student Affairs, to provide complementary and collaborative support services and involvement opportunities to enhance the experience of graduate students during their time on campus.
The Student Guide to Preparing Theses and Dissertations [46] and the Electronic Theses & Dissertations website [47] provide detailed information to students to help reduce the time spent preparing their manuscripts. The Graduate Assistant Guide [48] and forms that graduate students need to complete can also be found on the Graduate School website. These resources are designed to assist students on and off campus.

The Graduate School developed the Graduate Parent Support Program (GPS) [49] to serve as an accessible academic, social, and emotional support system for graduate students who have children. GPS offers a centralized platform for students to communicate about various topics related to balancing graduate work and family. The program provides opportunities for professional development and academic socialization. The American Council on Education named UA’s Graduate Parent Support Program the 2014 recipient of its State Network Leadership Award for the Advancement of Women in Higher Education.

The Tide Together Mentoring Program [50] utilizes a team approach to mentor graduate students who are currently pursing or plan to pursue doctoral studies. Program participants are matched with a faculty mentor and a graduate student peer mentor. The primary aim of the mentoring program is to help graduate students acquire the personal and professional skills needed for success in their future careers. Students who are eligible for the program must be a member of an under-represented minority in graduate education (i.e., African American, Hispanic, or Native American), a female in a Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM) discipline, or a first-generation college student. [51] Staff working with the Tide Together program in 2011–2012 wanted to know how participants rated the experience with their faculty mentors. Of the respondents, 81.3% indicated agreement with the statement “My faculty mentor helped me develop my academic abilities.” In 2012–2013, 94.4% of the respondents indicated agreement with the statement. [52]

Women in STEM Experience Program (WiSE) [53] seeks to support women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. Through WiSE women studying science and math related fields are placed with a graduate and faculty mentor to help them develop skills in professionalism and in their field of study in the hope of narrowing the existing gender gap in STEM studies and careers. In 2012, over 60 people from UA attended an inaugural evening WiSE event. In 2013, over 120 students and faculty from UA and other Alabama colleges attended the “Pathways to Success,” [54] a full day program to provide the opportunity for students to meet with fellow scholars and professionals while learning to navigate science and math related fields and graduate programs.

For three weeks in May, graduate students may attend The Writing Retreat sponsored by UA Writing Center and Graduate School. The retreat provides graduate students uninterrupted time and comfortable space to make tangible and substantial progress on their dissertations, reflect in a meaningful way on their writing skills and writing processes, and consider how those skills and processes might be applied to future writing projects. The Writing Retreat is an example of how UA supports and equips graduate students to be successful.

The Graduate School also provides Graduate Teaching Assistants an intensive, two-day Workshop for New Graduate Teaching Assistants in an effort to deliver quality education experiences for the undergraduates they teach. The workshop is required for all new GTAs to prepare them for their duties in all types of teaching settings. The Workshop Presentations are available on line. [55] In August of 2014 the Graduate School welcomed nearly 300 new GTA’s to the the workshop.

The Honors College

The Honors College serves as an enhancement to UA’s undergraduate curriculum. In addition to the honors courses available from the University’s 13 colleges and schools, students choose from more than 400 course and lab sections [56] that provide opportunities for students to interact frequently with instructors, and to engage in meaningful discourse with fellow students, and that emphasize student-motivated learning.

The Honors College is open to entering first-year students with a 28 ACT or higher and 1250 SAT or higher and a 3.50 GPA or higher. National Merit Finalists and National Achievement Finalists are admitted automatically. Current students may be admitted as full-time undergraduates with at least 12 UA credit hours and a minimum 3.3 overall GPA or as incoming transfer students with at least 12 overall credit hours and a minimum 3.3 overall GPA.
UA Honors College provides programming that engages, educates, and inspires. Program opportunities are designed to advance academics, service, and cultural understanding in support of the mission of the college and the University. Academic opportunities include: The Honors Book Club, Honors Year One, Medicine & Community, Randall Research Awards, Town Hall Community Discussions, and the University Fellows Experience. Service opportunities include: 57 Miles: Perry County Partnership, Alabama Action Abroad, Black Belt Experience, Heritage Panel, Honors Action, Nicaragua Clinical Experience and READ Alabama; while cultural events include: Alabama Action Abroad, Art Speaks, First Friends, HCA Talks, Quidditch at the Capstone, UA in Oxford | Honors Abroad, Xpress Night Presents and The Look of Things.

Summary Data from 2010–2013 indicates that the Honors College has seen a 73.9% increase in New Freshman Applications over the period. Exit Survey results from graduating seniors on items tied to the Honors College’s four pillars also show steady increases from August of 2013 to May of 2014 in impacts on cultural awareness, engagement in research, and service to others.

The Center for Instructional Technology

The Center for Instructional Technology (CIT), housed within Academic Affairs, provides an umbrella of related instructional technology tools and services, designed to facilitate teaching, learning, and collaboration by the academic community at UA. CIT is organizationally comprised of four individual groups – Audio-Visual Solutions, Emerging Instructional Technology, Faculty Resource Center, and Multimedia Services. Each spring CIT and the Technology and Learning Committee sponsor the CIT Faculty Technology Showcase. The event showcases faculty use of technology to enhance learning, conduct research, and increase professional productivity.

Audio-Visual Solutions. Audio-Visual Solutions provides support, consultation, design, installation, operation, and maintenance of a variety of audio/visual resources, including media-enabled classrooms and conference rooms, digital signage, and public address systems for events and emergency announcements. Staff support over 400 classrooms designed to provide faculty with the latest technology to assist them in classroom instruction and presentations. Staff also provide immediate tech support via the help phone in each classroom, and individual and group workshops to answer questions in the use of touch panel and push button control systems, document presenters, video players, computers, data projectors and any other devices that are available in the classrooms. The Service Catalogue is available online and specifies services available to faculty and staff. Since 2006 the number of rooms supported by Audio/Visual Solutions equipped with multimedia has increased from 104 to 407 in 2014 due to new construction, major building renovations, or upgrades to non-multimedia classrooms. This represents a 291% increase in media-enabled instructional space.

Emerging Technology and Accessibility. Emerging Technology and Accessibility works with colleagues within CIT, as well as faculty, researchers, and other campus community members to ascertain technology needs and to explore and evaluate tools, procedures, and resources needed to foster emerging technology and accessibility at UA. The Emerging Technology and Accessibility team helps plan and implement campus-wide rollouts of instructional technology tools. This can include change management, conducting pilots and user surveys, developing and leading any transitional tasks, proposing and evaluating policies and procedures, exploring possible workflows and functional administration.

The Faculty Resource Center. The Faculty Resource Center (FRC) provides faculty development and support for instructional technologies to enhance teaching and learning. Faculty and staff have access to a variety of resources including the University’s learning management system (Blackboard), collaborative learning applications, lecture capture systems, and support in the creation of instructional multimedia. Workshops and on-line tutorials are available on the use of multimedia software, academic support applications, and the use of technology to enhance education. Resources available to students include tutorials on the use of Blackboard, Blackboard Collaborate, Turnitin, Tegrity, and the use of Turning Technologies Clickers.

Multimedia Services. The Office of Multimedia Services (MMS) provides web, photography, videography and training and education services to academic partners on campus. MMS offers some free and some fee-based services in these multimedia areas, including website architecture, content development, web design and production, database development, flash and video production, photography, custom application development, and streaming media. Conversion and trans-coding services, captioning, and copyright clearance are also available. MMS is committed to working with each individual department, group, or program to develop the best individual solution to their multimedia needs.
Office of Information Technology

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) facilitates research, enhances instruction, and supports administrative operations by providing quality services and resource to students, faculty, and staff with the goal of enriching educational experiences that promote student success and faculty excellence through technology. Programs and services are designed to be user centered and include:

- The IT Service Desk, which provides a single point of contact for all information technology issues and resources. Services for students include virus removal, operating system repairs, general software troubleshooting. In addition to services provided on the Tuscaloosa campus, the IT Service Desk provides technical support for distance education faculty, staff, and students and is available to distance students via telephone or email. Issues such as access to myBama, email, computing security, and software assistance are managed for students by the IT Service Desk. [64] The IT Service Desk receives over 30,000 calls annually. After hours assistance is provided by Perceptis, who receive over 7,000 after-hour calls annually.

- Internet services, which include access to wireless networks, high-speed Internet access through the campus network and support for email and myBama, an interactive web site for UA faculty, staff, and students. The myBama portal provides access to e-mail, course information, campus news, and other campus-wide information. It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week from anywhere in the world. Each UA student is provided with access to Blackboard, an electronic learning management system that supports on-line course management. Blackboard is used extensively to provide and deliver on-line courses, as well as to provide web-enhanced course materials to students enrolled in on-campus and off-campus courses. The system contains built-in tools designed to share files, assist students in submitting class work (assignments, discussions, and exams), and provides a platform to increase student interaction, collaboration as well as fosters the development of interpersonal communication skills with students and faculty. Blackboard is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week from anywhere in the world.

Testing Services

Testing Services [65] serves UA students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community with test administration and test scoring and reporting. Testing Services offers assessments for placement in University courses in three academic disciplines: Computer Science, Mathematics, and Foreign Languages. Testing Services administers both undergraduate and graduate admission tests, GED, CLEP, PLACEMENT EXAMS, and other tests by special request from individuals or agencies. Current testing facilities include three computer labs varying in capacity, with the ability to access other labs/classrooms on campus, depending on availability. Current faculty listed as the instructors of record in Banner and current students have access to test scoring and reporting services. Test results are accessed through myBama via the Academics Tab.

Summary data from 2010–2013 [66] provide a snapshot of placement testing volume and activity, while the Standardized Test Counts Summary [67] indicates a decline in ACT requests. This decrease is due to the state’s initiative to pay for all students to test within the high school. ACETP and FE decreases are likely the result of moving the test to computer-based format and a limited number of certified labs available for administration. Increases in the number or administrations are anticipated after June 2015 when additional lab seats become available.

Academic Support Services for Student Athletes

The Bill Battle Center of Athletic Student Services (CASS) [68] provides services for student athletes that include tutoring, career counseling, advising, study rooms, a lecture room, and two computer labs. The Bill Battle Center has a computer lab with 48 computers, two multi-media classrooms, 30 tutorial rooms equipped computers and wireless internet, two math labs equipped with computers, and a student lounge. The Center is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. CASS staff provide a number of services, including monitoring student-athletes’ academic progress, providing assistance in selecting a major, and supervising study hall.
Athletic academic advisors are not the student-athletes’ primary advisors, but work with divisional academic advisors who are knowledgeable about the degree requirements of their particular programs of study. Student-athletes are encouraged to develop and maintain close ties with divisional advisors, who assist them in registration and class scheduling.

CASS offers individual tutoring, test reviews, and group tutoring sessions. The majority of tutors are available during evening study hall. A limited number of tutors are available by appointment in the morning and mid-afternoon. CASS also offers a personal monitoring program to help student-athletes develop time management skills, note taking skills, and test preparation strategies. All tutoring sessions are in Bryant Hall Athletic Student Services Building.

The Learning Specialist, a resource for teaching and learning strategies, works closely with student-athletes to assist them with their educational development. The principal duties include: assessing student-athletes and planning developmental instruction for learning needs; teaching study skills; coordinating the accommodations recommended by UA Office of Disability Services (ODS) for at-risk students; facilitating small group study; and connecting students and tutors for academic improvement in specific college subjects. The Learning Specialist assists students during day and evening study hall.

Study hall is an integral part of academic support services for student-athletes. Study hall is supervised study times with the purpose of helping student-athletes organize their study time more effectively. Study hall is conducted in Bryant Hall’s Bill Battle Center for Athletic Student Services. Study hall attendance is mandatory for all freshmen and college transfer student-athletes, and upperclassmen with a cumulative GPA below 2.5.

The Life Skills Program is another student support service offered by the CASS. To prepare college athletes for life’s challenges beyond their athletic arenas, the NCAA developed the Life Skills Program. The program is designed to help college athletes bridge the gap from college life to professional life in the work world, as well as, make meaningful contributions to their communities. The program has a five point focus around which programming is built: Academic Excellence, Athletic Experience, Career Development, Community Service, and Personal Development.

The annual reports from 2011–2012 [69] and 2012–2013 [70] detail the success of UA student-athletes. Alabama student-athletes earned 32 Academic All-American honors over the last four years, including a school-record nine accolades in 2012 and eight honors in 2013 and 2011. During 2011–2012, 525 student-athletes averaged over a 3.0 GPA. In 2012–2013, 550 students had attained a 3.0 GPA or better. Graduation rates for student-athletes [71] exceeded the University rate in both the 2011 and 2012 academic years.

Academic Support for Law Students

The UA School of Law [72] provides multiple forms of academic support services and resources to its students. The School of Law offers orientation for incoming students. Sessions are offered for both first time [73] and transfer students. [74] Academic support workshops are offered during a student’s first year on such topics as study skills, time management, outlining, and exam writing. Students may also request one-on-one sessions to receive targeted instruction in areas such as classroom preparation, rule synthesis and legal analysis, and improving fundamental writing skills. In the spring semester of the first-year, students experiencing academic difficulties take a reduced load of courses and attend individualized instructional sessions.

Students struggling with challenges related to academics or personal life issues are encouraged to take advantage of counseling services available at the University. [75] A licensed professional counselor is available to provide confidential counseling services for all law school students. This service is sponsored by the Law School and is free of charge.

The School of Law also offers a Summer Academic Excellence program for a select number of incoming first-year J.D. students. This program allows students to take one required fall semester course prior to Orientation and to receive supplemental instruction in legal writing, study skills, and exam preparation. The students in the summer program then take a reduced load of classes in the fall semester of their first year. In the spring semester, these students also may be expected to take reduced course hours.
The Bounds Law Library contains over 550,000 volumes and numerous online resources available for legal research. Reference librarians are available to assist students engaging in research. The John C. Payne Special Collections of the Bounds Law Library include more than 12,000 printed volumes, more than 1,300 cubic feet of manuscript materials, several thousand photographs, and an assortment of artifacts relating to the history of the School of Law, the school’s alumni and faculty, the history of the bench and bar of Alabama, and other topics of legal history. Patrons can access the library’s catalog on line using ATTICUS, which searches for books, journals and similar items in the law library. Students can access course reserves, and a variety of research materials from Quicklinks on the Bounds Law Library’s website.

The Career Services Office at the School of Law provides programs and services designed to teach career planning and job search skills, facilitate access to employment resources, and maximize the employment opportunities available to students. The staff work with students to see that they have the skills necessary to conduct a successful job search at any point of their career. All students are assigned a primary career counselor during the Fall semester of their first year. In addition to required sessions with career counselors, students have access to a variety of resources and services which include: copier, fax machine, telephone (available for long-distance calling), computer with internet connection, printer, scanner, and typewriter for student use in the CSO. Printed materials are available for reference and check-out on a variety of subjects, including general legal career search, judicial clerkships, careers in public interest/government, alternative legal careers, various substantive legal specialties, U.S. Military, and directories. Programs are presented on a regular basis during the lunch hour. The Practice Interview Program enhances interview skills and helps students manage anxiety, learn what to expect from legal employers, and enhance their overall interview question and answer skills. The Shadow Program provides law students an opportunity to follow a practicing attorney through his or her day. The Documents Center provides students with guidelines, templates, writing samples, and interviewing tips.

Each year the School of Law publishes enrollment data and placement summary data on their website. Summary statistics include information on pass rates, placement, and enrollment. For the Class of 2013, the Alabama State Bar passage rate was 97.8%; 91% were employed in a J.D.-required or preferred position or were pursuing advanced degrees within nine months of graduation, and 10 or more graduates were placed in federal judicial clerkships for the sixth consecutive year.

Supporting Documents

1. Orientation (PDF)
2. Parent Programs (PDF)
5. New Graduate Student Orientation Summary 2011–2013 (PDF)
6. Bama by Distance Advising (PDF)
7. Advising Hotline (PDF)
8. Gadsden Center Degrees and Programs (PDF)
9. DegreeWorks (PDF)
10. Advising Report Spring 2013 (PDF)
11. Advising Survey Summary 2011–2013 (PDF)
12. Office of the Registrar (PDF)
13. Center for Academic Success (PDF)
14. CAS Learning Resources Lab (PDF)
15. Center for Academic Success (CAS) Video Library (PDF)
16. Reading and Study Skills Workshops (PDF)
17. Crimson Edge Retention Snapshot 2013–2014 (PDF)
18. Calendar of Events (PDF)
19. Fall 2010-Spring 2014 Tutoring Services Report (PDF)
20. Student Support Services (PDF)
21. Student Support Services (SSS) Summary Information 2010–2013 (PDF)
22. University Libraries (PDF)
23. Catalog Search (HTML)
24. University Libraries Services (PDF)
25. HathiTrust Digital Library (PDF)
26. UA Libraries Software List (PDF)
27. UA Libraries Available Computers (HTML)
28. Subject Liaisons (PDF)
29. Ask a Librarian (PDF)
30. Sanford Media Center (PDF)
31. A.S. Williams III Americana Collection (PDF)
32. Angelo Bruno Business Library (PDF)
33. McLure Library (PDF)
34. Rodgers Library (PDF)
35. Hoole Library (PDF)
36. Mathematics Technology Learning Center (PDF)
37. Writing Center (PDF)
38. Writing Center Resources (PDF)
39. Writing Center Summary Data (PDF)
40. Writing Center Workshop and Promotional Activity 2013–14 (PDF)
41. Office of Disability Services (PDF)
42. Accommodation Requests (PDF)
43. Testing Summary Evening (PDF)
44. The University of Alabama Graduate School (PDF)
45. Graduate Student Services (PDF)
46. Guide to Preparing Theses and Dissertations (PDF)
47. Electronic Theses & Dissertations (PDF)
48. Graduate Assistant Guide (PDF)
49. Graduate Parent Support (PDF)
50. Tide Together Program (PDF)
51. Tide Together Reports 2010–13 (PDF)
52. Tide Together Summary 2011–13 (PDF)
53. Women in STEM (PDF)
54. WiSE Flyer 2013 (PDF)
55. GTA Workshop Videos (PDF)
56. Honors College Courses (PDF)
57. Honors Data (PDF)
58. Faculty Technology Showcase (PDF)
59. Center of Instructional Technology Service Catalog (PDF)
60. Blackboard Workshop Registration (PDF)
61. Blackboard Tutorials (PDF)
62. Blackboard Student Resources (PDF)
63. Multimedia Services (PDF)
64. IT Service Desk (PDF)
65. Testing Services (PDF)
66. Testing Services Summary Assessment Report (PDF)
67. Standardized Test Counts (PDF)
68. Athletic Student Services (PDF)
69. Athletics Annual Report 2011–2012 (PDF)
70. Athletics Annual Report 2012–2013 (PDF)
71. Academic Success Student Athletes (PDF)
72. School of Law (PDF)
73. Orientation Schedule (PDF)
74. Transfer Student Orientation Schedule (PDF)
75. School of Law Counseling Services (PDF)
76. Bounds Law Library (PDF)
77. ATTICUS Online Library Catalog (PDF)
78. School of Law Career Services (PDF)
79. Events Calendar (PDF)
80. School of Law Document Center (PDF)

81. School of Law Quick Facts (PDF)