SELF-STUDY REPORT
MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Founded in 1844 in New York’s capital as the state’s first public postsecondary institution (a state teachers’ college), the University at Albany is one of the four primary research centers in the 64-campus State University of New York system. Over its 175-year history, UAlbany has developed a dynamic, forward-looking academic portfolio, as demonstrated by significant recent additions, including a new College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the first-in-the-nation College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity.

These two new colleges extend to and complement the robust and rigorous academic programs spread across seven other degree-granting schools and colleges, including the College of Arts and Sciences, the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy; and schools of Business, Criminal Justice, Education, Public Health, and Social Welfare.

UAlbany has long been committed to providing access to a broad and diverse set of students, supporting their academic progression, and advancing their upward mobility. Today, we serve large numbers of first-generation college students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds. We have been recognized nationally as a leader in contributing to the upward social mobility of our students and graduates. As an academic community, we continue to learn from each other, to build an inclusive environment, and to provide the appropriate supports to ensure the success of all of our students.

We embrace SUNY’s mission to provide “educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access.” Our students have come from a diverse array of backgrounds, educational experiences, and geographic locations. As the population of New York has evolved, so too has the composition of our student body – now positioning us to reach our aspirational vision: to be the nation’s leading diverse public research university – providing leaders, knowledge, and innovations to create a better world.

STANDARD I - MISSION AND GOALS

The University’s current mission statement was drafted in 2018 as part of the last strategic planning process. The title of the plan, Authoring Our Success, is drawn from the mission statement, which emphasizes UAlbany’s commitment to empower our students, faculty, and staff to be the authors of their (and the institution’s) success. This mission undergirds a set of core priorities laid out in the strategic plan: Student Success, Research Excellence, Diversity and Inclusion, Internationalization, and Engagement and Service.

As evidenced throughout this self-study document, our new strategic plan guides all that we do from resource allocation to institutional planning. The strategic plan website tracks progress on key metrics and makes them available to the University community. The President discusses the priorities and progress on them in institutional forums, such as the President’s Council and his bi-annual address to the University community hosted by the Faculty Senate. Indeed, as intended, it is a guiding document that has helped immeasurably to anchor UAlbany to the Middle States standards of accreditation.

STANDARD II - ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

The University at Albany values and is committed to fostering a transparent, ethical, and inclusive organization that honors, supports, and advances academic and intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and intellectual
property rights, and supports. As we document in the self-study, we as a University safeguard those freedoms and foster such environments through the creation and use of mechanisms that enable stakeholder engagement in policy creation as well as a robust adherence to SUNY and University policies – reinforced by internal communications practices that educate the community about the centrality of these freedoms to the institution’s mission as a public institution of higher education.

Not only is diversity and inclusion one of the five pillars of our strategic plan, the composition of our student body very much reflects the changing ethnic and socio-economic demographics of New York State. Thirty-six percent of the undergraduate student population now identifies as a member of an underrepresented minority group; up significantly from 20% during our last MSCHE self-study review. Moreover, our students are increasingly facing challenges associated with mental health, food insecurity, and homelessness. As this evolution has occurred, it has been critical for the University to expand its support structure to ensure an inclusive environment for all students. While the EOP program continues to provide superb supports for our most academic and economically challenged students, the University has expanded supports and events for all students through such offices as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Intercultural Student Engagement, Equity and Compliance, and the Advocacy Center for Sexual Violence.

Building on the well-documented procedures around our academic grievance process for students across our schools and colleges, one area identified for improvement is the need for the University to implement a better process to ensure that records are maintained at departmental and school/college levels which document the number, nature, and resolution of academic grievances filed by undergraduate and graduate students, and that such information is filed with and maintained by the offices of Undergraduate and Graduate Education, as appropriate.

**STANDARD III - DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

As stated in UAlbany’s strategic plan, student success is at the center of all that we do. To make good on this commitment, the University provides high quality and coherent learning experiences that provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful beyond the completion of their academic program. Undergraduate students can pursue 52 academic majors and/or 10 pre-professional programs. All undergraduates are also required to complete at least one of our 76 minors, which complement and extend the learning in their major. At the graduate level, we offer 42 doctoral degrees, 85 master’s degrees, and 44 graduate certificates. All academic programs fall under the oversight of the faculty, University governance, the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies, the Graduate School, the State University of New York system administration and the New York State Education Department.

As part of our commitment to continuous curriculum improvement, the University transitioned to a new General Education program in 2017-2018. Our General Education Program and Institutional Learning Goals were designed to create a foundation that prepares students for continued work in their chosen major and minor fields and gives them the intellectual habits that will enable them to become lifelong learners. As part of this redesign, all first-year students are required to participate in one of our first-year programs, which includes the first-year seminar, the Writing and Critical Inquiry Program, Honors College, the Living-Learning Communities, and Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).

A key expansion of our academic programs include the addition of two new colleges since 2014. The College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity (CEHC) and the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) have expanded our academic
offerings in strategic ways that better enable the University to address key challenges in the 21st century. CEHC is the first such college of its type in the country and continues to be a strength in both attracting students and enabling cutting-edge research.

**STANDARD IV - SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

To meet our commitment to student success, the University has implemented and is expanding support systems both in and out of the classroom – which have evolved to meet the changing needs of our students.

As a Research I institution we take great pride in the integration of research to support the learning experiences of all students. Graduate students play an integral role in the life of the institution, from supporting research labs to serving as a bridge between research and teaching through the instruction of courses. To further support the graduate assistants, the University recently increased the annual stipend for all University supported GAs. In addition, the University recently launched the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Engagement, which supports the integration of research into the undergraduate learning experience.

Ultimately, the central measures of student success are retention and graduation rates. As detailed in Chapter 3, these metrics show a decline for UAlbany in recent years. To address this decline, which we take very seriously, the University has developed a sustainable, integrated, campuswide Strategic Enrollment Management Plan that targets recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation rates. Recognizing the opportunity to improve our success in this area, we are in the midst of evaluating and redesigning our student support system to enhance the quality of the learning environment, contribute to the educational experience, and further foster student success.

UAlbany provides structured orientation, advisement, and counseling programs in support of student success, along with many first-year experiences designed to support students with varying levels of preparedness, and international students participate in a weeklong orientation program. The University has also made recent investments in a range of services including a new four-year advisement model; health and wellness services, including new facilities to house them; and innovative academic Success Centers. Assessment of the effectiveness of programs supporting the student experience takes place on a regular basis and are regularly examined, and will help us modify our approaches going forward, as warranted.

**STANDARD V - EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT**

The University at Albany’s institutional and programmatic learning goals directly support its mission to serve as an engine of opportunity for our students by enabling them to pursue possibilities and create connections across the entire curriculum. We believe, and demonstrate, that the University at Albany is in the forefront nationally in terms of assessing student learning. Though, we believe that one of the best assessments is the national recognition for the upward socioeconomic mobility of our graduates by virtue of their UAlbany pedigree.

Building on University assessment frameworks dating back to 1968, the University has a well-established and supportive assessment culture. The current system of assessment includes four key areas: General Education Assessments; Annual Student Learning Outcomes Reports; Program Self Study Report and Site visit (including internal and external evaluators); and Institutional Analysis Activities. Across these assessment formats and under the guidance of our Council for Academic Assessment, faculty and staff evaluate curricular goals, program intent and quality, assessment systems, student achievement, and evidence of improvement/change.
It is critical that as part of our commitment to continuous learning, we ensure the assessments are fed back into the system to foster improvement. This is accomplished through a variety of means including ongoing faculty review and revision of academic programs to support student learning outcomes, providing professional development opportunity through the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership (ITLAL) for the enhancement of teaching and learning; and improving student support services through data retrieved from our new predictive analytics tools. To support the continuous improvement of our assessment work, the self-study recommends increasing support for the many assessment practices that occur on campus as well as provide additional professional learning opportunities to further raise awareness of and effective engagement with our assessment work.

STANDARD VI - PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The financial vitality of UAlbany remains at the forefront of the work of the institution as we work to deal with the changing environment and evolving student trends. As demonstrated in the pages that follow, our planning processes, resources, and administrative structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill our mission and goals.

Overall, the financial health of UAlbany can be classified as fair. We effectively manage revenue and expenditures, but as a largely enrollment-driven institution, we must be ever mindful of our recruitment and retention efforts. This work is further compounded by unfunded mandates such as state-negotiated faculty and staff salary increases as part of the union contract, which are not accompanied by additional state support. We project that our new Strategic Enrollment Management Plan will increase enrollments and therefore stabilize the University’s revenues. Over the last two years, the university has undertaken reorganization of its financial structures, establishing new financial controls, centralizing decision making and resource allocation (e.g., Workforce Planning Committee), and aligning decision making with the strategic plan priorities (e.g., strategic plan accelerators; strategic allocation of resources – StAR – grants).

In order to strengthen and ensure the technological viability and financial health of the institution, the self-study suggests the development of a multi-year strategic technology plan, increasing the annual financial surplus to 5% of state tax support; and strengthening student consultation in the process of developing student fee budgets.

STANDARD VII - GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ADMINISTRATION

The University at Albany has a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure with roles, responsibilities, and accountability that support decision making. Our system of governance, leadership and administration is tiered, involving the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees, SUNY System Administration, our local University Council, and our campus administration and faculty governance body. New York State statute and the Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees drive this structure. Ultimately, as described in Chapter 5, our faculty are responsible for the conduct of the University's instruction, research, and service programs.

The UAlbany community takes shared governance seriously, and trust that the evidence supplied in this chapter corroborate this assertion. The University Council, which is appointed by the Governor, serves as an advisory board to the President on such matters as reviewing major planning documents, overseeing facilities, governing the conduct and behavior of students, and reviewing budgetary requests.
The University Senate is the principal academic authority and has a consultative role in all issues that affect the faculty and students of the institution. The Student Association is an elected group of students that operate as a not-for-profit corporation funded through the student activity fee, who provide oversight of and support to serve students and enhance student life on campus. The Graduate Student Association is the governance body for all graduate students, engaging in advocacy, professional development, and providing resources for all graduate students at the University.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, the University Senate’s bylaws mandate biennial review of the state of shared governance each year. In 2016 and 2018, a joint effort of the faculty governance and administration resulted in a survey of all faculty and staff as well as a sample of students, and the findings were summarized and distributed to the campus community. Chapter 5 describes the processes that we have instituted since our last self-study to improve our shared governance and administrative effectiveness. •
CHAPTER 1
CREATING A NEW VISION FOR THE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY: STABILITY AND STRATEGY

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Located in New York's capital city, the University at Albany is the only public research university in the Capital Region, offering nearly 18,000 students the expansive opportunities of a comprehensive research university in an environment designed to foster individual success.

Founded in 1844 as New York's first public postsecondary institution (a state teachers' college), over the past 175 years the University at Albany has grown to a mid-size institution that is one of the most diverse research universities in the country. One of the four primary research centers in the 64-campus State University of New York system, UAlbany has developed a dynamic, forward-looking academic portfolio, as demonstrated by significant recent additions, including a new College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the first-in-the-nation College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity.

These two new colleges extend to and complement the robust and rigorous academic programs spread across seven other degree-granting schools and colleges, including the College of Arts and Sciences, the Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy; and schools of Business, Criminal Justice, Education, Public Health, and Social Welfare.

Harkening back to our early history, UAlbany has long been committed to providing access to a broad and diverse set of students, supporting their academic progression, and advancing their upward mobility. Today, we continue to serve large numbers of first-generation college students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds. As an academic community, we continue to learn from each other, to build an inclusive environment, and to provide the appropriate supports to ensure the success of all of our students.

We embrace SUNY's mission to provide “educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access.” Our students have come from a diverse array of backgrounds, educational experiences, and geographic locations. As the population of New York has evolved, so too has the composition of our student body – now positioning us to be a leader in fostering multi-cultural learning experiences that prepare an educated and diverse population and workforce.

The University at Albany’s commitment to diversity is woven through our Strategic Plan as a core priority, an institutional value, and a central aspect of the University’s mission. It is also the foundation of our vision, which is “to be the nation’s leading diverse public research university – providing leaders, knowledge, and innovations to create a better world.” UAlbany’s new branding campaign, “Unleash Greatness” also recognizes that the potential for greatness is embedded deeply within everyone and can be realized, given the right nurturing environment. Our philosophy is based on the belief that UAlbany’s diversity is inseparable from its greatness. We recognize that excellence and innovations thrive when we are inclusive, collaborative, respectful, and welcoming to all.

Part of our focus as an institution is to enhance students’ skills, talents, and knowledge so that they may be prepared to think and act in ways that would make them engaged citizens moving society forward into the next century. Without the knowledge gained from working alongside others who can provide a comparative perspective on the world’s political, social, cultural, linguistic, and economic profiles, our students’ understanding of the world would be quite limited. Indeed, it is critical for our students to learn and work in an environment
that fosters notions of diversity and inclusion in order to carry out our mission and vision for the training of future leaders.

That is why we are so proud of our success as an engine of social mobility within New York State and beyond. UAlbany has been recognized by the Washington Monthly and U.S. News and World Report as one of the nation’s leading higher education institutions in terms of advancing our students’ social mobility. The University also ranked in the top 30 on CollegeNET’s 2019 Social Mobility Index, a ranking methodology that measures how well a college or university educates economically disadvantaged students (at an affordable tuition) and graduates them into good paying jobs.

To prepare for future success in a wide range of fields, UAlbany students choose from over 150 undergraduate programs and more than 125 graduate programs. The University has been in the midst of a multiyear transition of its undergraduate experience. In 2017-2018, the University finalized the adoption of institutional learning objectives, which cut across the general education and major requirements. We designed our current curriculum to enable student mastery in four institutional learning competencies (which we refer to as general education academic competencies): Advanced Writing, Oral Discourse, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking. In addition, we are currently working toward implementation of a new First-Year Experience (FYE) program tailored to meet the academic needs of different student groups.

In every area of study, students are instructed by faculty who are world-class scholars and teachers – many actively engaged in life-enhancing research that contributes profoundly to the public good. As mentors, they provide numerous experiential learning opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, inspiring students to advance their skills and aspirations.

Our programs operate across three primary locations: the Uptown Campus, the University’s main campus, at 1400 Washington Avenue in Albany; the Downtown Campus, at 135 Western Avenue in Albany; and the Health Sciences Campus, a former pharmaceutical complex purchased in 1996, at One University Place in Rensselaer. While geographically distributed, these locations serve and operate as components of a single educational institution, with students, faculty, and staff moving seamlessly between the campuses throughout the day.

Following a robust and participative process, as discussed in Chapter 2, the University launched a new, visionary strategic plan during 2018. Our charge was simple: work collaboratively to lead this effort with an unwavering emphasis on student success. This led to the development by the campus community of our five core priorities and the creation of a plan to achieve this imperative. Indeed, the centrality of the University’s new strategic plan is evident in its prominent position throughout the self-study.

Our new mission statement and strategic plan chart our path forward for the next five years, and we are enthusiastic about the timing of the Middle States self-study process as a helpful engagement to keep us focused on our key priorities.

COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

UAlbany boasts a longstanding commitment to the use of data and assessment to inform decision making. This includes robust academic assessment, from measuring student learning outcomes to comprehensive program reviews. Throughout the year, there are multiple opportunities to gather data from students, through the Student Opinion Survey (administered across SUNY campuses), as well as through our administrative assessment processes to inform decision making campuswide.

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Our Downtown and Health Sciences campuses are registered with MSCHE as separate instructional locations due to a reporting artifact of history, but for all intents and purposes, each is fully controlled by the same administrative organization and reporting structure as that of our Uptown Campus operations.
We continue to add new mechanisms for utilizing data to improve our practice. The introduction of EAB’s Student Success Collaborative has helped us improve our advising and student success efforts by introducing predictive analytics to campus. SLATE, a new admissions customer relations management (CRM) software, enables faculty and academic leaders to engage with and track the application and admission process for undergraduate and graduate students. Our ever-evolving Business Intelligence (BI) platform provides decision makers with data about a range of metrics, from enrollments to personnel. Additionally, annual departmental profiles provide academic units and senior leaders with snapshots of the overall health of academic departments.

In 2017, after two years of preparation and broad-based consultation across campus, the University added a formal process for administrative assessment to its assessment repertoire. Each administrative unit (over 100) has since completed a matrix that identifies its mission and vision as well as a series of measurable goals. An Administrative Assessment Committee reviews the units’ submissions and provides feedback to each unit head.

We also are conducting a separate administrative program review process under this new initiative. Each vice president and dean’s office now completes a thorough, data-driven self-study, which is then submitted to an Administrative Assessment Committee designated by the President for review and feedback. We are phasing in these administrative self-studies over the next five years across all schools, colleges, and divisions. We will discuss this in detail in this self-study document.

As discussed throughout this document, the process of the self-study served as its own opportunity for assessment and improvement. Not surprisingly, the various work groups identified a number of areas where improvements could be made. Some of these issues, such as the size of doctoral stipends, have been addressed during this process. Others evolved into proposals for future action, as noted within this report.

**INTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE SELF-STUDY**

The timing of the Middle States review is optimal, as we have begun implementing our new strategic plan and the self-study process provided an opportunity for both retrospection and the forward thinking necessary to advance our five core priorities. Our intended outcomes for the self-study process include the following:

- Continued engagement of the institutional community, including both internal and external stakeholders, in a comprehensive and transparent self-appraisal process.
- Critical examination of past activities and how they inform our current reality, as well as shaping a future direction of the University based on the five core priorities of the strategic plan.
- Focus on continuous improvement in the attainment of our institutional mission, vision, and institutional priorities.
- Demonstrating how the UAlbany meets Middle States Standards for Accreditation, Requirements of Affiliation, and Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE AND WORK GROUPS**

The self-study process is guided by a steering committee and work groups comprised of faculty, students, staff, and administrative leaders. We carefully populated the working groups to ensure representation of diverse backgrounds, administrative duties, length of service at UAlbany and disciplinary perspectives. Each work group includes faculty, students, and staff.
Appendix 1.1 lists the individuals involved in the creation of the self-study document.

The self-study effort was led by Steering Committee co-chairs Dr. Jeanette Altarriba, Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Psychology, and Collins Fellow; and Dr. Jason Lane, Interim Dean of the School of Education, Professor of Educational Policy & Leadership, and Executive Director of SUNY’s SAIL Institute for Academic & Innovative Leadership. Dr. Bruce Szelest, Chief of Staff, and Mr. Jack Mahoney, Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness also have played instrumental roles in supporting the Committee’s work.

The Steering Committee is comprised of the four individuals listed above, and the two co-leaders and staff member for each work group.

The seven work groups mirror the structure of the seven Middle States standards. The Steering Committee co-chairs (Drs. Altarriba and Lane) selected the working group co-leaders in consultation with the President and Provost, based on the individuals’ relevant experience in their work group’s area of focus. The President then invited the work group co-leaders to serve in this role.

President Havidán Rodríguez invited University faculty and staff to volunteer for the work group of their choice, and Drs. Altarriba and Lane, with input from the work group co-leaders, constructed the membership of each from those who volunteered or who were nominated based on their academic or professional expertise. In addition, each work group contains a designee from the University Senate governance body for our teaching and professional faculty. We asked undergraduate and graduate student governance bodies to designate students to each work group. Professional staff familiar with relevant areas also supported each work group. In addition, we assigned a graduate assistant to each work group to assist with staffing responsibilities.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE SELF-STUDY DOCUMENT**

The work groups created each chapter of the report by critically examining evidentiary material to determine the extent to which the University meets the standards of accreditation and relevant requirements of affiliation. President Rodríguez also charged each work group with analyzing the University’s assessment practices across its operations and delivery of academic programs and to make necessary proposals for improvement.

All work group proposals for improvement that appear in the self-study are evidence-based, with notable examples provided, as appropriate, and supported by documents in an evidence inventory. Appendices and the document inventory provide the body of evidence behind the analyses provided.
CHAPTER 2
ADVANCING UALBANY’S MISSION

STANDARD I - MISSION AND GOALS

UALbany has a clearly defined mission and goals that meet the Middle States criterion measures.

As part of the development of its 2018 strategic plan, the University at Albany redrafted its mission, vision, and values statements, as follows:

MISSION

The University at Albany is an engine of opportunity. Fueled by our unique mix of academic excellence, internationally recognized research, and world-class faculty, we relentlessly pursue possibilities, create connections, and open opportunities – locally and globally – with a single-minded purpose: To empower our students, faculty, and campus communities to author their own success. This is the University at Albany.

This mission statement defines UAlbany’s purpose within the context of higher education, its students, and its unique assets and opportunities. By leading with the assertion that UAlbany is an engine of opportunity, the mission prioritizes the University’s commitment to access, excellence and success.

GOALS

The University’s goals are organized under five core strategic priorities:

• STUDENT SUCCESS is at the center of all we do.
• RESEARCH drives our EXCELLENCE.
• DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION are intrinsic to our success.
• INTERNATIONALIZATION increases our visibility and impact across the globe.
• ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE foster partnerships with reciprocal benefits.

These Core Priorities are clearly linked to the University’s mission and, through the goal statements under each priority, describe how the institution fulfills its mission.

In addition, as part of the Strategic Plan, the University developed new vision and values statements:

VISION

To be the leading diverse public research university – providing leaders, knowledge, and innovations to create a better world.

VALUES

To promote access, integrity, inclusive excellence, and the common good.

UALbany’s mission and goals were developed through a robust collaborative and participatory process.

The University’s current mission and goals were developed as part of the 2018-23 strategic plan, launched in April 2018. The current planning cycle began in 2016, in response to the 2010 plan’s impending expiration and the anticipation of the next MSCHE accreditation process.

In January 2016, University leaders, under then-President Robert Jones, began laying the groundwork for strategic planning. During this time, we retained a consultant and senior staff began initial discussions. The process began in earnest in June 2016, when our external consultant presented to senior leaders a
suggested Design Thinking approach to strategic planning. However, the timeline originally envisioned was abruptly short-circuited when, on July 19, 2016, President Jones announced that he had accepted the chancellorship of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

In the following weeks, SUNY appointed then-UAlbany Provost James Stellar to serve as Interim President. With the campus leadership team’s consensus, Stellar determined that the planning process would continue, arguing that this continuity would serve the interests of both the campus community and the presidential search process.

In August, the newly convened Strategic Plan Steering Committee proceeded with the Design Thinking approach laid out by the consultant.

Interim President Stellar used the occasion of the November 2016 Fall Faculty Address to articulate to the community the need to move forward on the creation of the plan.

During the 2016-17 academic year, the Strategic Plan Committee led the process, which included the creation of numerous “Futuring Papers,” or exploratory dives that detailed the current state of affairs on cross-cutting organizational issues such as graduate education, research, community engagement, and diversity and inclusion.

The community also engaged in a “Concert of Ideas” and subsequent ideation sessions that generated dozens of specific initiatives tied to institutional priorities. These activities informed the drafting of a conceptual framework document, which reflected foundational and near-term needs that would support UAlbany’s next administration in the development of a full-fledged strategic plan.

Three major imperatives form the foundation of this conceptual framework: strategic enrollment; excellence in research, scholarship and creative activities; and developing a culture of excellence among faculty and staff.

During the Spring 2017 semester, this framework document was presented on multiple occasions to campus stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and governance groups. At Interim President Stellar’s Spring Faculty Address in April 2017, the strategic plan co-chairs presented the framework and addressed questions from the community. In May 2017, the University Council, while pleased with the progress made, asked that University leadership pause on adoption of a planning framework until the new president took office, as the presidential search process was nearing its final phase.

In June 2017, the SUNY Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Havidán Rodríguez as UAlbany’s 20th president. Upon his arrival in September 2017, one of President Rodriguez’s first priorities was to bring the strategic planning process to the forefront, and he directed senior leadership to seize the momentum that had been built around defining the University’s mission and vision. The president also recognized an opportunity for the university to align two other major processes alongside the development and implementation of a strategic plan: a comprehensive fundraising campaign and a branding initiative.

To survey the landscape of the University’s opportunities and challenges, President Rodriguez embarked on a Listening and Learning tour – meetings with schools, colleges, administrative divisions, and governance groups. This tour helped the President assess the priorities articulated in the 2017 strategic framework and to develop an advanced understanding of institutional priorities and values.

In October 2017, he presented five core priorities to senior staff, along with a detailed charge to move forward on strategic planning, branding, and the fundraising campaign using an integrated and aligned approach.

These priorities were originally articulated as: Student Success, Research Excellence, Diversity and Inclusion, Globalization, and Public Engagement and Community Service.
As part of the President’s commitment to community engagement in strategic planning, he expanded the steering committee from 30 to 110 members to create a broader representation of the multidimensional diversity of the UAlbany community. The newly expanded Strategic Planning Committee met on November 3, 2017, and received a charge from President Rodríguez to establish an executive committee led by five work groups, each tasked with developing goals and a proposed work plan for each Core Priority.

These detailed work plans eventually evolved into a draft strategic plan presented to the Executive Committee with a short list of goals under each priority. The SPC co-chairs, then-Provost James Stellar and VP for Student Affairs Michael Christakis, presented the draft plan to the campus community through 30-plus “Road Show” sessions.

“ROAD SHOW” PRESENTATIONS

The road shows, which were held multiple times across the three campuses, were an opportunity for internal and external members of the UAlbany community to provide their feedback on the draft plan. These sessions created opportunities for lively and open debate about the details of the draft plan, resulting in a large volume of comments collected both in person and on a dedicated web page built to accommodate broad participation. One aspect of gathering feedback was use of real-time polling via the Poll Everywhere platform to gather feedback on the priorities, goals, and mission and vision statements. We catalogued, analyzed, and, in some cases, incorporated these comments into the next draft of the plan.

As an example, there were multiple requests to change the name of the “Globalization” core priority to “Internationalization,” which community members felt was an important distinction that better captured the issues in the context of higher education and UAlbany.

Another instance where the Road Show feedback had a significant impact on the plan was the reimagining of the mission and vision statements, which underwent several iterations based on input from the public sessions. The final versions of these statements reflect the University community’s passion for the institution – both in terms of where we are today and where we wish to be in the future.

Underscoring the University’s commitment to transparency and collaboration, in March 2018, the co-chairs presented the final draft strategic plan at a series of campus Round Tables designed to inspire the campus community to begin envisioning how each individual and unit would contribute to the realization of UAlbany’s new mission and goals.

After a preliminary review by University leadership and governance groups including the University Council, we launched the final plan, Authoring Our Success, at the Spring Faculty Address on April 2, 2018. The title of the plan is testament to the centrality of the University’s mission to our goals, as it is the cornerstone of the mission statement itself.

In all, we estimate that at least 1,000 campus stakeholders participated directly in the creation of the strategic plan. The emphasis on community engagement in the process starts from the top: President Rodríguez’s message from the beginning has been that “this is our university, and it is OUR plan.”

On a parallel track, the University community was establishing a structure to prepare for accreditation, including development of updated departmental profiles, academic program review, and administrative unit assessments.

UAlbany’s mission and goals address and fully integrate both internal and external contexts
We developed UAlbany’s mission and goals with a clear understanding of the critical nature of the University’s role, mandates, and commitments from both internal and external contexts. The primary internal context is our evolution within the University’s past development of mission and goals in conjunction with the robust assessment of current strengths, opportunities, and needs of the campus community. The overarching external context is the larger purpose of higher education: creating better lives, better communities, and a better society.

We were also mindful of the need to align our mission and goals with the State University of New York (SUNY) mission, which states that “educational services and activities should be offered through a geographically distributed comprehensive system of diverse campuses which shall have differentiated and designed missions designed to provide a comprehensive program of higher education, to meet the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students, and to realize local, regional and state goals.” (Section 351 of NYS Education Law)

In the strategic planning process, committee members and campus stakeholders prioritized the alignment of the University’s goals with SUNY’s mission. This focus enabled the University to designate its core priorities in its strategic plan.

The University at Albany exemplifies SUNY’s commitment to broad access by providing an excellent education to a diverse and inclusive community of students. With the University’s diverse student body, research capabilities, and geographic advantage, the University is fully aligned with SUNY’s mission by offering a “differentiated and designed” approach to meet the needs of New York State.

In addition, each of our goals (which we identify as “Core Priorities”) can be seen through both an internal lens in terms of its immediate impact on our campus, and through the external focus of the broader, long-term effects radiating out to our city, region, state, nation, and beyond.

For example, while our goals around Student Success are clearly grounded in academic programs and the overall student experience, implicit in this priority is a global awareness of the ways in which these programs and experiences will support our students to graduate and go on to create lives of meaning and accomplishment.

Conversely, while our Internationalization goals might at first blush appear externally focused, they also have a clear internal perspective as we have adopted a comprehensive internationalization approach in terms of programmatic impact and exposing students on our campuses to international perspectives and culture through daily interactions.

UAlbany’s mission and goals were approved and supported by governance bodies and a wide range of campus stakeholders

As discussed in detail above, governance bodies and other stakeholders vetted the University’s mission and goals as part of the University’s highly collaborative strategic planning process. This review process included student and faculty governance, the University Council, and boards of directors of the University at Albany Foundation, and Alumni Association.

UAlbany’s mission and goals have been broadly embraced as the guideposts for all activities, decision-making and policies

The strategic plan and its mission and goals have been “baked in” to every major activity, process, and policy emanating from the University. This is accomplished by cross walking and aligning initiatives with strategic plan core priorities and goals, as well as evaluating these activities in terms of their ability to help the University make progress against these goals. Just as past processes aligned to strategic plans/goals (e.g., the compact planning process and NYSUNY2020) we continue this alignment today under the current mission and goals through several processes and committee structures.
Some key examples of this integration include:

- First-year Strategic Plan Accelerators
- The Strategic Allocation of Resources (StAR) Initiative
- The work of the Workforce Planning Committee
- School/College/Division Strategic Alignment Plans

**UAlbany’s mission and goals provide strong support for scholarly inquiry and creative activity**

Not only does the University’s mission statement cite “internationally recognized research” as fueling our engine of opportunity; our Core Priority of Research Excellence sets forth scholarship and creative pursuits as critical to our success. This support is amplified through each of the other four core priorities, the goals of which also highlight the importance of research, scholarship, and creative activities.

**UAlbany’s mission and goals are continuously publicized and are widely known by stakeholders**

From the kickoff of the 2016 strategic-planning process through current implementation efforts, University leaders have consistently updated the community through campuswide emails, meetings, and presentations to a range of stakeholders. Since January 2018, the President and strategic plan co-chairs have issued more than a dozen campuswide communications updating the community about the strategic planning process, launch, and implementation.

The President also has leveraged his Spring and Fall University Addresses, President’s Council meetings, and other stakeholder meetings and gatherings to provide ongoing reports on the progress of the plan and the initiatives the University has created to meet its goals. In addition, the Office of Communications and Marketing now organizes its roundup of UAlbany news coverage within the University’s five core priorities.

Thanks to this continuous communication at all levels, UAlbany’s mission, vision and goals are now a constant refrain and a strong facet of every aspect of the University’s work. From the stories we tell through our news channels to resource allocation, our priorities, and aspirations are integral to all that we do.

**UAlbany’s mission and goals have been periodically evaluated and revised, in accordance with accreditation and strategic planning cycles**

The University has historically revisited its mission and goals in conjunction with accreditation and strategic planning cycles, a process that took place in 2010 and again in 2016-18. During the most recent cycle, the drafting of mission, vision, values, and core priority/goal statements was a major component of community conversations about the strategic plan.

**UAlbany’s goals are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with our mission**

Our vision and our values are inspired by our mission; taken together, these inform the priorities set out in the strategic plan. Each of the five areas identified as priorities have three additional goals alongside a sample of success metrics. These priorities capitalize on the University’s unique strengths in academic excellence, internationally recognized research, and world-class faculty. The strategic plan, is in itself a realization of our mission’s essence: “to empower our students, faculty and campus communities to author their own success.”

**STUDENT SUCCESS**

In a fast-changing physical and technical landscape, UAlbany is focused on furthering the engagement and development of our students,
in and out of the classroom. Engaged students achieve higher levels of success in personal and academic arenas, creating a foundation for lifelong success in their future careers and as engaged citizens. Student levels of participation and satisfaction with our programs and services are key indicators of our ability to continue to engage them on campus, additionally affecting retention, graduation rates and time to degree. Even after graduation, our levels of alumni engagement, satisfaction and success over time are indicators of the connection and lifelong value offered by our institution.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

As a Research I institution, our research, scholarship and creative activities are central to our mission, goals, and to our overall excellence. Our faculty are leaders in their respective fields, advancing knowledge and inquiry. In turn, this expertise is infused throughout our academic offerings to provide students with a high quality and cutting-edge academic experience in both curricular and co-curricular engagements. UAlbany strives to be an institution where world-class research, scholarship and artistic endeavors are nurtured and flourish; where these activities are supported by the University and promoted in ways that enable it to grow, to attract external funding and recognition, and to engage students at all levels.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The University draws people together across every identity imaginable. It is not unique for universities to be a microcosm of the world, but UAlbany has a special awareness of how our diversity of people and ideas are intrinsic to our success. Excellence derives from a recognition that our identities influence our experiences, inform our research, and provide a platform to challenge the limits of the human condition. The diversity of our students, faculty, and staff informs class discussions, leads research initiatives and affects governance and campus climate. This diversity, along with a climate of inclusion and connectedness, will propel UAlbany toward our vision to be the nation’s leading diverse public research university.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

UAlbany focuses on increasing the visibility and impact of our institution around the world. We collaborate with international institutions of higher education on programs, research, and scholarship. UAlbany’s students participate in education abroad, and faculty are encouraged to cultivate international research collaborations. UAlbany’s faculty build our courses, identify and support research, and provide scholarship opportunities that cross and unite these borders to create a rich soil for the cultivation of a truly global dialogue.

ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

The partnerships we foster have reciprocal benefits that reverberate through the communities to which we are connected. As an anchor institution, UAlbany is an integral regional, national, and international partner. Our commitment to public engagement, community volunteerism, and service learning are critical to our mission as a public institution and we seek to integrate our communities into the life of the University.

UAlbany’s Mission and Priorities are Consistent and Appropriate

Each of the five priorities outlined in the strategic plan are fundamentally inspired by and cyclically rooted to the University’s mission. As described earlier, at every stage students, faculty, and staff were engaged in the creation and final language of our priorities and each subsequent goal. The University’s mission and goals not only are consistent and appropriate; our University community has written the next five years of its future into existence through the authoring of
these priorities as well as the specific delineation of each goal.

Within the design of each goal lies the seeds for success, to be cultivated by the very people who seek to reap the benefits. In this way, our priorities ensure the shared responsibility of the pursuit of academic excellence. Aligning these priorities demonstrates an understanding that the University is inextricably linked to our surrounding communities as we seek to drive innovation, connection, and opportunity.

**UAlbany’s goals focus on student learning and are grounded in our commitment to institutional improvement**

**COMMITMENT TO STUDENT LEARNING**

**Student Success.** This is at the center of the University’s mission and reflects a clear commitment by the University to ensure that every student is empowered to succeed. Every effort is made to provide students with the academic program, tools, support systems, and environment they need to thrive and succeed.

**Research Excellence.** As an R1 university, great value is given to all research including, in particular, research carried out by students (graduate and undergraduate). The University strives to provide research opportunities through mentorship from our high-quality faculty, internships (paid or for credit), fieldwork, or international visits. Consistent with this commitment, the University has established the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Engagement (CURCE) to encourage, facilitate, and celebrate undergraduate research.

**Diversity and Inclusion.** The University at Albany has worked hard to embrace diversity in all of its dimensions, as it is essential to a high-quality education. Increasingly, the country and indeed the world, has changed in ways that underscore the prevalence of multiculturalism, multilingualism, and the idea that understanding and appreciating cultures and worldviews enriches a student’s educational experience. Lessons learned in and outside of the classroom from students, faculty, and staff who represent different beliefs and can share different experiences provides for an intellectually rich environment.

By learning from diverse groups, through initiatives such as our Living-Learning Communities, students gain greater perspective in terms of how to work in teams, fostering mutual respect, and the ability to nurture the strengths learned via the experiences of other individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Indeed, a student’s competitiveness is enhanced both in their course of study as well as in the world, through their exposure to others of diverse backgrounds.

**Internationalization.** Through celebrating international students in the University community and through the provision of international experiences for students (e.g., field trips, placements to do research and/or courses abroad, etc.) the University strives to provide students with the knowledge and a familiarity of people, cultures, and traditions beyond our own. Such experiences are highly valued by the University and are directed toward preparing engaged global citizens.

**Engagement and Service.** The University prides itself on its local, regional, national, and international partnerships and facilitates student participation in these partnerships in order to create a sense of pride and citizenry in our students. Such experiences are a key component of the broader learning opportunities for our students.

**COMMITMENT TO INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT**

The pursuit of the overarching goal articulated in the strategic plan that “we will be the authors of UAlbany’s success” entails an explicit commitment to:
• Building faculty and staff development programs that will enable all faculty to more effectively foster student learning; conduct high-impact research, scholarship, and creative activities; and engage collaboratively as full partners in improving the University.

• Creating leadership development programs for faculty and staff to improve our capacity for strategic thinking, planning and management; data-driven decision making; inclusive excellence; and continuous improvement.

• Designing a culture of service excellence that supports faculty success, improves the student experience, increases employee satisfaction, fosters alumni loyalty, and elevates the reputation of the University at Albany.

Following the launch of the strategic plan, President Rodríguez issued a call to schools, colleges, and administrative divisions to develop specific action items. The explicit purpose of this initiative has been to help advance the mission, vision, and institutional goals/priorities of the University. More than 500 action items were submitted, which were reviewed by the Strategic Planning Advisory Council (SPAC). We have systematized the material in these into a common template for each of the five core priorities.

The summary file for these action plans identifies the divisions of the University with responsibility for advancing the institutional commitment, primary priorities/goals/objectives, planned activities and the desired outcomes, resources, and funding sources/amounts, success metrics, and anticipated timeframe. To begin the process of implementation, the SPAC recommended funding a select group of these initiatives as “First-Year Accelerators” tied to the five core priorities.

BENCHMARKING OUR PROGRESS

Strategic plan investments require assessment metrics that inform future funding and realignment decisions in a data-driven manner. Therefore, transparency in the creation and vetting of these metrics is critical to the legitimization of funding outcomes. Upon the strategic plan rollout, a Metrics Team (or “scorecard committee”) assembled from experts among the five core priority areas, met to select metrics appropriate to each area and their three identified goals. The committee created and recorded methodologies ensuring that consistent performance measurements taken over time would lead to a valid assessment of progress. The campus community was invited to review the proposed Strategic Plan baseline metrics, available on the University’s Strategic Plan website. With baseline metrics now in place, the next step for the University is to contemplate stretch goals for each and to regularly monitor progress.

UAlbany periodically assesses mission and goals to ensure relevance and achievability

As described above, the University revises and evaluates its mission and goals in conjunction with planning and accreditation cycles. Implicit in the end date of a strategic plan is the recognition of the need to evaluate progress, in conjunction with our institutional metrics, and to adapt as needed to changing internal and external conditions. Through this cyclical process, the University commits to a thorough review and assessment of mission and goals.

STANDARD II - ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

UAlbany is committed to academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and respect for intellectual property rights

The University at Albany values and is committed to academic and intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and intellectual property rights, and supports and safeguards those freedoms in a number of ways.

Academic and Intellectual Freedom. The University is bound by the policies of the State
University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees. These policies stipulate that faculty have “full freedom, within the law, of inquiry, teaching and research. This policy is restated in its entirety in both the University at Albany Academic Faculty Handbook 2019 and in Article 9 of the 2016-2022 negotiated contract between New York State and United University Professions. In addition, University at Albany Senate Bill No. 8586-17 (SUNYA Faculty Statement of Ethics) affirms the obligation of the faculty to “promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom” (Appendix 2.1).

**Freedom of Expression.** The University at Albany affirms its commitment to freedom of expression through a specific Freedom of Expression policy that states the University’s “commitment to encourage and preserve free speech, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly for the entire University community,” and through a “time, place and manner policy” that provides for “a designated public forum to third parties outside of the Campus Community for their exercise of free speech rights” (Appendix 2.2).

To assist faculty, staff and students in understanding the University’s commitment to free speech on campus and the use of the designated public forum, we disseminate a quick overview and assistance card publicly before and during free speech events on campus (Appendix 2.4). Since 2014, 13 groups (12 external entities) registered with the University to utilize the designated public forum (Appendix 2.3).

**Intellectual Property Rights.** As a research university, respect for intellectual property rights is of paramount importance for our scholarly mission. SUNY has adopted distinct policies on Patents and Inventions, Copyrights, and Computer Software for work completed under the auspices of the University at Albany using state or University funding or resources. These policies are accompanied by implementation procedures (Appendix 2.3.5). SUNY’s Patents and Inventions Policy Board defines SUNY’s intellectual property and commercialization policy objectives and to develop and interpret such policies in furtherance of SUNY’s strategic goals. In addition, since the majority of externally funded research activities at the University at Albany are administered through the Research Foundation for SUNY, as the University’s fiscal agent, for such externally funded work we adhere to all policies relevant to intellectual property rights that have been developed by the Research Foundation. These in turn adhere to and reflect SUNY intellectual property and copyright policies. These policies and procedures include the Intellectual Property Policy and the Policy Procedures for Distribution of Royalty Payments. The University’s Office for Innovation Development and Commercialization is responsible for adhering to these policies and procedures, with support from both the SUNY Office of General Counsel and Research Foundation Central Office of Innovation and Partnerships.

With respect to materials that faculty develop and create for instructional purposes, the University at Albany adheres to SUNY’s Copyright and Faculty Ownership of Intellectual Property policy (Appendix 2.3.6). This policy stipulates that the copyright for all materials produced for a class taught in a classroom or online rests with the faculty member.

**UAlbany’s campus climate fosters respect among its diverse students, faculty, and staff**

The University at Albany strives to maintain a respectful, safe, and nonthreatening environment for its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The University’s strategic plan, *Authoring Our Success* (2018-2023) reflects that Diversity and Inclusion is a University priority. Action items for achieving and maintaining diversity and inclusion on campus include recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, administrators, and students, fostering an inclusive campus climate, and cultivating an inclusive learning environment. The University has an exceptionally diverse undergraduate student population, with 36% identifying
as underrepresented minority (Appendix 2.5). This compares with 20% identifying as underrepresented minority at the time of the University’s 2010 Middle States self-study review.

President Michael Christakis and Chief Diversity Officer Tamra Minor followed up with student leaders to summarize the student concerns communicated over the semester break with a plan to address 17 areas so identified, each with

Table 2.1 UAlbany Undergraduate Student Diversity

As on many college campuses across the country, concerns about diversity and inclusion at UAlbany became a major theme during fall 2019 due to several incidents that were perceived to be racially or ethnically motivated. The University leadership responded to these concerns in a number of ways, ranging from high level messaging reinforcing the University’s leadership commitment to inclusiveness to supporting and participating in a student-led town hall that allowed students to share their concerns about the campus climate. Most of the University’s executive council and deans were present for the town hall. More tangibly, Student Affairs Vice one to three high level administrators assigned as point persons to report back at assigned dates with progress updates to both the students and to President Rodríguez (Appendix 2.5.5).

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is the seat of the University’s commitment to fostering a respectful and inclusive campus community environment. The office provides resources for faculty and professional staff concerning diversity initiatives, trainings, discrimination and harassment complaint processes, recruiting, and hiring procedures. To achieve this goal, ODI supports initiatives
and resources such as the Conversations for Change, Dialogue in Action and the Diversity Transformation Fund.

The Dialogue in Action (DIA) program utilizes trained faculty and staff to lead dialogues for their colleagues and peers to help identify and share strategies on creating greater inclusion in and outside the classroom. In the 2017-18 academic year, 16 sessions were conducted by faculty and staff facilitators with between seven and 25 participants in each individual session. Midyear evaluations demonstrated that 90% of participants felt that the DIA experience would help them make the campus more inclusive (Appendix 2.6). The Diversity Transformation Fund, in particular, is a program that supports activities and initiatives that model and indicate inclusiveness as a major goal, and stimulates creativity and promotes the exchange of ideas in the campus community. In 2017-18, this fund provided support to six collaborative proposals to engage the campus community in a meaningful dialogue around contemporary issues (Appendix 2.6).

The Division of Student Affairs has in place multiple units and programs that foster diversity and inclusion. The Division’s Intercultural Student Engagement unit sponsors activities and events that increase the cultural competency of students, faculty, and staff, and manage safe and respectful spaces for students to learn more about themselves and others. An excellent example of this commitment in action is the “Leave Hate Behind” event held in Fall 2017 to provide first-year students opportunities to connect with identity groups and address messages of hate, helping them feel more connected to the campus community during high-risk weeks. Assessment conducted after this event showed that 97% of attendees said the event made them feel more connected to the campus community (Appendix 2.7). Many students reported that the event greatly supported them to confront hate speech.

Intercultural Student Engagement also provides support and advocacy for students from historically underrepresented communities to succeed socially and academically, including, but not limited to, students of African, Latino, Asian, and Native American (ALANA) descent, various religious communities, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) and Ally community, and first-generation college students. Within this area are multiple resource centers, including the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, Multicultural Resource Center, and Interfaith Center. In addition, students can avail themselves of confidential medical and mental health services through the Counseling and Psychological Services Center and Student Health Services. While we have made efforts to ensure staff composition reflects the diverse campus community, we must continue to work toward this goal.

UAlbany’s Community Standards unit administers Community Rights and Responsibilities (CRR), the student code of conduct. CRR outlines behavioral expectations for students; defines prohibited behaviors; explains procedures for student conduct case adjudication, including incidents involving allegations of sexual misconduct, and describes possible sanction outcomes. Students are governed by 29 specific rules, which include behavioral categories such as threatening and abusive behavior; residence hall regulations; disruptive conduct; and retaliation. Additional supplemental policies to CRR that also foster a campus climate of respect include policies and reporting options for incidents such as hazing, harassment, and hate and bias incidents and/or crimes.

The University’s Sexual Violence Response Policy clearly outlines the procedures and services offered to campus community members who report that they have experienced an incident of sexual misconduct. This policy also articulates UAlbany’s intolerance of these behaviors. Our four-person Office of Equity and Compliance is headed by a director who also serves as the University Title IX Coordinator. The office oversees the response to incidents of sexual misconduct and compliance with policies
and legislation surrounding these incidents. Because of significant information and training efforts about what constitutes sexual violence, and encouraging victims to report incidents of sexual violence, the University receives about 260 reports of sexual violence per year, resulting in approximately 40 formal Title IX investigations reaching full conclusion annually.

Many reported incidents do not result in a Title IX investigation, either because they are outside the University’s jurisdiction, determined to be baseless, occurred prior to the student enrolling at the University or because after the initial report the victim did not wish to pursue a Title IX investigation or was non-cooperative. However, these reports still allow the University to offer and provide support services for victims such as counseling and advocacy services. All complaints that warrant full Title IX investigations are pursued and concluded in a timely manner; the target goal is to complete the entire process, from intake of the complaint to student conduct process adjudication (if appropriate), in 120 days.

In 2015, New York passed groundbreaking legislation (New York State Education Law 129-B), commonly known as “Enough is Enough.” This legislation requires all New York State colleges to adopt a set of comprehensive procedures and guidelines to prevent and address sexual violence, including a uniform definition of affirmative consent and a statewide amnesty policy. We educate all of our students about sexual violence prevention through general and specialized training for various student groups. All University student leaders, officers of student organizations, and student athletes complete mandated training on an annual basis regarding domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking prevention, and hazing prevention. In addition, all first-year students are required to attend sexual violence and Title IX training as part of the University’s mandatory orientation program. Overall, in the 2017-18 academic year, over 4,300 students received this training. In addition, all new employees receive an overview of unlawful discrimination and sexual violence polices as part of the mandatory orientation program, and other units on campus can and do request voluntary training for their employees on these subjects. As a result, over 170 employees attended training in this area during fall 2018 semester alone. Beginning with the Fall 2019 semester, all University employees are mandated to take sexual harassment and discrimination prevention training on an annual basis.

The University also undertakes regular assessment of the supervision of these programs. For example, we conduct a biennial Sexual Violence Prevention Campus Climate Survey of students and faculty/staff to evaluate the success and failure of sexual violence prevention on campus (Appendix 2.11). In addition, the University tracks the completion of training on sexual prevention training and has a 100% compliance rate in training student athletes, campus student leaders and first-year students.

We also have an onsite, University-staffed Advocacy Center for Sexual Violence that provides advocacy, support, and advisement services to students who report that they have experienced sexual violence. Since 2016, 487 students have received some form of service and support from staff in the Advocacy Center (these numbers include students who may have experienced sexual violence before being enrolled at the University and/or could be repeat clients for different incidents) (Appendix 2.12). The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), much like the Advocacy Center, is a resource for employees who have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault. (Appendix 2.11). Numbers tallied going back to July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018 show that 751 employees reached out to the EAP office to utilize the confidential Information, Assessment and Referral service. (Appendix 2.13, 2.14, 2.15).

Human Resources also maintains and administers a program and mandatory training on workplace violence prevention in accordance with NYS Labor Law and University policy (Appendix 2.16). To ensure the compliance rate
for this training meets University standards, in fall 2019, the University introduced a comprehensive electronic and online training tracking system including the ability to regularly remind employees of training requirements and include supervisor intervention for non-compliant employees. Our goal and expectation is 100% compliance for all mandated training. As of January 6, 2020, compliance with this mandatory training in its inaugural year stood at 83%.

UAlbany also is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to learn, equal access to employment and employment opportunities, and equal access to services, programs, and activities at the University. The Disability Resource Center works with faculty and University staff and units to ensure that we provide reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning, and psychiatric disabilities.

Through a process overseen by the University’s Human Resources Office, employees and applicants for job opportunities at the University can also request and receive reasonable accommodations to perform their job or apply for a position. Compliance with these policies, coupled with clear procedures for Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance, enhances UAlbany’s commitment to equal opportunities for employment, training and education programs, retention and upward mobility. The University’s Facilities Office has adopted the University’s 2018 Accessibility Study’s recommendations (available in the document inventory) into its capital plan, focusing first on the “impact” items. As example, we have replaced all Academic Podium exterior doors to lower weight infrastructure ($2.7M); we are now in phase 2 of a four-phase $14 million project to renovate over 110 toilet rooms on the uptown and downtown campuses; construction is underway on a new elevator to the Lecture Centers; and improving all Podium exterior ramps are part of the $8.2M phase 2 Lecture Center upgrade project; and the University will address the upgrade needs of the Taconic Building as part of an $11M refresh project going to bid in spring 2020. Additional accessibility work is in planning and design for implementation into the outyears. Appendix 2.16.5 summarizes the University’s approach to tackling accessibility challenges to or our buildings and grounds.

The Discrimination Complaint Procedure protects students and employees in the investigation and resolution of allegations of unlawful discrimination. During the 2018-19 academic year, 17 complaints of unlawful discrimination were reported to the Office of Equity and Compliance for investigation.

The University is fully compliant with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act and publishes an Annual Security and Fire Safety report (Appendix 2.16.6).

UAlbany is committed to accountability and encourages feedback regarding its policies, procedures, and campus climate. The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness administers a SUNY Student Opinion Survey every three years, which gathers information about undergraduate students’ satisfaction and educational experiences. As a participating institution with the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, UAlbany has administered a faculty job satisfaction survey to collect faculty feedback about the nature of work, resources, benefits, tenure, and leadership, and reports comparisons to peer institutions (2012, 2017). This report documents the changes made as a result of these surveys under Standards V and VI.

UAlbany’s grievance policy is well-defined, shared broadly, and effectively assures that grievances are addressed promptly, appropriately, and equitably.
The University at Albany has adopted internal policies that govern different grievances and their resolution and is bound in relevant matters by measures enacted by the New York State Legislature and the State University of New York (SUNY) and by agreements negotiated with multiple unions.

**Academic Grievances.** The Graduate Academic Council (GAC) and the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC), through the work of their respective Committees on Admission and Academic Standing (CAAS), are responsible for ensuring that approved procedures exist within the schools, colleges, departments, and programs for students to file academic grievances. Copies of established grievance procedures are filed by each academic unit with the Offices of the Dean of Graduate Education and the Dean of Undergraduate Education and are available to students at each school/college dean’s office.

Students who seek to challenge an academic grade or evaluation of their work in a class, research, or another educational activity may request a review of the evaluation by filing an academic grievance (Appendix 2.17). A student who seeks to dispute a grade or evaluation must initially pursue the matter directly with the faculty member involved. If not satisfactorily resolved directly with the faculty member, a written grievance may be filed with the program/department, or directly with the school/college for units that are not departmentalized. Should a grievance not be satisfactorily resolved at this initial level of review, students may pursue further consideration of the grievance at the next organizational level until such time as the grievance is considered at the University level by the GAC or UAC CAAS, as appropriate. Action on an academic grievance by the appropriate CAAS, upon acceptance by the GAC or UAC, as appropriate, is final and not subject to further formal review within the University.

**Opportunities for improvement:** Building on the well-documented procedures around our academic grievance process for students across our schools and colleges, it is suggested that the University implement a process to ensure that records are maintained at departmental and school/college levels which document the number, nature, and resolution of academic grievances filed by undergraduate and graduate students, and that such information is filed with and maintained by the Offices of Undergraduate and Graduate Education, as appropriate.

**Student Conduct: Regulations and Procedures.** Student conduct is governed by the University’s Community Rights and Responsibilities (Appendix 2.20.1), which includes a regulatory code defining prohibited conduct (section 3, pp. 5-9) and detailed procedures for adjudicating alleged violations (section 4, pp. 10-12). The procedures include evidentiary rules governing the conduct of hearings, identifying potential sanctions, and describing avenues of appeal. Alternative dispute resolution options may be available in the form of mediation and involvement of the University Community Accountability Board, which is based on principles of restorative justice. Alcohol and drugs continue to be one of the most violated rules on the campus, however the Office of Community Standards works closely and in partnership with University Police Department and with Counseling and Psychological Services to provide preventative and responsive programs to address college student substance abuse. Community Rights & Responsibilities was recently updated and approved by the University Council. The National Association of Student Affairs Practitioners (NASPA) has recognized Community Standards with awards for restorative programs the unit has implemented.

**Faculty/Staff Grievances.** The University at Albany adheres to applicable SUNY and union-negotiated procedures (Appendix 2.18) for resolving grievances involving faculty and staff. The Office of Human Resources Management, in addition to appropriate union representatives, are available to help employees seek resolution of grievances. Over the last three full calendar years, the University has averaged 18 formal employee grievances annually among our 3,100 full-year employees. All of these grievances have
been addressed and adjudicated using the policies and procedures promulgated by the University, SUNY, and within union collective bargaining agreements.

Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Unlawful Discrimination. UAlbany policies and procedures seek to ensure that we promptly address claims of sexual harassment and other forms of violence reported by students to determine what occurred; that interim steps are taken to protect the student as necessary; and that a timely response occurs to end the violence to prevent its recurrence and address its effects. The University adheres to federal Title IX requirements and has enumerated specific procedures in its student conduct code governing cases of alleged sexual misconduct. The University strives to complete the complaint process in a timely way by balancing principles of thoroughness and fundamental fairness with promptness. The University additionally has adopted detailed Policies and Procedures for addressing employees’ allegations of sexual harassment and other unlawful discrimination, also within the purview of the Office of Equity and Compliance and the Office of Human Resources. Please see Section 2 of this Standard’s report for more details regarding complaint and investigation data.

University Police Department and Parking Management. The University Police Department (UPD) has detailed procedures governing the investigation and resolution of complaints (Appendix 2.19) and its website invites aggrieved individuals to register complaints and describes procedures for their investigation and resolution. In 2017 the UPD received 17 complaints and, following investigation, sustained six; in 2018 it received 14 complaints and sustained one (Appendix 2.20). The University has established an Independent Review Committee that reviews the disposition of complaints made against UPD officers, recommends follow-up actions and procedures, and periodically surveys student, faculty, and staff opinions about the UPD and campus safety. The department has been implementing new policies and practices in accordance with President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and survey results reflect satisfaction with UPD officers’ performance of duties (Appendix 2.21).

The Office of Parking and Mass Transit Services, which operates separately from the UPD, maintains clearly described procedures for appealing parking violations; waivers of citations have been granted in roughly 40-60% of the appeals filed annually since the 2015 fiscal year with most being waived as a courtesy and learning experience for first-time offenders (Appendix 2.22).

UAlbany takes conflict of interest, or its appearance, seriously

The University is committed to conducting its activities without conflicts of interest. The UAlbany faculty handbook (available in the document inventory) states that “New York State Public Officers Law prohibits any employee of the State of New York from using ‘his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges’; and the Research Foundation Conflict of Interest Policy prohibits the use of one’s position ‘to secure privileges or exemptions for himself or herself or others’.” Because UAlbany is a state institution, its employees are public officers and subject to the state’s Public Officers Law (POL), POL §§ 73, 73-a, and 74, which governs the ethics of public officers and conflicts of interest. The NYS Executive Law provides for a disclosure process administered by the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) for Public Officers. JCOPE reviews disclosures to ensure that the filers have not violated the POL. JCOPE also conducts investigations of allegations of wrongdoing. All University employees are provided with a copy of the Public Officers Law upon employment and are required to attest that they have received and read the law. The specifics of the Public Officers Law also are reviewed at employee orientation. Finally, individuals’ disclosures are records accessible under the State’s freedom of information law.
University policymakers and individuals with a salary above a set level must complete training concerning their ethical obligations. Individuals must complete a live training session within two years of being required to file a JCOPE disclosure statement, and every three years thereafter. The University’s Ethics Officer is responsible for providing training that covers the Public Officers Law and other related ethics laws and regulations, and for advising employees on interpreting the ethics rules in the POL. UAlbany has a 100% compliance rate for both the required JCOPE disclosure filing and training requirements.

SUNY has a unique relationship with the Research Foundation for SUNY (RF), a private not-for-profit corporation. This relationship has resulted in the RF employing a number of individual staff members who administer research-related offices and conduct research at the University. The RF prohibits its employees and officers from having conflicts of interest. Key employees must make annual disclosures of their interests through an online system administered by the RF. Under current policy, the UAlbany Vice President for Research is responsible for identifying individuals who are required to make disclosures and informing them of their obligations. The University has a system in place for achieving this requirement and as of January 2020 had a 99% compliance rate.

Additionally, all individuals – regardless of title or position – must disclose their outside financial interests if they will be seeking or receiving support through one of the University’s externally sponsored activities, and are responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of the activity. This requirement is independent of any other requirement for employees and officers to disclose their financial interests. Individuals required to make disclosure use the SUNY Pre-Award and Compliance System COI Module. Those required to disclose must also complete an online training course through CITI on managing conflicts of interest in research before making their initial disclosure(s) and every four years thereafter. Disclosures, as they relate to sponsored projects, are reviewed by the Research Compliance Officer and, as needed, by the Conflicts of Interest Committee.

In addition to the requirements of employees and officers to disclose their individual financial interests, as a state agency, the University is subject to an extensive system of laws, policies, regulations, and external reviews designed to ensure that the University complete all procurements on an ethical and fair basis. Our centralized Office of Procurement Services assists the community in procuring goods and services, ensures that the University meets the required ethical and public bidding requirements of various New York State control agencies.

As part of the state’s Project Sunlight, UAlbany publicly discloses contacts with external parties related to the procurement of state contracts for real property, goods, or services. The Director for Risk Management and Internal Control provides training to individuals about reporting obligations. The President’s Executive Committee, the assistant deans for fiscal administration in all schools and colleges, the fiscal managers in all administrative departments, and numerous other entities on campus have all participated in Project Sunlight training.

As part of a new training monitoring program implemented in fall 2019, all professional staff will be required to take online Project Sunlight training. We evaluate the success of the Project Sunlight initiative by monitoring the number and distribution of inquiries made to the Office of Enterprise Risk Management and Compliance, reviewing entries made to the Project Sunlight system to ensure all applicable departments and divisions are using the system, and comparing the University’s entries to those of the other three SUNY University Centers.

UAlbany’s practices in the hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation of employees are fair and impartial

The mission of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) is to support and advance the University’s workforce needs by
implementing administrative policies and systems that advance diversity, recruitment, and retention objectives, and to promote a work environment characterized by fair treatment of staff, open communications, personal accountability, trust, and mutual respect.

OHRM provides comprehensive guidance to its managers and employees through the Human Resources website. As outlined in the manager’s toolbox, several links provide managers and supervisors detailed guidance about attendance rules; collective bargaining agreements; classification and compensation; evaluation, counseling and discipline; performance management; policies and procedures; recruitment and hiring; renewals and permanency/tenure, and benefits.

Recruitment. UAlbany is committed to providing equal opportunity for all people seeking employment at the University. To that end, we have developed a recruitment and selection process that applies to all faculty, professional (unclassified), and civil service (classified) positions at the University. The detailed recruitment processes for unclassified and classified positions are posted online for use by the entire campus community and applicants for employment. Detailed information regarding New York State Civil Service requirements is provided on the Civil Service website.

Promotion. Pursuant to its obligations and responsibilities to employees and the State of New York, the University recognizes the need to provide an internal career development program for employees as well as equal employment opportunities for all applicants. UAlbany’s advancement opportunities are consistent with employee development, qualification, and job performance. Guidance and criteria for professional employee evaluation and promotion are provided by the Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees, Article XII, “Evaluation and Promotion of Academic and Professional Employees.” The promotion process supports Affirmative Action requirements to provide upward mobility for women, minorities, handicapped persons, and Vietnam-era veterans.

More specifically, criteria and procedures governing the promotion and continuing appointment of faculty at UAlbany are subject to the overarching collective bargaining agreement between United University Professions and the State of New York. Detailed Procedures for Promotion and Tenure Review at UAlbany, addressing matters spanning the initiation through culmination of the promotion and continuing appointment process, including timing, general criteria and standards, preparation of materials, and the review process from the departmental level through the President’s decision, are available online for public viewing.

In general, scholarship, teaching, and service performance of candidates for promotion and continuing appointment are reviewed and recommendations are made at multiple levels by faculty, departments (or school/college in units that are not departmentalized); school or college tenure and promotion committees in departmentalized units; the UAlbany Senate Council on Promotion and Continuing Appointments; and administrative officers (department chair, if applicable; school or college dean; Provost), before the President issues a decision, which then is subject to confirmation by the SUNY Chancellor.

Collective Bargaining Agreements. The OHRM is guided by collective bargaining agreements with its six bargaining units and Management Confidential employees. The contracts for these bargaining units are very detailed in all aspects of employee rights, salaries, performance programs and reviews, promotion procedures, disciplinary processes, and numerous other employee relations issues. The University maintains a close working relationship with the unions and their representatives regarding all aspects of the agreements and the handling of grievances.
Grievances. The University at Albany adheres to applicable SUNY-wide and union-negotiated procedures for resolving grievances involving faculty and staff, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The Office of Human Resources Management, as well as appropriate union representatives, are available to help employees seek resolution of grievances.

UAlbany is honest and truthful throughout its public relations announcements, advertisements, recruiting and admissions materials and practices, and in its internal communications

The University at Albany is committed to providing information to all parties, internal and external, in an honest and truthful manner. UAlbany is keenly aware that if students, faculty, and staff do not find that their experiences at the University are consistent with what was portrayed in advertising, recruitment materials, position postings, and external communications, then not only will they be justifiably disappointed, but their retention will likely be adversely affected. The University appreciates that honesty and truthfulness in all aspects of communications, at the earliest stages of contact with potential students, faculty, and staff, are paramount.

As discussed subsequently in this chapter (Standard II, criterion VII) and in Chapter 3, Standard IV, the University at Albany takes great pride in the transparency of its website and in materials pertaining to recruitment, cost of attendance, and related matters. For example, the University utilizes the SUNY Net Price Calculator to assist prospective students in planning for the cost of attending UAlbany. In addition, as a public institution that serves a disproportionate number of economically disadvantaged students, UAlbany is conscious of ensuring that students are aware of, and can plan for, all costs of attendance and that the academic experience they receive is accurately reflected in recruiting materials.

Finally, in an effort to ensure that there are no financial surprises for applicants or admitted students, the UAlbany admissions website and recruitment materials include connections and directions so students can easily find both basic and in-depth information about academic programs, admission requirements, course transfer and other credit equivalents, costs of attendance, scholarships and other special admissions and financial aid programs.

In addition, as discussed earlier in this chapter, all details of employment at the University for both faculty and staff are made available to the UAlbany community as well as publicly, including salary levels, promotion and tenure procedures, negotiated employment agreements, and other matters. As evidence of these transparency efforts, UAlbany faculty cited “My sense of fit here” as the third most highly ranked “best aspect” of the University at Albany in the 2017 COACHE job satisfaction survey. In addition, just 5% of faculty in the same survey cited “Tenure/promotion clarity or requirements” or “My sense of fit here” as a “worst aspect” of the University.

With regard to external communications, UAlbany is careful to produce materials that accurately portray facts with integrity. Assistance is available within the Office of Communications and Marketing to help the University’s schools, colleges, and departments confirm the accuracy of external communications. In addition, the University’s Social Media Policy helps ensure that uses of social media with respect to the University are conducted in an honest, appropriate, and ethical manner.

The University has developed a system of internal communications to distribute critical information and updates to faculty, staff, and students as needed while limiting these messages so that the volume is not so overwhelming that these communications might be ignored. This has been accomplished by limiting authorization to issue University-wide or larger group emails to key personnel at the University so
that widely disseminated messages are both important and accurate. In addition, the Office of Communications and Marketing produces and distributes informational messages known as *Today at UAlbany* twice a week, in three different versions targeted specifically at faculty and staff, and students, to keep the UAlbany community informed about campus events and issues.

**Opportunity for Improvement:** The UAlbany website suffers from numerous broken links, leading to concerns that information may differ when access is gained through different links or originating web searches. The University has made substantial investments to expand its web support staff and in its web platform in fall 2019 to earnestly address these issues, as well as to better leverage academic program web pages in support of student recruitment. While numerous and substantial improvements have been accomplished, the University needs to maintain the momentum gained and fully implement a process to ensure that information posted is regularly monitored and updated to promote greater consistency, accuracy, and reliability.

**UAlbany promotes its affordability and accessibility, and cultivates financial literacy among its students**

The University at Albany is committed to promoting affordability and accessibility and helps students understand funding sources and options, value received for cost, and how to make informed decisions about incurring debt.

The University is fully transparent concerning all details regarding the cost of tuition and related fees for undergraduate, graduate, and general studies students. Tuition and mandatory fees for state-operated units of the State University of New York are determined by the SUNY Board of Trustees. SUNY generally limits annual increases in mandatory fees to the rate of inflation contained in the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI).

Information about tuition and fees, including billing, payments, refunds, room and board costs, financial liability, residency requirements, and Net Price Calculator, are maintained and updated by the University’s Office of Student Accounts. This information is made accessible via the Office of Student Accounts website and a variety of other institutional websites including the University’s homepage, Admissions, and Graduate Studies, which ultimately direct users to the Student Accounts website. In conjunction with the Student Financial Center, the Office of Financial Aid assists students and families in navigating the financial aid process.

Approximately 57% of UAlbany’s undergraduate students receive some type of grant aid based on family income and need, and approximately 63% of undergraduate students receive loans to cover the cost of attendance (Appendix 2.23). Current and prospective students and family members can also utilize “SUNY Smart Track,” a financial planning system, to help determine costs of attendance (Appendix 2.24).

Of particular note is the University’s participation in the Excelsior Scholarship program, which allows any New York State resident whose family household federal adjusted gross income does not exceed $125,000 to attend a SUNY or CUNY college tuition-free, contingent on the student’s completing 30 credits per year. During the 2018-19 academic year, UAlbany certified over 1,100 students eligible for Excelsior with some form of a monetary award. While this is less than 50% of the undergraduate student population that was initially deemed eligible to receive an Excelsior award, many students were already awarded a Pell or TAP grant that covered tuition expenses.

The University also provides a significant number of need-based and merit-based scholarships through its academic and administrative departments and through the University at Albany Foundation. Among those included are Presidential Scholarships, veterans’ and military scholarships, and athletics scholarships. Lower- and middle-income students who are New York State residents may also avail themselves of the New York State
Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), an award program that can provide up to $5,165 annually; as a grant, these funds do not have to be repaid. Approximately 46% of students at UAlbany are eligible for some level of TAP.

Prospective and new students, including transfer and international students, and their families, are provided information about the cost of attendance and financial aid resources in a variety of ways, including “Money Matters” sessions offered during new student orientation, and via a guidebook created to provide new students information about UAlbany.

Students at the graduate level have an opportunity to fund their education through fellowships, teaching assistantships, and research assistantships. Significant discussion has ensued at the University about stipend levels for graduate students and the University has devoted considerable time to evaluating and reviewing graduate funding to ensure fair and appropriate remuneration for its students. As a result, in October 2019, Provost Carol Kim announced that in recognition of the immense contributions that our graduate and teaching assistants make to the teaching and research mission of the University, and of the importance of competitive stipends for attracting and retaining top doctoral students, the University was increasing doctoral stipend levels to $18,000 in the humanities and social science disciplines, and to $20,000 in the sciences (Appendix 2.24.5).

SUNY’s Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) provides access, academic support, and financial aid to students who show promise for succeeding in college but who may not have otherwise been offered admission. Available primarily to full-time, matriculated students, the program supports students throughout their careers within the University. While we expect students to support themselves financially as much as possible, we recognize that most students admitted to the EOP require full or partial support through available grants, scholarships, jobs, and loans. The University’s EOP is discussed more fully in Standard IV. The University also funds graduate students through its Graduate Opportunities Program (GOP), which supports full-time graduate education for individuals who graduated from a New York State institution while participating in EOP, or other programs targeted to economically disadvantaged and academically underprepared students.

The University utilizes an EAB web platform to support its strategic enrollment management functions, student success goals, and other institutional operations. EAB provides mechanisms to help faculty and staff in areas such as Advisement Services, Financial Aid, and Undergraduate Education to be able to better identify “at risk” students and monitor their progress toward degree completion.

UAlbany complies with all applicable federal, state, and Commission reporting policies, regulations, and requirements

The University is bound by compliance obligations both upward (for example, to state and federal agencies and the Middle States Commission) and downward (for example, in oversight of the integrity of research conducted by faculty and staff). The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) is responsible for compliance with preparation, external reporting, and publication of institution-wide assessments, graduation and retention rates, and other compliance and institutional performance information. This office publishes a large number of internal and external reports and assessment resources. Academic assessment is also overseen by the University Senate’s Council on Academic Assessment, which has particular responsibility for the evaluation and review of all University academic programs and for ensuring compliance with SUNY-mandated assessment of such programs. The Division of Student Affairs also contributes to assessment with a particular focus on retention, graduation, time to graduation, and student behavior.

The University is subject to oversight and registration of academic programs and operation
by the State University of New York (SUNY) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The University conducts audits of academic programs on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with these entities and works with departments to address discrepancies when they arise. The University is conducting a full audit of all undergraduate academic programs in Spring 2020.

The University is also in compliance with all applicable Middle States Commission policies, including but not limited to the Commission’s accreditation, Mid-Point Peer Review and Annual Institutional Update requirements, guidelines for athletics, and Credit Hour, Transfer Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation policies. In addition, we provide full disclosure of information about the University’s accreditation on our web site.

UAlbany is fully transparent about its goals, mission, programs, sites, and operations, both in its planning and development of such items and in communicating about outcomes and changes. As has been described, the University recently completed a new five-year Strategic Plan, including new mission and vision statements. This planning process involved the participation of more than 1,000 members of the University community. In addition, the President regularly provides updates to the University community about the implementation of the Strategic Plan and any changes affecting the University’s mission and vision. Required reporting about programs, operations, and sites is made to the appropriate external parties.

The University also is committed to informing faculty, staff, and students about their rights and related external regulations, including but not limited to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Students’ Bill of Rights, and Student Consumer Right to Know information. Further, the University’s compliance with external financial and federal aid standards can be viewed within the SUNY and Research Foundation external financial and federal single audits (Appendix 2.25).

Compliance with regulations regarding research activities including animal use, human subjects, export controls, and potential conflicts of interest is handled by the Office of Regulatory and Research Compliance. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety oversees laboratory safety, including the use of biological and radioactive research tools. Both offices provide support and a wide range of materials online and in person. A compendium of SUNY regulations, policies, and procedures is available online.

**UAlbany periodically assesses ethics and integrity as evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which we implement them**

Because UAlbany is both a self-governing university and part of the State University of New York system, the institution is subject to, and welcomes, numerous levels of periodic assessments of its culture and practices pertaining to ethics and integrity. These assessments and reviews take place in the form of regular monitoring and periodic reviews by internal and external offices and entities. As discussed in Standard VI of this document, our robust internal control development, review, and testing system ensures that proper internal controls are in place. The University internal control system begins with an annual “Tone from the Top” message from the University President stating his support of the observance of proper ethics, integrity, and adherence to internal controls. In addition, in spring 2020 we expect to issue our “Principles of Professionalism, Ethics and Compliance” to all University faculty, staff, and students, as well to staff for University-affiliated corporations. This communication will affirm the University’s expectation that all members of the University at Albany community “do the right thing” at all times when it comes to ethical behavior and integrity (Appendix 2.26).

In addition, the Office of Audit and Management Services conducts periodic reviews of University operations and investigates potential and reported ethical and integrity lapses. Through
an anonymous internal control hotline, the University encourages members of the community to bring forth concerns or reports of potential ethical violations or including any affiliated corporations. The various ethics-related monitoring, testing, and investigatory aspects in place at the University are widely publicized to serve as both a deterrent and a resource to help ensure proper ethical behavior. The Offices of Internal Control and Audit and Management Services work closely with the University Ethics Officer, Chief Risk and Compliance Officer, Research Compliance Officer, and General Counsel’s Office in this effort.

In addition to this robust system of ethics and integrity review, UAlbany is subject to significant and regular external reviews of its internal controls and ethics processes from the SUNY Office of Internal Audit, the New York State Office of the State Comptroller (OSC), the New York State Inspector General’s Office (IG), and various external research sponsors and regulatory agencies.

Included in this external oversight network is an annual internal control report and certification prepared for submission to the New York State Division of the Budget and OSC (described further under Standard VI in this document), a targeted annual financial process review for OSC called the Advisory 28 review, and periodic inquiries from the IG. We investigate these inquiries and report results back to the IG for additional action as warranted. The University averages approximately five such periodic inquiries from the state IG or SUNY Office of Internal Audit annually. Further, as discussed earlier in this chapter, University faculty and staff must abide by the ethical requirements outlined in New York State Public Officers Law. Faculty and staff considered to be either policymakers or who earn above a certain annual salary level are required to submit extensive conflict of interest and financial disclosures forms to the State Joint Commission on Public Ethics, which has investigative and financial penalty powers for ethical violations or intentional or unresolved conflicts of interest. Because of the University’s self-imposed ethical standards and vigorous system of internal controls and audits, the University welcomes rather than fears these external reviews of University ethical behavior and uses these regular and periodic external reviews as tests of our process of ensuring ethical behavior by our faculty and staff.

In recognition of the importance of ethics and integrity at the University, President Rodríguez created the Office of Enterprise Risk Management and Compliance (ERMC) in 2018. This office brings together under single and coordinated direction the functions of Internal Control, Enterprise Risk Management, University-wide Compliance, Policy Development, Equity and Compliance (Title IX), and Emergency Management to ensure that the University operates with proper ethics and integrity. ERMC reports to the Vice President for Finance and Administration and is headed by the newly created position of Associate Vice President and Chief Risk and Compliance Officer for the University.

Under this new structure, the University is implementing an Enterprise Risk Management system through which faculty, staff, and students will be provided with the training, knowledge, and resources to act ethically and with integrity in all aspects of their daily University lives. This system includes a robust institutional policy development process and policy library, a University-wide compliance review function, and a set of internal controls and procedures to provide the expectations and rules to which the University community is expected to adhere.

To date, we have established policies and procedures for the proposal, review and approval of new institutional policies; established a centralized institutional policy library; implemented a number of new, significant and required institutional policies; are updating institutional policies into the centralized system and library; rolling out the centralized compliance review process; and conducting an updated department level vulnerability and risk assessment across the entire University.
CHAPTER 3
STUDENT SUCCESS: PROMOTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND PERSONAL GROWTH

STANDARD III - DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The University at Albany provides its students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels regardless of instructional modality, and which are consistent with high educational expectations.

UAlbany’s certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs foster coherent student learning and promote synthesis of learning.

At the undergraduate level, the University at Albany offers 62 undergraduate degrees, 36 Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degrees, 25 Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees and one undergraduate Certificate (Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Analysis). Of the B.A. and B.S. degrees, 36 are also offered at the Honors level and 10 are interdisciplinary programs. Students must complete an approved sequence of courses and study totaling a minimum of 120 credits and fulfilling all degree requirements including General Education and, if required, a minor.

The General Education Program proposes a set of knowledge areas, perspectives, and competencies considered by the University to be central to the intellectual development of every undergraduate. The General Education Program is intended to provide students with a foundation that prepares them for continued work in their chosen major and minor fields and gives them the intellectual habits that will enable them to become lifelong learners. Courses within the program are designed not only to enhance students’ knowledge, but also to provide them with new ways of thinking and with the ability to engage in critical analysis and creative activity.

Undergraduate students fulfill the integrated requirements of bachelor’s and master’s degree programs within a rationally designed and effective framework at the beginning of their junior year. Bachelor’s/Master’s degree programs require a minimum of 138 credits and up to 12 graduate credits may be applied simultaneously to the requirements for the baccalaureate.

Joint Degree Programs are selective programs that allow students to begin a graduate-level degree after their third year of study at UAlbany. We have one joint degree program with Albany Law School and the remaining programs are in the health sciences fields.

At the graduate level, the University at Albany offers 42 Doctoral Degree programs, 56 Master of Science (M.S.), 22 Master of Arts (M.A.), and seven Departmental Master’s programs. In addition, UAlbany offers 26 Graduate Certificates, eight Advanced Graduate Certificates and 10 Certificates of Advanced Study.

In addition to traditional, in-person offerings, the University at Albany offers several completely online degree programs that foster coherent student learning experiences. Most of our online programs are at the graduate level but we now have one fully online undergraduate major in Informatics. In addition, we offer seven Master of Science programs, one Master of Arts, one M.P.H., two Ph.D.s., and nine graduate level certificate programs online. Online courses and blended pedagogy are part of a concerted strategy to help students complete degree programs in a timely manner.

Internationalization is a strategic priority at UAlbany, and we have developed an innovative Global Distinction Milestone for undergraduate students. This recognizes their successful completion of a structured set of integrated academic experiences that are distinctly global in
scope and purpose, designed to prepare UAlbany students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and perspectives to succeed in a globalized world.

The Office of the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education coordinates the academic experience of undergraduate students, working closely with the deans and faculty and the Undergraduate Academic Council to develop and implement undergraduate academic policy and curricula, as well as promote undergraduate opportunities in experiential learning, such as research and internships.

The Graduate School provides strategic leadership, advocacy, and support to ensure excellence and integrity in graduate education. The office strives to enhance student success from the time of admission to graduation, and cultivates educational experiences that are accessible, diverse, and inclusive. The dean and staff in this office assist departments in coordinating admissions, administer policies and regulations pertaining to graduate programs, connect students and staff across the University with academic resources, and provide support and strategic direction in the maintenance of existing programs and development of new programs.

University governance, in the form of the University Senate, is responsible for oversight of the undergraduate and graduate curricula. In particular, the Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Councils (UAC and GAC) ensure the coherence of the University’s academic programs by reviewing any additions or changes to the current curriculum. Each council engages a number of subcommittees that review changes or additions to academic programs or policies to ensure that the changes enhance the rigor and continuity of programs and policies already in place, and contribute to a coherent learning experience. The University Senate operates according to a shared governance model and is comprised of teaching faculty, professional faculty, administrators, undergraduate and graduate students, and emeriti.

As part of the Strategic Plan, UAlbany is expanding its programmatic offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Since our last Middle States review, we have added 24 new graduate programs (advanced certificates, master’s, and Ph.D.; Appendix 3.2). We have also launched two new colleges: the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity. These colleges house seven new undergraduate majors and six new minors (Appendix 3.1). We are also developing additional new programs in environmental and sustainability engineering, public health, and business economics, as well as interdisciplinary programs in bioengineering, globalization, and environmental studies. We also continue to innovate and chart new directions at the graduate level.

UAlbany’s student learning experiences are designed, delivered, and assessed by sufficient qualified faculty who are appropriately resources, supported, and regularly reviewed

The University at Albany recruits and retains appropriately qualified faculty in sufficient numbers to deliver its academic programs effectively. Our faculty is comprised of traditional, tenured and tenure-track, full-time lecturers, graduate students, and part-time contingent faculty. Faculty roles, responsibilities, and policies for evaluation and promotion are clearly defined and widely circulated. Teaching is a key component of faculty responsibilities, and thus teaching effectiveness receives extensive institutional support.

The rigor and effectiveness of student learning experiences delivered by faculty members is assessed directly by students, who evaluate every course offered for credit at the end of the semester (many instructors also make use of early-semester evaluative surveys). Two measures from these evaluations – “intellectual challenge” and “being held to high standards” – speak directly to the rigor of a course. Overall
evaluation of the faculty member and of the course speaks directly to the effectiveness of instruction.

Appendix 3.3 summarizes the mean evaluations of lower- and upper-division courses for the last year. Upper division courses are segregated by school/college. Appendix 3.4 summarizes evaluations across schools/colleges for graduate courses.

Across all schools and colleges, performance evaluations of faculty members also require peer evaluation of teaching. Such evaluations are typically conducted by faculty members who have taught similar courses in the past and are currently teaching at the same level. These evaluations are required at all levels and ensure that faculty members maintain rigor and receive feedback on pedagogical effectiveness. The seriousness with which the university approaches peer review of teaching is clear from promotion and tenure guidelines, published on the web site of the Office of the Provost. Here colleges, schools, departments, chairs, and faculty members can find guidelines and best practices for peer review of teaching, developed in part in conjunction with governance through the University Senate. The University’s Institute for Teaching, Learning & Academic Leadership (ITLAL) also provides resources outlining effective approaches and best practices.

Given the research-intensive status of the University, a full-time, tenure-track faculty member’s portfolio also includes responsibility for scholarly inquiry. The percentage of such faculty members has been steadily rising and, as of fall 2018, approximately 55% of all faculty members at the University were full-time. Thirty-eight percent of the remaining faculty hold part-time appointments, and 7% are full-time, non-tenure track lecturers. [Appendix 3.6] Full-time faculty members engage in sustained scholarly and creative activities and, over the last three years, such activities have resulted in 2,620 instances of peer-reviewed authorships (about three per full-time faculty member). [Appendix 3.5]

UAlbany faculty also received $102.7 million in external research funding in FY 2018-19, an increase over the last two years of funding and the second highest amount in the last five years.

UAlbany has taken a leadership position with respect to part-time, contingent faculty and full-time lecturers. In response to a Blue Ribbon Panel on contingent issues, minimum per course salaries were increased by 36% and now stand at $4,000 beginning in spring 2020. [Appendix 3.6.1]

This panel also considered a career pathway for our full-time lecturers, which was announced in Fall 2020. [Appendix 3.6.2] A career path is critical to acknowledge and reward the contributions of non-tenure-track, full-time lecturers in the delivery of high-quality instruction at all levels of the academic curriculum. The goal was to develop a review process with a focus on teaching and service. As of fall 2018, 7.4% of instructional workforce within schools and colleges was comprised of full-time lecturers. Additionally, there are 37 full-time lecturers appointed to support undergraduate teaching (in the Writing and Critical Inquiry program and in EOP). [Appendix 3.6]

Whereas full-time faculty members are deployed in both lower- and upper-division courses, upper-division courses tend to be predominantly taught by full-time faculty members ensuring that the spirit of scholarly inquiry is embedded in core curricula, uniting the first (Student Success) and second (Research Excellence) priorities of our current Strategic Plan. Again, Appendix 3.6 lists faculty deployment by status.

Of the full-time faculty, 98% held doctoral, professional, or terminal master’s degrees. Of the part-time faculty, 30% held doctoral, professional, or terminal master’s degrees and 51% held a master’s degree. The size of the faculty in relation to enrollment at the University at Albany is comparable to the other three research centers within the SUNY System.
Appendix 3.8 lists the relationship of faculty size with enrollment in fall 2017. The University has one faculty member (full- or part-time) for every 15 students, comparable to 14-17 across the other three research centers within SUNY. The ratios are also comparable when examined separately for full- and part-time faculty. The University has one full-time faculty member for every 24 students, comparable to the other SUNY research centers.

We further ensure instructional effectiveness through appropriate class sizes. In fall 2017, the average class sizes were 15 in graduate courses, 29 in upper-division undergraduate courses, and 51 in lower-division undergraduate courses.

Performance evaluations of faculty members also require adherence to UAlbany’s Principles of Teaching Responsibility, the provisions of which “are so reasonable and the University conceives them to be so important that adherence to them will be taken into consideration as part of the assessment of teaching effectiveness called for in Article XII of the SUNY Board of Trustees’ Policies.” Such assessments also call for evidence of investment in the development of teaching. This encourages faculty members to seek opportunities to participate in workshops and seminars aimed at improving the effectiveness of teaching. Many such opportunities are available within the University, and Appendix 3.9 summarizes faculty attendance in seminars and workshops over the last three years. In 2017-18, ITLAL delivered 1,651 instances of assisting faculty in a structured professional development programs related to teaching excellence. Half of our faculty members received individual consultations in 2017-18.

The University’s guidelines for promotion and tenure explicitly list teaching excellence as a requirement for success.

The University at Albany also values excellence in teaching and mentoring and recognizes that educating future global citizens and mentoring future scholars is a fundamental function of a research university. Teaching is a specialized form of scholarly leadership that aims to disseminate disciplinary knowledge and new discoveries by engaging students in the thinking of the disciplines so they can observe, judge, act upon, create, and manage a body of changing information in sophisticated ways.

This guideline is publicly declared and featured on the University’s website. Faculty members are alerted to this expectation upon joining the University and periodically thereafter. Chairs and deans also use these guidelines in mentoring as well as evaluating faculty members. Moreover, the Academic Faculty Handbook clearly outlines the importance of teaching responsibilities (p. 21).

UAlbany’s academic programs are clearly and accurately described, promoting transparency and timely degree completion.

The University describes the requirements of its academic programs in multiple print and online publications, including detailed graduate and undergraduate bulletins published annually. These bulletins serve as the official record of academic regulations and detail general degree requirements, and requirements for majors and minors for students matriculated in the published year. We update the online version of this document throughout the term to reflect any changes to the curriculum approved throughout the year.

At the undergraduate level, the university has developed specific pathway publications that help students align their programs of study with their completed coursework. The computer-based Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) matches a student’s academic record against the requirements of a particular degree program, providing a roadmap to graduation for a student in terms of which requirements have been completed and which courses are still needed. The University is in the process of developing and implementing the DegreeWorks Audit Reporting System to replace the current
DARS. This platform will provide additional opportunities to articulate course requirements both for intended and potential programs of study. DegreeWorks will also forecast course planning into future semesters, enabling students to visualize their complete academic pathway to graduation.

Technological expansion with the implementation of DegreeWorks also may help incoming transfer students improve early understanding of program plans and requirements as well as how pre-UAlbany credits will be applied to UAlbany degree requirements.

In addition to DARS, the Academic Support Center maintains a complete listing of Major Academic Pathways (MAPs). These MAPs detail the courses required for each major, any necessary minor, general education, and elective courses, and provide a full eight-semester plan detailing how a student can complete the major by identifying the specific courses and options available each semester. Individually assigned academic advisors reference these MAPs as they meet with their advisees each semester to guide students through the appropriate curriculum.

The Graduate School oversees many aspects of education at the post-baccalaureate level: verification of admissions, tracking student progress and completion, coordination of existing and new curricula, authorization of degrees, and more. However, the development, promotion, and operation of individual programs and the advisement of students in them are the primary responsibility of the individual schools, departments, and faculty that provide graduate instruction. Each school and college provides detailed information about the core curriculum and requirements of each program offered. Many offer extensive information beyond the core curriculum to include requirements for additional concentrations, certificates, and internships. They also detail requirements for each master’s program, including specific course requirements, pathways, and expected time to completion. In addition, the Registrar’s Office has programmed all M.A. programs into DARS. Nearly all Ph.D. programs publish electronically an extensive guide or handbook that details the specific requirements and timelines for completion.

Learning opportunities and resources support academic progress and high achievement.

A robust teaching and learning infrastructure supports UAlbany’s academic programs. Among them, ITLAL, the Office of Online Teaching and Learning (OTL), and the Educational Technology Center (ETC) all support teaching and learning. ITLAL exists to serve the UAlbany faculty and teaching staff by modeling exemplary teaching practices, as well as offering programs for instructional, curriculum, and faculty development (Appendix 3.9). OTL provides strategic support for online education, launching online options including: (a) online course sections, (b) hybrid/low residence courses and programs, and (c) fully online degrees. Finally, the ETC is the central hub of educational technologies, among them consulting and video services, test scanning, and assistance with learning management systems such as Blackboard, VoiceThread, and Ensemble Video.

UAlbany has been a leader within SUNY in the distance education space for decades. Our online programs from the School of Education, where the majority of our online programs reside, were recently ranked No. 8 in the country and No. 1 in the Northeast by US News and World Report. Academic support services fully support online learners. Our website provides information needed for students to succeed as online learners and for faculty to develop and implement online courses.

UAlbany students have opportunities to enroll in a wide variety of distinctive and selective academic programs. The Honors College is a vibrant community providing intellectual challenges to talented students who are ambitious in pushing the limits of knowledge
in the classroom and beyond, maximizing the opportunities available to them, and committing to civic engagement through leadership, hard work, and responsibility. Approximately 150 students are admitted to the Honors College each year, with the requirement to maintain a 3.5 GPA. Our Living-Learning Communities (L-LCs) offer nearly 20 options, divided into two groups: major-specific communities, based on academic interests and intended majors; and special-interest communities, based on common interests among students. Importantly, L-LCs serve as part of the first-year and transfer transition program for over 800 students annually.

The Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) provides admissions opportunities, and subsequent four-year academic supports, for economically and educationally disadvantaged students who are residents of New York State, making higher education possible for students who lack the traditional credentials for college admissions but who have the potential and motivation for academic success. UAlbany has awarded more than 4,500 bachelor’s degrees to students admitted through EOP, and over 15% graduated with honors. EOP student retention rates are consistently over time a good 10 to 12 percentage points higher than those of the entire first-year cohort, and 6 to 8 percentage points higher in terms of the six-year graduation rate metric, which points to the effectiveness of the EOP program.

All students participate in academic first-year experience courses, such as the First-year Seminar and the Writing and Critical Inquiry (WCI) Program. Supported by 25 full-time faculty, the WCI program provides a dynamic learning environment where students become effective learners by connecting writing practices to the process of critical thinking through an introduction to college-level thinking and discourse. A critical foundational course, students benefit from small classes and one-on-one interactions with their instructor, which is noteworthy for a large research university.

The combination of these programs (L-LCs, Honors College, EOP, First-year Seminars, and WCI classes) ensure all incoming students experience a small class or community in their first or second semester. Students also experience these types of interactions and supports through sophomore classes offered by EOP and transfer student programs, as well as academic support for student-athletes offered through the Student-Athlete Academic Services Office.

The SUNY system deeply values applied, or experiential, learning opportunities and UAlbany is fully aligned with the intention to make such learning opportunities available to all students. Indeed, the University’s Strategic Plan specifically references it as a student success priority at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In the 2017-18 Academic Year, 8,160 students participated in 1,334 applied learning courses (Appendix 3.11).

The University promotes experiential learning opportunities in the areas of undergraduate research and field study, service learning and volunteerism, internships, study abroad, creative works, and course-based experiential learning through practica and clinical experiences. The University’s Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Engagement (CURCE) hosts workshops, provides students with individualized assistance on their journey to research and scholarly pursuits, and hosts an annual Fall Research Fair. This year’s fair offered information from 45 departments, faculty, research centers, institutes, labs, offices, and units. The University is committed to expanding support through undergraduate research awards, simultaneously supporting the student success and research excellence priorities of the Strategic Plan.

The Center for Experiential Education (CEE) coordinates applied learning opportunities broadly, and seeks to enhance the academic curriculum through experiential learning in partnership with departmental and regional stakeholders. The CEE supports faculty and
academic departments as they design and deliver experiential courses and curricula, including work integrated education, community-based learning, and other course-based experiential projects. Funding and recognition programs are available for faculty through experiential education mini-grants, a faculty-of-the-month program, and the Outstanding Achievement in Experiential Education awards. The Office of Student Engagement also supports innovative and engaged teaching and learning through CHEER (Creating Highly Engaged Educational Resources) Grants.

Finally, the University at Albany serves the wider community in the region by making available its curricular excellence to advanced high school students through the University in the High School (UHS) program. Approximately 200 high schools collaborate with UAlbany to provide college-level learning for local high school sophomores (1.4% of UHS enrollment), juniors (52.5%), and seniors (46.1%). This program has seen slight growth over the last five years. The number of subjects taught has increased by 13% and the number of enrollments increased by 5%. (see Appendix 3.12). Each course taught as part of the UHS program is overseen by faculty within the appropriate academic department. Students who register for courses through the UHS Program are subject to the same academic expectations as UAlbany students. Recorded student grades for all courses result in a permanent academic record at the University. The classes are taught by high school teachers who undergo rigorous training with on-site class visits as part of the ongoing program evaluation. Learning outcomes are assessed in the same way campus-based classes are assessed. (See section below on assessment of learning in our General Education Program.) Data suggest that students who take UHS classes tend to do well in college. When we compared 2017-18 UAlbany graduates with and without UHS courses on their transcripts, those with at least one UHS courses graduated with a higher GPA (3.32 vs. 3.18).

UAlbany has an exceptional General Education Program that aligns with SUNY guidelines and Middle States criteria and provides students with essential skills

The General Education Program at the University ensures that all undergraduate students acquire knowledge and gain competencies in a wide variety of disciplinary areas that SUNY and the UAlbany faculty have deemed critical to success in more advanced coursework in majors and minors, and in success beyond graduation. General Education allows students to enhance their knowledge and skills, while discovering new areas of inquiry and new possibilities.

The program includes a set of free-standing course requirements of at least 30 credits – one course in each of the following 10 areas: Mathematics, Writing and Critical Inquiry, Arts, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, U.S. History, International Perspectives, Foreign Language, and Challenges for the 21st Century. In addition, the University has developed four Institutional Learning Outcomes that are integrated into the majors: Advanced Writing, Oral Discourse, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking. We refer to these as Advanced Competencies in the Major.

The result is a General Education Program of sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, to expand their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and to prepare them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic fields. This last priority is explicit, since General Education at UAlbany extends across students’ early coursework in the 10 areas and into their majors as they pursue and refine intellectual skills and competencies in communication, critical inquiry, and information literacy. The curriculum is in accordance with MSCHE standards, allowing students to acquire and demonstrate essential skills – including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis
and reasoning, technological competency, information literacy – and to study values, ethics, and diverse perspectives.

The faculty at the University have developed the General Education Program to be consistent with campus priorities and in compliance with the SUNY General Education Requirement (GER) policy and procedure. Between 2010 and 2014, faculty significantly revised the program, through the governance process, in response to the SUNY Board of Trustees (BOT) Resolution 2010-006, as well as other SUNY priorities related to seamless transfer and assessment expressed in BOT Resolutions 2009-138 and 2010-039 (all outlined in SUNY Memorandum to Presidents, Volume 1, Number 10, May 28, 2010). The new program was implemented in 2013 and 2014. All UAlbany requirements that correspond to SUNY GER areas incorporate SUNY GER learning outcomes. UAlbany’s local requirement of “Challenges for the 21st Century” stands outside the SUNY GER, though many courses at UAlbany that meet this requirement carry one or more SUNY GER designations (Appendix 3.13).

Students are able to complete the UAlbany General Education curriculum (and thus the SUNY GER) during their first two years of full-time study, in accordance with SUNY Seamless Transfer Policy). Students can access lists of courses approved for the various General Education categories through the searchable Schedule of Classes and the General Education Course Lookup. In addition, UAlbany’s program goes beyond the requirements of the SUNY GER – without requiring extra coursework for students – by incorporating more advanced training within each major in the areas of Writing, Oral Discourse, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking.

The University at Albany’s General Education Program fulfills the MSCHE standards for general education outlined in Standard III (in many cases these represent a minimum level of correspondence, and UAlbany’s general education categories embrace all of MSCHE’s categories). See Table 3.1 on the following page.

In summary, the University at Albany’s General Education Program provides students with essential skills in areas that are critical for their academic success in more advanced coursework and for their intellectual development as lifelong learners and citizens of the world.

**UAlbany offers graduate and professional students myriad opportunities for original scholarship and independent thinking, guided by expert faculty**

The Office of Graduate Education was recently converted into The Graduate School to increase the profile and visibility of graduate education at UAlbany. The University’s faculty, who are leading researchers in their disciplines, offer numerous and robust opportunities for graduate students to develop proficiencies in research, scholarship, and independent thinking. Competency in quantitative techniques, statistics, or other special tools for research such as foreign languages is essential in many disciplines and for many kinds of research. All doctoral programs require the successful completion of advanced study in research methodology.

In addition, doctoral students are required to pass a comprehensive exam designed to ascertain the student’s general knowledge of the subject, acquaintance with scholarly research methods and skills, and ability to organize and present materials. The culmination of the doctoral program is a dissertation that shows a “high degree of scholarly competence.” Candidates for a master’s degree must satisfactorily complete a graduate research seminar or an acceptable thesis in their field of specialization unless the program trains practitioners and requires fieldwork.

UAlbany students achieve success with assistance and support from many offices. First, since the costs associated with graduate education and research can be a deterrent, the university offers
opportunities for financial assistance to those
who are completing research. Assistantships are
offered across the campus and support growth
via faculty-led scholarship. The campus also
offers opportunities for fellowships and research
support beyond a typical assistantship.

Mechanisms for supporting graduate students
include the Dissertation Research Fellowship
Awards Program, Benevolent Association
Research and Creative Activity Grants,
Conference Support Awards, the Grenander
Award for Non-Animal Methodologies in
Research, Testing and Education, and the
Journal Support Award. We also maintain
a list of external research funding sources
to further support graduate students with
research, conference travel, and professional
opportunities. Ultimately, 47% of doctoral
students in the 2018-19 academic year received
support to pursue their coursework and original
research: 495 received doctoral stipends from the
university, 35 were supported by individual unit
resources, and 159 were supported on external
research grants, out of a total population of
1,452 doctoral students.

Quality research, scholarship, and independent
thinking require more than financial support.
The Division for Research supports various
research opportunities for graduate students.
The mission of the division is to “increase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UALBANY GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM</th>
<th>MSCHE GENERAL EDUCATION CATEGORIES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math and Statistics</td>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing and Critical Inquiry</td>
<td>Oral and Written Communication; Critical Analysis and Reasoning; Technological Competency; Information Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Cultural and Global Awareness; Cultural Sensitivity; Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Cultural and Global Awareness; Cultural Sensitivity; Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>Scientific Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>Scientific Reasoning; Cultural and Global Awareness; Critical Analysis and Reasoning; Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US History</td>
<td>Cultural Sensitivity; Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Perspectives</td>
<td>Cultural and Global Awareness; Cultural Sensitivity; Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
<td>Cultural and Global Awareness; Cultural Sensitivity; Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges for the 21st Century</td>
<td>Cultural and Global Awareness; Cultural Sensitivity; Values, Ethics, and Diverse Perspectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADVANCED COMPETENCIES IN THE MAJOR (INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES)**

| Writing                            | Oral and Written Communication |
| Oral Discourse                     | Oral and Written Communication |
| Information Literacy               | Critical Analysis and Reasoning; Technological Competency; Information Literacy |
| Critical Thinking                  | Critical Analysis and Reasoning |
UAlbany’s visibility in, and resources for, advancing and disseminating knowledge, discovery, and scholarship,” and to “engage diverse communities in strategic partnerships and increase public, scholarly and economic benefits.”

In addition to faculty and staff, the division aims to support the scholarly endeavors of students (both graduate and undergraduate) and this commitment is documented in its vision and goals. The division offers students a place to find information about our research centers, institutes and labs, funding opportunities (internal and external), reports, publications, news, events, honors, and awards, and offers information on the SUNY Research Foundation. The division supports students on their research journeys and assists them throughout the entire process.

Proper mentorship is a key element of the success of all graduate students. It is expected that upon completion of their degrees, our graduate students have obtained skills in research and scholarship and have become content experts. In order to achieve this, our courses must be taught by faculty who have established advanced expertise in their fields. The University requires that graduate instruction may only be provided by faculty members who hold an earned doctorate or the Master of Fine Arts (MFA), or who hold the rank of associate professor or higher (exceptions may be requested for those with specialized qualifications). Our tenure and promotion process emphasizes ongoing scholarly contributions by faculty to ensure that graduate students are guided in their research by mentors who are at the cutting edge of innovative scholarship in their fields.

UAlbany rigorously assesses the effectiveness of all curricular offerings

The University systematically and regularly reviews its academic programs and assesses student learning. The UAlbany Institutional Assessment Plan describes the process and timelines for systematic review of all academic programs. (In the latter part of this chapter, we discuss how we assess administrative and co-curricular programs, while Chapter 4 discusses how we evaluate our assessment processes and provides data on their effectiveness.)

New academic program proposals undergo extensive review, evaluation, comment, revision and oversight. New programs begin with review and input from the proposing department. Proposals are then reviewed by the corresponding school’s governance body before moving to University governance (either the Undergraduate Academic Council or the Graduate Academic Council). If approved, the proposals are forwarded to the University Senate and then to SUNY Administration for review and, if desired, public comment. If approved at the SUNY level, proposals are forwarded to the New York State Department of Education to be reviewed and, if approved, registered. The Office of the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education and the Graduate School support and coordinate this process. Nonetheless, the process is complex and time-consuming and has been difficult for units at all levels to manage. SUNY has significantly expedited its own approval process, and the University is following suit with a committee making significant headway in identifying strategies to smooth the way for proposals through the various levels of review. This will ease the path to curricular innovation and will allow us to respond to current developments and trends in a timely manner (See Appendix 3.15).

Existing academic programs (both graduate and undergraduate) are assessed via external accreditation or campus program review. Both
these processes are facilitated by IRPE; both are overseen by the University Senate’s Council on Academic Assessment (CAA).

Academic programs that are not externally accredited are reviewed on a seven-year program review cycle. The Program Review process begins with a departmental self-study and the selection of independent reviewers for a two-day site visit. After the report is received from the reviewers, IRPE and the CAA review it. The CAA evaluates the report and provides its own response. This package is then reviewed by the responsible dean and the entire process results in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the dean/Provost and the department. This MOU process ensures a forward-looking strategy and addresses areas of excellence and concern identified through the Program Review process. This “closes the loop” by including a series of specific action items along with timelines for implementation. Extensive information for departments on the entire process is available from IRPE, including a practitioner’s guide. The CAA and IRPE maintain websites with departmental self-study documents available to the concerned parties. Final MOUs are shared with the department, dean, and the Provost.

If programs are externally accredited (Appendix 3.16) the process is customized to meet the individual requirements of the external accreditors, but much of the UAlbany oversight processes remain. The responsible unit undertakes a comprehensive self-study, and works with the external accreditors to determine the site visit team. Once the site visit team concludes its review, they send a report to the school/department and to the dean and Provost. Where deficiencies are noted, the school/department must address them through a consultative process. This process is also under the purview of the CAA, providing for governance partnership in the external accreditation process. IRPE maintains copies of all reports.

Academic program surveys, student feedback, and Student Instructional Rating Forms (SIRFs) – student evaluation of their courses and instructors – are part of both program reviews and external accreditations. SIRF evaluations are used in classes, whether taught face-to-face, fully online, or via a blended delivery. SIRF results are also included in Promotion and Tenure cases for faculty.

Our campus adheres to a SUNY systemwide schedule for assessing each General Education learning objective every three or four years. The four competencies embedded in each major are reviewed by the Associate Dean for General Education and the Committee on General Education (part of the Undergraduate Academic Council). General Education assessment is overseen by the General Education Assessment Committee of the University Senate’s Council on Assessment. The results of these assessments are discussed in Chapter 5.

UAlbany has invested in an online systemwide educational portfolio and additional growth is a Strategic Plan priority. All online credit-bearing academic programs are subject to the same approval process noted above, including having to be approved by the State Education Department. Courses are reviewed as part of their home department’s review process using SIRF evaluations. We assess courses taught using hybrid or online pedagogy and fulfill general education requirements using the same campus procedures that apply to in-person offerings. Our ability to appropriately support online offerings is assessed by the Vice Provost for Online Learning, a new position created since our last Middle States accreditation. In addition to the rigorous assessment that all of our academic offerings receive, a comprehensive review of our online courses and administration was recently conducted (Appendix 3.17). In addition, the School of Education, which is our largest provider of online education, has been consistently ranked by US News & World Report as a top-10 provider of online graduate education nationally for the last three years.
Our program in Writing and Critical Inquiry is assessed as part of General Education assessment, since WCI is one of our General Education requirements. This program also was self-assessed comprehensively in 2015, and the director provides annual analyses of student completion and program effectiveness. (see Appendix 3.16 as an example)

We also survey and assess programs that have credit-bearing courses. For example, our Living-Learning Communities and First-year Seminar Program are evaluated for retention and GPA effects (see Appendix 3.19), which complements data collected from student satisfaction surveys. While we assess courses within the Honors College using the same rigorous process as all other courses – as part of departmental program review or external accreditation, or of general education assessment – the dean of the Honors College also assesses the overall retention and effectiveness of the Honors College ( Appendix 3.20).

When courses taught for EOP students fulfill General Education requirements (writing, math) they are assessed as part of our campuswide General Education assessment. EOP provides a mandatory five-week summer preparation program, first-year and sophomore study skills classes, mentoring, and academic support. A complete report detailing various aspects of the EOP program can be at found in Appendix 3.21.

International credit-bearing courses are either evaluated by academic departments for course equivalencies or evaluated by our Center for International Education and Global Strategy. In addition, international courses and programs undergo partner visits and syllabi reviews to ensure high quality. Students are advised on how courses will count towards their graduation requirements during pre-travel advisement.

The UHS program offers college-level courses in high schools across New York State in over 30 subject areas. These courses have UAlbany departmental liaisons, and curricula are within the purview of the affiliated academic department. UHS courses with General Education student learning outcomes undergo the same rigorous assessment as campus General Education courses.

The University participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE; see Appendix 3.22 for the 2017 results), which includes benchmark data on several high-impact practices and engaged learning. Through the Office of Student Engagement, UAlbany continues to add high-impact practices for undergraduate students. Growth in our Living-Learning Communities and First-year Seminar courses continue to show very positive retention and GPA success (Appendix 3.19). UAlbany’s Strategic Plan provides for additional growth in several high-impact practices including L-LCs and applied learning.

We assess the expanded experiential education programs according to where they are situated organizationally. Internship courses are reviewed by the Committee on Interdisciplinary Studies. Research-based experiences awarding academic credit are overseen by the appropriate academic department or by CURCE. Service-based experiences awarding academic credit are managed through the School of Social Welfare’s Community and Public Service Program, meaning that these courses are assessed through the program review process maintained by that school.

Meanwhile, the campus is implementing an administrative assessment process and thus administrative units that offer or oversee credit-bearing work but are not housed within academic departments (such as the Honors College, Living-Learning Communities, and EOP) are included in this assessment process.

In Spring 2019, the University Senate passed a bill governing micro-credentials. Faculty and/or departments develop micro-credentials through a proposal process centralized in the Center for Experiential Education, which convenes a committee of faculty and staff to review and approve them. The committee includes
a member of the Undergraduate Academic Council and a member of the Graduate Academic Council. Proposal review is underway, and the University will begin offering a small number of micro-credentials in Fall 2019. Micro-credentials are issued digitally on the Credly Acclaim platform, but do not appear on a student’s academic transcript.

**STANDARD IV – SUPPORT OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

UAlbany recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings and in support of our students, UAlbany has firmly committed to student retention, persistence, completion, and success

UAlbany has clearly stated, ethical policies and processes to admit, retain, and facilitate the success of students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals provide a reasonable expectation for success – and which are compatible with our mission to be the nation’s leading diverse public research university

The University at Albany has established Student Success as a top university priority within the Strategic Plan, affirming that “student success is at the center of all we do.” To meet this commitment, the University has in place strong support systems both in and out of the classroom. These systems, which will be described throughout this section, have evolved to meet the changing needs of our students.

Ultimately, the central measures of student success are retention and graduation rates. These metrics show a decline for UAlbany in recent years as compared to national benchmark data, as represented in the chart below:

*Table 4.1 Retention Rates at UAlbany and Peer Institutions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>UAlbany Retention</th>
<th>National 4-Year Publics</th>
<th>R-1 Public Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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*Fall 2018 retention is as of July 25, 2019 and will change.
To address this state of affairs, in February 2019 the University convened a Strategic Enrollment Management Council (SEMC), co-chaired by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Student Affairs. The SEMC was charged to develop a sustainable, integrated, campuswide framework that maximizes recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation rates by engaging campus stakeholders in the development of the University framework for student success.

The SEMC is composed of six work groups, each of which contributes to the development of an overarching university student recruitment and support framework. These work groups (Program Demand & Market Trends, Enrollment Marketing, Financial Aid, Graduate Student Recruitment, Undergraduate Student Recruitment, and Student Success) have provided in-depth evaluations of each area to identify areas of strength as well as areas in need of improvement or redesign. The final SEM plan was released in November 2019 (Appendix 4.1). The plan’s overarching goal is to strategically grow UAlbany’s overall enrollment in a way that accelerate progress in fulfilling our mission and reaching our vision. This will be achieved using five key strategies:

- Attracting new graduate students
- Increasing retention of undergraduate students
- Growing our undergraduate applicant pool and increasing yield
- Recruiting international students, especially at the graduate level, and
- Significantly increasing our online presence

In addition to distributing this plan to all faculty and staff, the President has issued a call to action in numerous public addresses and other communications to faculty and staff stating that recruitment and retention must be everyone’s top priority, regardless of one’s role in the University.

**ADMISSIONS STANDARDS AND PROCESSES**

Undergraduate admission to the University is based on evidence of high school graduation or the equivalent, quality of high school program, record of achievement, and desirable personal characteristics without regard to age, sex, race, color, creed, disability, marital status, or national origin. The undergraduate bulletin and admissions website detail the undergraduate admission standards and first-year student profile. Graduate programs, deadlines, and requirements are unique to each program with this information located centrally on the Graduate School website. The Undergraduate Bulletin provides detailed information about the undergraduate admission process and requirements, and clearly articulates the areas included in the admission review and the process by which applicants are considered for admission. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions is responsible for the review and ultimate admission decision for all undergraduate students. This office has implemented a new recruitment platform, SLATE, which enhances the communication, tracking, and onboarding of all new students.

Graduate admissions is more decentralized, handled directly by the faculty in the academic programs, under the broad oversight of the dean of the Graduate School and the Graduate Academic Council (part of the University Senate), which collectively exercise general responsibility for graduate study, admissions and University-wide policies, procedures, requirements, and standards of graduate study. However, within this framework and with their approval, each graduate program establishes its own admissions criteria and application review processes, as appropriate for their field of study. The development, promotion, and operation of individual programs and the advisement and interests of students in them are the primary responsibility of the individual schools and departments which provide the graduate instruction.
The Center for International Education and Global Strategy is responsible for the recruitment, admission and enrollment of international students. International students who do not meet the minimum English language requirements but do meet the University’s admission standards may be offered conditional admission by the International Admissions & Recruitment Office. These students will be admitted to the Intensive English Language Program (IELP), and upon successful completion of IELP or upon achieving a 70 internet based TOEFL score or a 6.0 IELTS score, students will be able to matriculate as full-time first-year students. International graduate students apply directly through the Graduate School and for their specific program of study.

**UAlbany provides accurate and comprehensive financial aid and related information**

The undergraduate and graduate bulletins provide comprehensive and detailed information about estimated costs, financial aid, payment policies, tuition, and fees.

The Office of Student Accounts provides detailed instruction and information about historical and current term tuition and costs, bills, payments, and refunds, financial liability for withdrawing or dropping a course, as well as financial residency requirements. The Office of Student Accounts has recently developed a payment option (E-Payment Plan) to help students and families meet financial obligations while attending the University at Albany.

The Office of Financial Aid is responsible for the administration of state, federal and institutional financial aid programs. In conjunction with the Student Financial Center, the Office of Financial Aid assists students and families in navigating the financial aid process. Detailed financial aid policy and information is accessible via the website and in person.

Forty-one percent of UAlbany students are eligible for Federal Pell aid, which is significantly higher than the percentage of Pell eligible students at the other SUNY centers. Given the significant number of students with heightened financial need the Financial Aid office works to package students with as much aid as is possible, within federal guidelines. In addition, the University has developed new programs to provide micro-loans and grants to students to assist with financial holds on a student’s record as well as provide emergency funds if a financial crisis affecting their ability to pursue their education arises. For example, as the Fall 2019 semester was winding down, the University made a concerted effort to reach out to and assist several hundred students in good academic standing with financial holds to resolve their billing status in order to allow them to advance register for Spring 2020 classes. Participation in a new academic recovery program led by the Advisement Services Center, in collaboration with the Office of Financial Aid, was also instituted to ensure that these students had the mentoring, tutoring, and other needed supports once their particular financial barriers were addressed.

The Office of Financial Aid aims to educate students about financial literacy, and recently made available to all students the SUNY Smart Track financial planning tool noted earlier. Additionally, we have implemented the federally mandated Net Price Calculator, which is a great aid in providing students with preliminary cost and financial aid packages to assist in understanding the full cost of attendance.

The financial aid application process is the first step students take in their effort to receive funds to assist paying their educational expenses. A step-by-step guided tutorial helps students and families navigate the financial aid process. Included in the online information are specific deadline dates, links to necessary forms, and supplemental directions when appropriate.

The Financial Aid Office provides information about Federal Grants, New York State Grants and Scholarships, and university-specific scholarships available through the schools, colleges, and UAlbany Foundation.
UAlbany provides robust and holistic support programs for student success

The University at Albany offers several programs to assist students entering undergraduate study with identified weaknesses. As previously discussed, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is a state-funded program that supports economically and educationally disadvantaged New York State residents of all races. The program provides services designed to help students achieve success by providing support in academic, financial, social, and personal matters. Students in this program begin with a five-week summer intensive program and return to start their academic experience with classes, counseling, and advising that support their success. First- to second-year retention rates have fluctuated during periods of growth, but have always been above 90%, and 6-year graduation rates have also been higher than the general student population, showing the success of this program for qualifying students.

Students with academic records indicating that they might need more time to succeed in typical first-year classes are provided with a variety of support tools. A SUNY-Performance Incentive Fund (PIF) grant was recently utilized to develop assessment structures surrounding STEM classes, specifically focusing on intensive review and intervention strategies in introductory math and chemistry courses. Initial testing, smaller sections, enhanced tutoring, additional review sections and linked classes have been implemented through this grant. Based on a formal assessment, this pilot initiative has since received recurring funding status.

In some cases, students who are identified as underprepared are offered a smaller, intensive classroom environment (Chemistry); in others, additional credits and faculty support are provided through WCI (Writing and Critical Inquiry) studio classes. Supplemental instruction is offered along with tutoring, and beginning in fall 2019, first-year students admitted from our

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>First-Year Retention</th>
<th>4-Year Graduation Rates</th>
<th>5-Year Graduation Rates</th>
<th>6-Year Graduation Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
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<td>93.1%</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
</tr>
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<td>96.4%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>96.4%</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
<td>98.0%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>98.0%</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fall 2018 retention is as of July 25, 2019 and will change.
waitlist are being placed in a 3-credit college success class during their first semester. This pilot program will be carefully assessed with the goal of creating an academically supportive pathway for students needing additional help with the college transition process.

As previously noted, first-year students take a Writing and Critical Inquiry (WCI) general education class, and international students are offered separate sections of WCI taught by specially trained instructors to address the unique writing and communication needs of international student learners.

UAlbany offers students many first-year experiences designed to support students with varying levels of preparedness. These offerings include Living-Learning Communities, discipline-based seminars, Targeted Learning Clusters where students are housed based on their enrollment in a specific class, the Honors Program, and EOP. These programs provide faculty, advisors, and student mentors as direct student support advocates in each of these areas. Building on this established and successful portfolio of First Year Experience (FYE) programs, the University is moving toward a stronger pathway model for entering students. This is discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Transfer students also are offered a variety of successful Transfer First Year Experience programs to help with their transition to a new, and often different, learning environment. New transfer students might start directly in their major, with advising offered at the departmental level. Many begin as “intended” or “undeclared” majors and they are advised through the Academic Support Center. Students can start in one of our six Transfer Communities (where living on campus is optional), detailed in Appendix 3.12, or can choose to begin with a special section of a class that fulfills a unique, UAlbany general education requirement, Challenges for the 21st Century.

The University at Albany is committed to providing support for students who have learning challenges, especially those students who had an I.E.P. (Individual Education Plan) and/or 504 Plan in high school. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides support for registered students to receive appropriate learning accommodations. Students are encouraged to connect with the DRC during orientation.

Since our last Middle States accreditation, UAlbany has adopted the EAB Navigate Platform to build a campuswide approach to student success. One specific development is the creation of a Student Success Team model which connects advisors, faculty, and administrators on a “case management” approach to communicating about and supporting shared students. While this design serves to support all students, it is especially valuable for students who enter the University identified as academically at risk. The platform provides functionality that allows advisors to request in-term progress reporting from faculty and issue alerts about specific students. This improved information sharing model provides the opportunity for targeted and timely interventions for at-risk students.

The University continues to expand the use of the platform incorporating additional faculty and student service units. Since its launch in fall 2017, over 50,000 faculty and advisor appointments have been made through the EAB platform, 3,000 tutoring appointments, and over 10,000 students have engaged with the platform. As an outgrowth of this success, the University at Albany won EAB’s Return on Education award in 2018.

UAlbany has structured orientation, advisement, and counseling programs in support of student success

**ORIENTATION**

The Office of Orientation and Transition Programs (OTP) facilitates the transition of
new students into the University by hosting orientation events, developing an online supplemental orientation process, supporting connections to University resources, promoting a sense of pride in the University and partnering with parents and families throughout the onboarding process. Since the last Middle States review, the orientation process at UAlbany has undergone significant restructuring with the goal of creating a more interactive, inclusive, and engaging experience for incoming students. During orientation students are provided with tools and resources to connect with the larger University community, explore internships and potential career paths, and receive information about University policy and processes.

First-Year Orientation is a two-day program in the summer during which students stay overnight in a UAlbany residence hall. Students meet with their academic advisor to finalize their class schedule, attend interactive and informative sessions, meet other first-year students, and prepare for the upcoming semester.

Transfer students engage in a two-step onboarding process, including a dedicated advising session and a full-day transfer orientation. Each transfer student connects with an academic advisor prior to the transfer orientation day, either in person or on the phone, to evaluate their academic record and establish an academic pathway at UAlbany. During the week immediately prior to the first day of classes, every incoming transfer student participates in a full-day transfer orientation that includes federally mandated informational sessions, career planning workshops, and participation in the University convocation ceremony.

International Students participate in a weeklong orientation program through the Office of International Student and Scholar Services. Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) students participate in a mandatory five-week summer program before their first year at UAlbany. The purpose of this program is to provide the students with an intensive orientation to University life and to assist them with preparing for college studies.

Current UAlbany students serve as Orientation Leaders to guide students throughout orientation.

Graduate Student orientation takes place within the schools and colleges, usually at the program level, and all new graduate students receive an extensive orientation guide that is available online. In addition, the Graduate School partners with the Graduate Student Association each year to put on a Graduate Student Resource Fair introducing students to campus services (Counseling and Psychological Services, Disability Resource Center, Campus Recreation, etc.) and the Graduate School and GSA staff.

ADVISEMENT

A cohesive and consistent advisement model is essential to ensure that undergraduate students receive the necessary tools to make informed and personalized decisions about their academic pathway. The University at Albany currently has a trifurcated advising system where the Academic Support Center is responsible for the advisement of all (non-EOP) incoming students and non-declared students, Departmental Advisors are responsible for the advisement of students declared into their respective majors, and EOP provides four-year advising to all students in the EOP program. The University requires mandatory advisement for all students, ensuring that each student connects with an advisor to receive their Advisor Verification Number (AVN) prior to registration for the following term.

The Academic Support Center provides primary advisement to all incoming non-EOP first-year students and all open/non-declared transfer students. This office is specifically responsible for the early advisement and support of first and second year students as they explore and decide on a major academic pathway. Students advised in ASC are assigned to a specific academic
advisor and work with that advisor until declaring or being admitted into a major.

In addition to primary advisement, the Academic Support Center offers walk-in consultations to all undergraduates supplementing advisement meetings with departmental advisors. In 2017-2018 academic year, the Academic Support Center provided primary advisement to 6,300 students and had over 27,000 student scheduled appointments.

The Academic Support Center also provides specialized pre-professional advisement in both pre-health and pre-law areas. Pre-professional advisors are available to all UAlbany students interested in these fields, and they serve to assist students in preparing for and navigating the processes to enter these fields.

The Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) provides advisement and support services in academic, financial, social, and personal matters to all students admitted into the EOP program. EOP advisors have small caseloads (typically less than 100:1) allowing them to develop strong and sustained advising relationships with their students. This personalized and intrusive advising model has contributed to the overall success of the program and the high retention rates of EOP students. In addition to direct advisement, the EOP office offers tutorial services, an EOP computer lab, Study Skills Workshops, and a mentorship program.

Currently, once a student declares a major, the major department assumes primary academic advisement responsibility for the student. Each department is responsible for the oversight and implementation of the departmental advising model and thus there exists more than one advising model for declared students. Departmental advising is provided by a variety of both professional and faculty advisors.

In addition to their assigned academic advisor, each student-athlete is assigned an Athletic Advisor who has full knowledge of NCAA rules and regulations and academic eligibility. With the implementation of EAB, the advisement structure across campus has become much more collaborative. The university has implemented a “Success Team” model whereby each advisor is connected with the Resident Director and first-year instructors for their advisees so that the team can work together to support the student. The EAB Platform has improved interactions with students while also significantly improving the way that student service areas interact with each other. Providing key operational improvements (including a shared scheduling and advising platform) has streamlined access to student information and increased communication about shared students, directly improving collaborations between units. This increased productivity has strengthened campuswide advising and significantly improved outreach and intervention with at-risk students.

Going forward, the University is now moving toward an advisement model that unites the department-based advising structures under a campuswide framework supporting the student life cycle from admission to graduation. Specific focus is on providing consistent information across general education and curricular requirements, strengthening coordination and collaboration, and providing holistic and personalized support.

COUNSELING, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

UAlbany provides a broad range of services to support the health and well-being of our students through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Student Health Services (SHS), the Center for Behavioral Health Promotion and Applied Research (CBHPAR) and Campus Recreation (CR). In 2017-18, these comprehensive and coordinated services provided clinical treatment across more than 22,000 visits and numerous population-level programs.

National data indicate that students are coming to college with increasingly complex behavioral
health concerns; in keeping with these trends, and despite its move off campus in 2008, CAPS experienced a 69% increase in clinical visits over the last decade as students on our campus exhibited an increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression.

In 2017, a new Department, the Center for Behavioral Health Promotion and Applied Research was created. CBHPAR provides leadership for health promotion/well-being initiatives and the essential population surveillance research that supports them. Among other programs, the CBHPAR is instrumental in guiding the University’s newest and most comprehensive well-being program, UAlbany WAY (Well-being and You). CBHPAR also coordinates the Middle Earth Peer Assistance Program, a nationally recognized service that offers a hotline, peer education, and peer coaching to all students and which is linked to the University’s academic infrastructure through credit-bearing service-learning opportunities and the new Human Development major.

CAPS and CBHPAR jointly contribute to alcohol and drug misuse and abuse prevention and mental health promotion research. These units also provide resources, education, consultation, and training to campus community members.

Student Health Services (SHS) provides a range of health care services for students, including treatment for acute illnesses and injuries, episodic treatment of chronic conditions, gynecologic and sexual health care, psychiatric services, monitoring and delivery of immunizations, and travel health counseling. In 2018, over 10,000 prescriptions were filled at no or low cost to students through our onsite pharmacy. In 2007-08, prior to its move off campus, SHS provided care to students across 18,341 visits, in comparison to its 2017-18 provision of 12,889 visits, illustrating the impact of the current geographic barrier to health service access. In response to requests from students and the University community, SHS, CAPS, and CBHPAR returned to the Uptown Campus in January 2020 into a new state of the art health and counseling facility funded through $2M in SUNY construction funding. This move will significantly increase timely and responsive access to services and promote efficient service delivery. This new facility is simply stunning and already well received by our students, as of this writing.

To further enhance the University’s comprehensive efforts to promote student health and well-being, Campus Recreation (CR) was created in 2011 and formally joined with the above three departments beginning in 2019. With its focus on student well-being, CR now offers a full range of services, including Intramural and Club Sports, Group Fitness, Wellness, Outdoor Adventure, Open Recreation, and Aquatics. CR also manages three satellite fitness centers, a pool, multiple outdoor fields, tennis and basketball courts, and a low ropes course. CR provides training and supervision to over 150 student employees each year. Spaces in two separate facilities on campus are currently in the planning stages for increased and improved CR programmatic areas.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES

International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS: To assist with academic and cultural adjustment, ISSS provides services and programs to a broad portfolio of international students and scholars, as detailed in Appendix 4.3. ISSS services include:

- Preparation of visa/immigration documents.
- Pre-arrival support and orientation upon arrival.
- Advisement about immigration, international travel, employment, financial planning, taxes, cultural adjustment, and personal matters.
- Administrative support for visas, maintenance of status, employment authorization, social security cards, federal and state taxes and other benefits.
• Aid in successful integration of our international students and scholars into the academic, cultural, and social life on campus and in the greater Albany area.

Helping students and scholars comply with federal immigration regulations is a critical task. ISSS informs international students and scholars of federal policies and procedures, and keeps SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) records up to date.

ISSS liaises with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Department of State, and has recently begun using a case management and SEVIS batching program called Sunapsis. On campus, ISSS collaborates with the Academic Support Center, the Department of Residential Life, and other campus offices to connect international students and scholars to services on and off campus. In addition to ISSS, the Center for International Education and Global Strategy offers an Intensive English Language Program (IELP), described earlier. The program delivers high-quality English language instruction, supports the University’s academic programs by facilitating conditional admission of academically qualified students who need English language support, and provides remedial English to admitted students.

TRANSFER SUPPORT SERVICES

Transfer students enter UAlbany with a diverse set of backgrounds and needs, and UAlbany’s transfer coordinator creates a unique support system to facilitate a positive and successful transfer experience. When students transfer to UAlbany they are offered support through our Campus Transfer Coordinator, and a cadre of specially trained Transfer Transition Leaders. The university has several clubs for transfer students, commuter students, non-traditional students, and has chapters of two national honorary societies (Tàu Sigma for transfers and, new in fall, 2019, Alpha Sigma Lambda for non-traditional students). Transfer engagement programs and results can be found in the Student Engagement Annual Report (Appendix 4.3).

Transfer students are provided supportive pathways into UAlbany curriculum and majors through Transfer Communities (where living on campus is optional) and special sections of our Challenges for the 21st Century general education classes.

The Student Engagement Annual Report (2017-18) highlights transfer engagement with more than 600 new transfer students attending a welcome event within the first three weeks of the Fall 2017 semester and 60 transfer students attending Community College Luncheons designed to familiarize new students with key campus resources. Appendix 4.3 shows that first-year transfer student retention has been consistently above 80% over the past 10 years, and upwards of 65% of transfer students graduated within four years over this timeframe.

A Dean of Students office was established in Spring 2019 and serves as a centralized source for the functional units in the “student advocacy and support” cluster. Specifically, the following support areas are now a part of the Dean of Students office:

• The Advocacy Center for Sexual Violence provides confidential advocacy and emotional support services to student survivors of sexual violence through the coordination and provision of all services and actions they may be in need of, thus increasing their overall well-being and retention rate. The center provides a comprehensive sexual violence prevention and training program for students, faculty, and staff.

• The Office of Community Standards supports and promotes a safe and civil community through the establishment and administration of the student code of conduct, Community Rights and Responsibilities. Community Standards consults with students, faculty/staff, and community partners, and facilitates a variety
of resolution processes to address concerns, conflicts, and violations of University policy.

- The Disability Resource Center supports students by ensuring a fully accessible living and learning environment for the University’s programs, services and activities in order to prepare them for a successful future in a diverse and global society.

- Off-Campus Student Services (OCSS) provides support, resources, programming, outreach, and accountability to students who reside or who plan to reside off-campus, with an emphasis on safety and security, community engagement, being a good neighbor, locating housing, and tenants’ rights. OCSS strives to promote positive University/community relations by working collaboratively with internal and external partners to address issues and concerns that impact the college community off-campus.

- Student CARE Services administers programs to help students overcome personal, social, and financial barriers to success, especially those related to emergency and basic needs. Support may include collaborative needs assessment, resource coordination, financial and in-kind grants, and on-going mentorship.

- Veteran and Military Student Services provides support to University at Albany students who are veterans, veteran-dependents, active duty personnel, Reserve and National Guard members, and ROTC cadets to secure Veterans Affairs educational benefits, facilitate connections, and create a sense of community through veteran-centered events and activities.

Some UAlbany students have resource challenges beyond their financial needs. For some students, these challenges include food insecurity and lack of access to professional clothing. To respond to these needs, the university created an on-campus food pantry and a professional clothing exchange (Purple Threads), which provides new and used professional garments to students free of charge.

UAlbany has innovative academic support processes and programs

The University provides a multitude of academic support opportunities to enhance the successful achievement of students’ educational goals. Campuswide tutoring programs are offered through the Learning Commons (formerly Advising Plus), the Center for Achievement, Retention, and Student Success (CARSS), as well as departmental tutoring programs including Bio-DOME, IBASS, and the Math Lab.

The Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) and the Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) are New York State Education Department funded programs to increase the number of historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged New York resident students in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and health-related fields. CSTEP provides students with opportunities to conduct summer research, receive peer mentor/tutor help, participate in educational field trips, present research at conferences, and receive discounts toward graduate preparatory courses. Over 300 students are served annually in the CSTEP program, and 80% of CSTEP seniors graduate.

Success Centers: In Fall 2016, UAlbany opened its first Student Success Center through a partnership between Academic and Student Affairs. The original center is located in State Quad (a first-year residential hall), a second Student Success Center opened in 2018 and is located in the Campus Center, and a third opened in 2019 on Dutch Quad. The Student Success Centers are open to all UAlbany students and serve as Advising Plus satellite locations, bringing academic support through peer tutor sessions, group tutoring, exam review, and supplemental instruction.

The Career and Professional Development Office (CPD) works collaboratively to provide career support and services to both current
students and alumni who have graduated within the past five years. The CPD provides direct student support through the use of Career Coaches, Employer Relations and Alumni Relations team members, and Peer Career Advisors. One program of note is the Career Readiness Program, which provides students the opportunity to acquire career readiness skills and connect with a career mentor during their first year.

Throughout their academic careers students can utilize the CPD resources, including exploring our Handshake job and internship database, attending the job and internship fairs, and preparing for the transition to work.

UAlbany graduates can continue to benefit from connecting with the CPD post-graduation. Graduates can access the resources including professional assistance with resumes and job searching, and have access to Handshake and potential employers for up to five years post-graduation.

UAlbany’s Center for Experiential Education (CEE) was established in support of SUNY and the University at Albany’s mission to provide the broadest possible access to a comprehensive, quality program of education by enhancing the academic curriculum through experiential learning. Experiential learning affords students opportunities for hands-on learning, both on and beyond the campus. The CEE supports faculty and academic departments as they design and deliver experiential courses and curricula, including work integrated education, community-based learning, micro-credentials, and other course-based experiential learning projects.

UAlbany has clear policies and procedures for the evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits and experiential learning opportunities

Institutional policies related to the transfer credit equivalencies for undergraduate students are available on the Registrar’s website and as part of the Undergraduate Bulletin. Information for graduate students is available on the Graduate Bulletin. Transfer equivalencies for institutions and courses previously approved for transfer credit are available online from the University at Albany’s Transfer Equivalency Databank and also found through the Registrar’s website. Courses not included in the databank may still be awarded transfer credit but require a course description or syllabus be attached to the transfer credit permission form. Post-matriculation transfer courses may not meet some requirements for the major, minor, and/or liberal arts credit requirements.

The Office of Undergraduate Education and the Graduate School are respectively responsible for the development and maintenance of articulation agreements. These agreements establish clearly articulated transfer equivalencies as well as detailed pathways for students to transfer into UAlbany and continue a specific academic trajectory.

EVALUATION AND ACCEPTANCE

Courses are accepted for transfer credit provided that a grade of C- or higher was achieved and the individual course is equivalent to a course offered at the University at Albany. The maximum number of 90 transfer credits from two-year colleges, four-year colleges or a combination of colleges, may be applied toward the baccalaureate degree requirements.

The National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) and American Council of Education (ACE) provide the University with guidance on review and acceptance of non-traditional learning to include military training. If training is presented for consideration in the form of a transcript from an accredited institution, then credit will be considered (e.g. FEMA training through Frederick Community College). The University does not accept life experience credit from a transcript that is not connected to coursework.
The University currently will award credit and/or placement for Subject and General Examinations completed through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) that are equivalent to courses currently acceptable for transfer to the University at Albany, and on which the student has scored at or above the 50th percentile (i.e., equivalent to the grade of C). Students from any transfer institution may petition to have a course evaluated for a specific General Education Program category by consulting the Office of Undergraduate Education and filing a Transfer Credit Appeal. Students are permitted to submit these petitions at any point in their undergraduate career.

The University at Albany will award 30 credits to students completing the requirements for the IB Diploma with a cumulative score of at least 30 (including both Standard Level and Higher Level exams) and no score lower than a 4 (satisfactory). The University at Albany will consider for credit and/or placement on a course-by-course evaluation those IB subjects completed at the Higher Level without completion of the IB Diploma if a score from 4 (satisfactory) to 7 (excellent) is earned.

Students are permitted to complete post-matriculation transfer credit. If they are completing the coursework through a SUNY school, the student should cross-register for the course using prescribed procedures and forms. If the course will be completed at a school outside of the SUNY system, the student should complete a Transfer Credit Permission Form (TCPF) in consultation with their advisors and/or department prior to taking courses at other institutions.

UAlbany safely and securely maintains student information and has effective policies and procedures to control the release of student information and records

The University at Albany is committed to ensuring the privacy and proper handling of confidential information it maintains on faculty, staff, and students, including Social Security Numbers (SSNs), which are required for state and federal government reporting purposes. It is the policy of the University to protect SSN privacy and to place appropriate limitations on their use throughout the admission, financial aid, billing, registration, and HR processes. Protections apply equally to University information systems and the information systems of contracted third parties as established through the University’s ITS Protocol, which was established as part of the University’s Identity Management Security Domain.

UAlbany follows SUNY guidelines and mandates in relation to granting access to Non-Public Information (NPI) that is stored in Student Information Systems (SIS) (e.g. PeopleSoft, Blackboard, and EAB). Non-public information includes SSNs, driver’s license numbers, credit and debit card information, financial records, and all information protected by the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Storage standards of Student Educational Records (FERPA) and other data types are enforced.

The University grants access to student data records to employees on an as-needed basis, but only after approval from both the department and the Registrar. Individual access is reviewed at least once each semester and employee access is terminated immediately upon separation from the institution. User IDs are never reassigned. The University has clearly defined protocols regarding the use of personally identifiable information and all other institutional identifiers, limiting their use to business purposes only and establishing procedures to assure that University employees are aware of and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Compliance with this protocol and its related standards and procedures is in accordance with the compliance section of the University’s Information Security Policy, as well as all applicable laws (such as the NYS Information Security Breach and Notification Law and the Social Security Protection law).
The Registrar’s Office conducts FERPA workshops at the request of the various departments. SANS, Securing the Human, has been adopted by the Office of Internal Controls to satisfy regulatory training requirements, including FERPA. The Office of Human Resources also has procured “FERPA for Higher Education” through Skillsoft, which is a learning management system that offers a plethora of eLearning, online training, and talent solutions on a corporate scale. The course is 30 minutes in length with interactivity throughout. Other topics through SANS include lessons on personally identifiable information (PII), privacy awareness, and security. Regular announcements are sent to faculty/staff at the beginning and end of each semester.

Specific information about FERPA and how the University handles its provisions can be found in the Undergraduate and Graduate bulletins on the University’s website. Students can grant permission to a third party to access their educational records by filing a student consent to release information form and can choose to suppress directory information by filing a request to suppress directory information form.

The campus adheres to the SUNY Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. The Registrar’s Office also uses the AACRAO Guide on Records Retention to inform decisions.

Collection and maintenance of student financial records by the Office of Financial Aid are governed by federal mandates and audited for accountability. Procedures to protect information vital to the institutional mission of teaching, learning and research are in place. Employees, appointees and volunteers must agree to the Access and Compliance Agreement (ACA) stating they will comply with applicable laws and University policies and procedures governing the handling and use of personal records and information. Failure to consent to the ACA is tracked on an individual basis and results in loss of access to University business records if not correctly completed and filed.

UAlbany offers athletic, student life, and other extracurricular activities that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all other programs

Athletics. The Department of Athletics provides an NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics program for men and women and is committed to supporting the educational mission of the University. The department prioritizes success in intercollegiate competition while maintaining student-athlete academic performance at the highest levels, and operates with fairness, integrity, and ethical responsibility. The University’s 16 teams have achieved notable success in athletic competition, for example winning 6 of the last 7 America East Commissioner’s Cups (which recognizes the strongest athletic program in the conference), and in 2018 the men’s lacrosse team became the first Division I SUNY team to be ranked number 1 in the nation and reached the NCAA Final Four. Most of the University’s teams compete in the America East Conference, while football plays in the Colonial Athletic Association and women’s golf is a member of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Association.

The Office of Compliance Services is committed to the principle of institutional control in the operation of the athletics department, consistent with the rules and regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the conferences, and the University. The Department of Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual (Appendix 4.4) clearly outlines these rules and regulations and the department’s commitment to them. Since student-athlete academic achievement and well-being are central to the Athletics mission, the department maintains a comprehensive Student-Athlete Academic Services program. The Department of Athletics also publishes a Student-Athlete Handbook (Appendix 4.5) and fully apprises student-athletes of all support services, resources, responsibilities, rules, and expectations at orientation sessions, team meetings, and academic advisement sessions.
Student-athletes themselves run a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee to discuss matters of relevance to all student-athletes and to mount and coordinate extensive community service efforts.

UAlbany holds its student-athletes to the same rigorous academic and conduct standards (Appendix 2.20.1) as all students and members of the University community. Notably, our student-athletes achieve academic success at a level that matches or exceeds their athletic performance. For example, student-athlete GPAs are on average higher than average GPAs of the student population as a whole (average cumulative GPA in spring 2019 of 3.06 versus 2.96). The University’s Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR), a position required under NCAA rules, oversees matters of academic integrity with respect to the conduct of athletics on campus, as well as matters relating to student-athlete welfare and the administration of the Department of Athletics. The FAR is appointed by and reports directly to the president, and to the faculty (via an annual report presented to the University Senate), and serves as a member of the Intercolligate Athletics Advisory Board (IAAB).

The IAAB includes faculty and staff from across the campus, and meets regularly and reviews data, policies, and procedures related to athletics, as well as receiving full annual reports on the Athletics budget. In this oversight role per its charge, the IAAB reports directly to the President and annually conveys its judgment about the appropriateness of the recommended Mandatory Athletic Fee (Appendix 4.6). Further oversight of the University’s athletics activities and student-athlete well-being on campus occurs in the form of a Title IX Resolution Committee, formed after the University entered into a Resolution Agreement with the Office of Civil Rights to strengthen UAlbany’s Title IX position and offer equal and meaningful opportunities for both women and men to participate in athletics on campus. This committee includes members of the Athletics staff, the University administration, and faculty, and tracks the Department of Athletics efforts and progress in the area of Title IX.

Student Life. UAlbany’s vibrant campus life is enhanced by many offices and programs within the Division of Student Affairs and via student governance through the undergraduate Student Association (SA) and the Graduate Student Association (GSA). UAlbany has organizations that are funded and overseen by the SA, the GSA, academic departments and national Greek organizations and honorary societies. Currently, there are 199 registered student organizations, 20 club sports teams, 22 graduate student organizations, and nine pre-professional clubs.

The majority of extracurricular activities are overseen by the re-established Office of Student Involvement. This office maintains several tools to communicate and promote campus activities including UAlbanyGO and MyInvolvement. The Student Organization Resource Center was launched in 2015 to support clubs and organizations, and a requirement for all clubs to have a faculty or staff advisor was added since our last Middle States review. Fiscal oversight of the Student Association Budget is through the UAS Trusteeship agreement.

The University at Albany is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for our incoming students to acclimate them to the University and aid in their success during their pivotal first six weeks on campus. The Great Dane Welcome (GDW), a strategic and comprehensive calendar of events, launched in 2014, includes 64 events ranging from large-scale traditions to simple welcome tents. Funded through the Campus Life Fee, the UAlbany Programming Board contributes significantly to the GDW and in 2018-19 produced 132 events reaching 20,000 attendees through their programming efforts.

The Office of Intercultural Student Engagement (ISE) provides a variety of programs to develop and maintain an inclusive and supportive campus
environment for all students. Within this office, the Multicultural Resource Center works to improve the campus climate for African, Latino, Asian and Native American (ALANA) students, as well as assist in the training and education of all members of the UAlbany community around topics of diversity, inclusion, multiculturalism and cultural competency. The C.H.A.R.G.E. Peer Educator Program provides an opportunity for students seeking leadership experiences related to diversity and inclusion to receive training to facilitate cultural competency discussion-based dialogues.

The Gender and Sexuality Resource Center oversees our Safe Space training program as well as providing campuswide programming. Finally, Interfaith Services along with various faith and interfaith student groups on campus, encourage UAlbany students, faculty, staff and alumni, as well as members of the surrounding communities, to participate in a diverse array of faith and interfaith events and dialogues, service opportunities, or attend weekly Catholic, Islamic, Jewish, or Protestant services on campus. ISE operates from a collaborative approach, working with various offices and departments at the University to ensure all students benefit from the rich diversity within the University.

In 2017, the University opened the Center for Leadership and Service, which integrates student development and experiential learning into relevant portions of the academic curriculum while expanding opportunities for service learning. As an example, the Center and the School of Education launched a new interdisciplinary minor in Leadership. The Center also works in collaboration with other offices, units and community agencies. In spring 2019, the Center for Leadership and Service and the Office of Career and Professional Development received UAlbany Strategic Planning Resources allocated specifically for community service internships and for emergency funding to assure students are able to complete internships.

With approximately 93% of first-year students, 82% of sophomores and 56% of juniors and seniors living on campus, the Department of Residential Life provides programming in the residence halls. The current programming model, UAlbany WAY, provides structure for Resident Assistants to promote wellness and social activities among students who live in residence.

Since our last accreditation report, the University has invested in a campus recreation program, funded through a new Recreation and Campus Life fee. This has allowed us to offer additional health and physical activity programs for our students. Our intramural programs have grown and now serve over 2,500 students each year, and we have added fitness classes for faculty, staff, and students.

Within Fraternity and Sorority Life, there are currently 37 active organizations involving 425 students. The average GPA of Greek-affiliated students was 3.04 in spring 2019, and students are highly involved in community service, having completed 3,833 hours of service in the past year. The University recently launched a Greek Life Commission, charged with providing a comprehensive review of Greek Life that will be reported in 2020.

Third-party Providers. While the University partners with several external organizations or vendors in ways that benefit our students, third-party providers do not provide, oversee, or significantly contribute to the delivery of credit bearing or co-curricular activities.

Regular assessment of the effectiveness of UAlbany programs supporting the student experience are systematic and longstanding

The primary purpose of the University at Albany’s Institutional Assessment Plan (Appendix 4.7) is to ensure a high-quality academic experience for its students and to promote institutional effectiveness in achieving University goals. While the Institutional Assessment Plan formalizes assessment activity across
UAlbany, it also acknowledges the University’s long history of using assessment to inform campus decision-making on a number of levels with regard to programmatic and operational matters that affect student social, intellectual, and personal development. The Institutional Assessment Plan is a shared statement of the University community, and a commitment to share assessment results with students and other concerned parties in support of an institutional culture of assessment.

Assessment data concerning the student experience are primarily collected through numerous surveys administered by Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) and Student Affairs Assessment and Planning (SAAP) during key times of students’ tenure at the university. The IRPE survey log (Appendix 4.8), which documents institutional survey activity going back to Fall 2000, shows 20 assessment-related surveys conducted in the most recent full academic year. Results from these surveys are shared with interested stakeholders and governance bodies with the ultimate goal of enhancing the student experience of UAlbany students and operational excellence.

The Office of Undergraduate Education engages in continual evaluation of assessment and satisfaction data, especially to improve the student academic experience. Units within UGE (Student Engagement, Writing and Critical Inquiry, General Education, the Academic Support Center, the Honors College, and the Center for Achievement, Retention, and Student Success (CARSS), and the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Engagement) conduct assessment reviews each year related to institutional success metrics such as retention and graduation rates.

Student Engagement assessment includes an evaluation of the retention impact of each First Year Experience program (example below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FYE PROGRAM</th>
<th>FIRST-YEAR TO SOPHOMORE RETENTION BONUS*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living-Learning Communities</td>
<td>+8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeting Learning Clusters</td>
<td>+2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors College</td>
<td>+12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOP</td>
<td>+12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline-based First Year Seminars</td>
<td>+3.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compared to first- to second-year retention rate of 77.8% for students not in any FYE program

The Division of Student Affairs collects usage, satisfaction, and learning data from students, faculty/staff, alumni and other stakeholders with regard to the Division’s programs and services. The Division’s assessment council works to ensure that all 20 units evaluate student employees, measuring student learning or development outcomes, and collecting data for continuous improvement. SAAP has also facilitated program reviews with eight departments over the last five years.

Co-curricular programs are assessed through Student Affairs Assessment and Planning (SAAP) and IRPE. These consist of campus assessments (e.g., 6-week satisfaction survey), SUNY-wide assessments (e.g., Campus Climate Survey), and national benchmark surveys (e.g. NSSE). Attendance and satisfaction data are routinely gathered at co-curricular events and used to improve offerings and communication methods. All UAlbany offices participate in ongoing assessment and the Division of Student Affairs coordinates their assessments through an assessment council.

Every three years the University at Albany participates in the SUNY-wide Student Opinion Survey (Appendix 4.9). The data from this survey, which is administered to all undergraduates, allows us to benchmark our scores against the other three SUNY university
research centers at Binghamton, Buffalo, and Stony Brook.

After the first six weeks of the fall semester, the Great Dane Welcome Survey (Appendix 4.10) is administered to all new undergraduates (first-years and transfers). The 26-question survey asks students about their experiences at the University and measures their overall well-being.

The Offices of Student Affairs Assessment and Planning, Career and Professional Development, and Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) have collaborated since 2015 to administer the First Destination Survey. The data gathered provide a better understanding of where recent graduates are employed or attending graduate school. Beginning in summer 2019, these data were made available via the IRPE assessment report website.

The University has been measuring student learning outside the classroom through the Student Learning Project (SLP) over the past decade. Now in its third iteration, the SLP has been built using a framework that integrates national (AAC&U), campuswide (General Education) and Student Affairs best practices while adopting ideas from ACPA’s Student Learning Imperative and the PERMA model. Results have shown that UAlbany students are achieving the intended out-of-class learning outcomes.

Taken together, the programs and strategies detailed above represent an integrated approach to furthering our institutional goals around student success.

**CONCLUSION**

Given the importance of supporting the student experience, we would like to conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of current efforts to address recent declines in undergraduate retention and graduation rates.

Beginning in fall 2019, the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education has been charged with the coordination of a cohesive retention strategy. The Academic Support Center, Honors College, Writing and Critical Inquiry, the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Engagement, academic recognition and probationary processes, university-wide tutoring, and our FYE programs were consolidated in the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education. These changes make it clear to all, across campus, that the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education is responsible for coordinating strategic initiatives focused on improving student retention and graduation.

The efforts of this office reflect the Strategic Enrollment Management Council’s (SEMC) five-prong strategy to address retention, persistence and completion at UAlbany by adopting a framework that recognizes student success at the intersection of institutional structure and culture, student wellness and preparedness, and academic momentum and support. Strategically incorporating each of these areas into a sustainable success model that is personalized, student-centric and proactive will drive the work of UGE and the campus going forward.

The SEMC recognizes the critical role of faculty for student success and thus coordination with our schools and colleges for university-wide and department-specific retention initiatives is an essential part of the model. Early in the 2019-20 academic year, each school and college began evaluating their student success programs and initiatives to identify areas of strength and opportunities for alignment with the SEMC framework.

Beginning with the Fall 2019 cohort, we are utilizing a combination of strengthened, intentional advising, Diagnostic Assessment and Achievement of College Skills (DAACS) assessment and testing, and EAB powered Student Success Teams to work closely with incoming students.
to create customized First Year Experience (FYE) pathways based on their intended major, prior academic preparation, personal goals, and professional aspirations. Engagement classes, paired with new direct admissions programs, are currently under development and in the Spring 2019, new FYE marketing materials and a new FYE website were created in anticipation of this cohesive and integrated approach.

Even with enhanced initial advising, diagnostics and FYE pathways, some students will not achieve academic success in their first semester or year. UAlbany has a comprehensive notification system for informing students of their academic standing. New transfer students are offered a mentor to help them recover through our Office of Transfer Engagement. In addition, in the Spring 2019 semester UAlbany launched a new Academic Recovery Program. In its initial pilot, students placed on academic warning and academic probation were paired with an academic coach trained in providing support to students in academic distress.

Students were required to meet with their Academic Recovery Advocate weekly along with attending study and study skills sessions. Preliminary data from this program show excellent promise.

The University at Albany is fully committed to student retention, persistence, and completion. Recognizing the opportunity to improve our success in this area, we are in the midst of evaluating and redesigning our student support system to enhance the quality of the learning environment, contribute to the educational experience, and further foster student success. ♦
CHAPTER 4

FOSTERING AN ENVIRONMENT OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

STANDARD V - EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

UAlbany has clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels which are interrelated, with relevant educational experiences, and which are consistent with the UAlbany mission.

The University at Albany’s institutional learning goals at the undergraduate level directly support its mission to serve as an engine of opportunity for its students by enabling them to pursue possibilities and create connections across the entire curriculum.

Each academic component of a student’s degree is built around clearly articulated learning outcomes:

- Well-publicized (on departmental websites) student learning objectives developed by academic departments and programs shape major and minor curricula within disciplines;
- The General Education Program is built around 10 categories that have both common characteristics and independent, specific learning objectives;
- Elective courses possess disciplinary and/or general education learning objectives by virtue of their integration into major, minor, and/or general education curricula.

The University also has explicitly articulated institutional learning goals in the form of advanced Competencies in the Major. These competencies – in Advanced Writing, Critical Thinking, Oral Discourse, and Information Literacy – are part of the General Education Program, fully integrated into major curricula, and develop skills the university deems critical to the academic, professional, and life-long success of its students. Each of the four competencies has specific and independent learning objectives, and all majors offered at UAlbany have outlined specific plans that ensure coursework develops skills in these areas. In this way, the University clearly signals that writing, critical thinking, oral communication, and information literacy are broad, yet well-defined institutional learning goals that bind together the educational experiences of our students across their academic program.

Albany employs a longstanding, organized, and systematic process for assessing student learning.

The University employs a robust and varied framework for assessing student learning and achievement that aligns with the University’s strategic plan and mission, especially for the Student Success priority. Building on University assessment frameworks that date back to 1968, the University updated the assessment framework in 2005 as part of the Institutional Assessment Plan. With implementation over the past 13 years, the University has developed improvements to procedures, processes, and documentation, including updates to support documents such as *A Practitioner’s Guide to Program Review*. These frameworks foster an institutional culture of assessment, which will ensure the continued excellence of the academic programs within the university and in turn will empower students to author their own success. Furthermore, we use an effective assessment framework to enhance the student experience, a key component of our Student Success core priority.

Assessment activities take place throughout all degree programs and involve many units within UAlbany with most of these activities coordinated by IRPE, the source of official data about the University. IRPE works with individual units to develop and review assessment plans and provides feedback on external accreditation reports to ensure their accuracy. In addition, the Council on Academic Assessment,
and its two subcommittees (the General Education Assessment Committee [GEAC] and the Academic Program Review Committee [APRC]) have an advisory role for the university assessment system. This chapter documents the methods by which UAlbany assesses learning outcomes at the program, department, and/or institutional level, including continuous improvement of the process over the last decade and proposals that will enhance this framework going forward.

As such, we have an organized process for program assessment and improvement for the evaluation student achievement related to institutional and degree/program goals. This system involves four key areas:

- **General Education Assessments**
- **Annual Student Learning Outcome Reports**
- **Program Self-Study Report and Site visit (internal and external evaluators)**
- **Institutional Analysis Activities.**

Across these assessment formats, faculty and staff evaluate curricular goals, program intent and quality, assessment systems, student achievement, and evidence of improvement/change. In this section, we provide background information on each key area of the system and share the results of our evaluation of these processes.

General Education assessment and assessment of broader institutional learning goals

The University assesses undergraduate general education courses on a regular basis using a multistep process. The process ensures courses are taught in a manner that is consistent with the learning objectives associated with each general education course category, and that they evaluate what fraction of students meet these objectives, and identify methods to improve courses. We conduct this assessment process independently for courses taught by University at Albany instructors and those associated with the University in the High School (UHS) Program.

During each academic year, IRPE samples approximately 50% of the courses, identifying two to three of the 10 general education categories for assessment, meaning that we assess each category every five years. Within each category, IRPE randomly selects a subset of courses that satisfy that requirement from the spring semester, rather than trying to assess every course. During this selection process, IRPE staff often modify the list of selected courses to ensure balance among departments and course enrollments. IRPE informs course instructors prior to the start of the semester when their course has been selected for assessment and provide instructions on assessing each of the category’s learning objectives. In addition, IRPE staff make themselves available to instructors to discuss the assessment process, which should take place during the course.

At the end of the semester, each instructor is required to provide a report to IRPE, which includes the course syllabus, the process by which they assess each of the learning objectives and the number of students who meet each of these learning objectives. Since the last MSCHE review, the response rate for courses that are selected for assessment has increased markedly due to a combination of encouragement from the College of Arts and Sciences dean’s office (most of the general education teaching is within the college) and outreach from IRPE staff to assist in the development of these reports. Once IRPE obtains all reports, staff combine the information contained in the individual course reports into a summary report that includes a description of the assessment process, response rates, and learning objective statistics for each category.

The IRPE summary report, along with the individual course assessment information is transmitted to the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC). The GEAC is tasked with reviewing each individual course to make sure the course description remains consistent with the student learning objectives for the general
education category and review the numbers of students that meet each of the objectives. All individual course information is redacted (i.e., identifying information about the specific course) before transmitting this information to GEAC, which is geared toward ensuring an objective evaluation of each course. In nearly all cases, we have found that individual courses comply with the learning objectives, and more than 80% of the students who take these courses meet or exceed each of the individual objectives.

Students within the UHS program are more likely to meet the individual learning objectives than students who take courses at UAlbany. As a group, UHS students are highly motivated, and more time is devoted to instruction (a one-semester course is taught over two high school semesters). Finally, the GEAC presents a summary report that includes each course's assessment results and methods of improvement. In cases where a course is not compliant with the learning objectives, or a department did not participate in the assessment process, the Associate Dean for Graduate Education coordinates with the department and corrective steps are taken. At the conclusion of each year's General Education cycle, the Director of Assessment posts the final IRPE report on the IRPE assessment website (Appendix 4.11).

A significant barrier to full faculty participation in any given semester's assessment and to obtaining accurate assessment information on the General Education curriculum is that instructors are concerned about the amount of effort required to effectively assess the learning objectives relative to the potential value to improve the course.

Assessment of broader institutional learning goals, in the form of the General Education Competencies, is separate from assessment of courses in the 10 general education categories. The results of the latter are conveyed to SUNY as part of our responsibilities as a campus in the statewide system. The competencies function as local requirements exclusive to UAlbany. After they were proposed and then approved by University governance, academic departments developed detailed plans to deliver the competencies to all students in each of the University’s majors. Governance, in the form of the University Senate’s Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC), began review of these plans in 2014. The council either approved a given departmental plan, or returned it to the department for revisions that would ensure the plan could demonstrably and effectively meet the learning objectives for each of the four competencies. This process proved to be enormously time consuming and cumbersome, even if worthwhile in the opportunities it provided for departments to review and refine their major curricula and in the enhanced and integrated learning opportunities the competencies provide to students. To date, departments have submitted plans for all current majors offered at the University. Governance has approved plans for 50 majors, with approval of revised plans pending for seven more (these should receive final approval by the end of 2019).

Simultaneous with the process of development and approval, the Office of Undergraduate Education and IRPE have been developing plans for full assessment of the competencies. We will begin implementation of assessment in this area by academic departments in 2020. Assessment will proceed on a four-year cycle, with all learning objectives for one competency assessed each year in turn. The Associate Dean for General Education and the Office of Assessment will provide departments with forms similar to those used for assessment of general education courses, but tailored to the learning objectives of assessment tools appropriate for the competencies. Departments will submit these completed forms and associated data to the Director of Assessment, who will review them and convey results to governance General Education Committee of UAC and the Council on Assessment’s General Education Assessment Committee. Departments will use the assessment process to refine the approaches to delivering the competencies, and the relevant committees and offices will offer advice, guidance, and support in this process.
ANNUAL STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE REPORTS

With the exception of externally accredited programs, each academic program has developed a set of student learning objectives (SLOs) for each of their degrees. Following University guidelines, SLOs are unique to each degree program and have been developed and refined over time in consultation with IRPE. On an annual basis, each unit reviews their current set of SLOs to ensure that the objectives outlined are consistent with the current format of the degree, curriculum map, and assessment outcomes. Furthermore, IRPE carries out a bi-yearly check to ensure that the SLOs listed on each department’s web page and on the University’s SLO page reflect the current objectives. Externally accredited programs follow the guidelines of their accreditation body (e.g., American Psychological Association), including development of learning objectives and submission of annual reports directly to the organizations.

On an annual basis, each unit is required to submit a Student Learning Outcomes report to IRPE that documents the processes and outcome of specific learning objectives (SLOs) that were assessed during that academic year (it is not necessary to assess every SLO each year). Specifically, the report includes the methods that faculty/staff used to assess the specific SLO, and how the unit used the information from the assessment within an improvement feedback loop. Department units submit reports to the respective dean’s office, which then transmits the report to IRPE. Subsequently, two representatives from IRPE read the assessment reports and provide feedback on the objectives, assessment process and outcomes, and information about how the department used the assessment to improve the educational experience. The appropriate dean communicates IRPE feedback to the individual units.

The unit then addresses the feedback in subsequent reports, or in separate correspondence with the respective dean’s office and IRPE, if needed.

The Standard V work group evaluated the Student Learning Outcome annual assessment process by randomly selecting 12 departments and reviewing reports and feedback during three academic years: 2010-11, 2013-14, and 2015-16, which spans the period since the last Middle States Review. The 2016-17 academic year are the last available documentation of the full review – inclusive of the SLO report, University feedback, and program response (when applicable). Although we selected the departments randomly, they represent a broad cross section of UAlbany programs (see Appendix 5.1). Two members of the work group reviewed each set of reports and feedback by using the rubric shown in Appendix 5.2.

The group reviewed the assessment rubrics used to support the University’s 2010 Middle States self-study, but determined that expectations were now different. That is, rather than a focus on direct/indirect measures and basic procedures in the 2008 version (for the 2010 self-study), the 2018 rubric has a greater focus on continuous improvement. This includes the extent to which the unit had assessable SLO and assessment outcomes, responded to the IRPE feedback, and used results from the assessment process to improve the academic program.

The analysis of the annual assessment reports indicates that there is a wide range of response rates and quality of assessment going on within different units. Since the previous Middle States Review period, there has been a major emphasis on having each unit develop measurable learning objectives and related assessment outcomes. As a result, there are numerous individual SLOs that have become more focused over time and are now objectively assessable, which is demonstrated by the fact that eight of the 12 departments were rated at “adequate” or “exemplary” in rubric category 1.

There also are numerous examples of individual departments responding to the feedback provided by IRPE during the assessment process, which in turn resulted in a more comprehensive set of SLOs and assessment
Reports (nine of the 12 departments received an “adequate” or “exemplary” rating for rubric category 2). This group of programs had similar variety in demonstrating that they have used the assessment process within the educational feedback loop, in which seven out of the 12 programs received an “adequate” or “exemplary” score within this aspect of the rubric. Based on these results, it appears that most units engage with the yearly assessment process. Further, it appears that there has been a substantial improvement in the response rate and quality of the reports themselves since the last MSCHE review.

**Opportunities for improvement:** Based on an analysis of the evidence provided above, it is clear that the University at Albany has comprehensive and robust processes for assessing student learning across its academic programs. Notwithstanding these facts, we posit the following opportunities for improvement in this area:

- IRPE and the Associate Dean for General Education should develop a best-practices guide to be distributed to the instructor of each course that satisfies a general education category. This guide would describe methods of developing course-specific assessment and additional resources that are available for this task. Such a guide should emphasize that instructors are not being asked to change their pedagogy, but rather to articulate the teaching practices they use to IRPE and GEAC. This would include describing how their courses, assignments, and methods of assessment align and support each other. The guide would necessarily provide examples from various disciplines.

- IRPE should work with academic departments to better document the improvement of educational programs/outcomes that systematic assessment activities generate, perhaps adding a section on the annual spreadsheet indicating progress in this area. We believe that units are making curricular improvements based on assessment activities but the systematic reporting of these improvement efforts could be improved within the annual reports.

**PROGRAM SELF-STUDY REPORT AND SITE VISIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATORS)**

The University utilizes a seven-year cycle for internal program reviews, with the timeline approved by the Council on Academic Assessment. The process consists of a program self-study and report, a site visit by external reviewers, an external reviewer report, administrative and governance recommendations to the program, and a department response to the recommendations. Prior to a unit initiating a self-study, IRPE convenes a meeting of faculty and administrators, in which IRPE staff provide information, guidelines, and other supports as needed. IRPE remains involved throughout the process in reviewing self-study documents, arranging site visits, and general support. To support continuous improvement, the self-study requires specific documentation, including eight areas: mission, learning outcomes, curriculum and design (including a curriculum map outlining goals), student quality, faculty quality, assessment plan (including outcomes and uses), support, resources, and facilities, and conclusions.

As a separate process, programs with external accreditation (e.g., Public Health, Educator Preparation, School Psychology) participate in a timeline and self-study process as required by the accrediting agency (e.g., CEPH, TEAC, NASP, APA). In the past three years, the University has implemented updated procedures for the externally accredited programs. First, IRPE staff now review the final drafts of the self-studies prior to submission to the accreditation organization. The intent is to review all materials for accuracy and consistency with University policies and procedures. Second, the reports are now gathered and posted on a wiki for internal uses, including maintaining a record of submission, accreditation agency response, and
annual report. While still in the pilot stages, the intent is for the CAA, IRPE, and university administration to have easy access to the information from these reports, as needed, for University improvements.

From 2010 to 2017, the University had 31 programs report using the internal process and 14 program reports using external accreditation organizations. To evaluate the quality of the program reports, the Standard V work group evaluated 15 program reports. The group randomly selected 11 internal program reports and four externally accredited reports (see Appendix 5.3 for programs selected). Two reviewers read and scored each program report, with a follow-up conversation about any discrepancies. To gain insights into continuous improvement since the last Middle States self-study, the group used the 2010 rubric (see Appendix 5.4 for program review rubric). This rubric includes a category of “excellent” or “needs improvement” across the eight areas of the internal self-study report. Table 5.1 shows the percentage of programs reaching the “excellent” rating for the 2010 and 2020 self-studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>2010 MS SELF-STUDY</th>
<th>2020 MS SELF-STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Quality</td>
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<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Quality</td>
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<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>87%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support, Resources,</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, with the exception of the assessment plan, the work group evaluation process indicated a greater percentage of the program reports more directly address and provide details on the eight areas the University requires for inclusion in the self-study. This improvement is likely due to expansion of University support and guidelines and the annual assessment reports requiring ongoing changes to the program review time cycles. The programs review their progress in these areas to improve programs as documented in the formal self-study report. In the area of the assessment plan, the four reports with a “needs improvement” score either did not have a clear assessment plan or were still relying primarily on indirect assessment measures. Given that the assessment plan area in the 2010 self-study has the highest ranking, this discrepancy is likely attributable to the greater expectations for learning outcomes and assessment plans, as described in the annual assessment above.

INSTITUTIONAL DATA ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES

In addition to the program and course level assessment activities, IRPE has undertaken a number of regular surveys and subsequent data analysis activities intended to improve the educational effectiveness of the institution. IRPE conducts a variety of surveys and data assessments, which include surveys conducted on an annual basis (e.g., 6-week survey, First Destination survey), and others that are conducted more infrequently, or for specific purposes (e.g., Campus Climate Survey, ITLAL Satisfaction Survey). IRPE staff determine the set of surveys to be conducted each semester, in order to minimize “survey overload,” which can reduce survey response rates and result in biased, or non-representative, samples. Of the numerous data analysis activities that are continuously undertaken by IRPE, the First Destination Survey, Attrition Analysis (elaborated below), Faculty and Staff Survey, and SUNY Student Opinion Survey are the most relevant to assessing institutional effectiveness. After IRPE
completes any given survey and subsequent data analysis, staff issue a report on the results, which is publicly available to campus constituencies and stakeholders in support of developing improvements.

**UAlbany Uses Assessment Results to Improve its Educational Effectiveness**

To support our claim that the University uses assessment results to improve educational effectiveness, we draw on the four assessment systems described in the previous section (see Appendix 5.5 for wiki information and the self-study document inventory), interviews with or written responses from key university personnel, a survey of department chairs with a 78% response rate (see Appendix 5.6), and University websites. Standard V work group members interviewed Jack Mahoney (Assistant Vice Provost for Academic and Resource Planning), Billie Franchini (Interim Director of the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership), and Steven Doellefeld (Director of Assessment) to inform the review and address questions that arose during the process.

**ASSISTING STUDENTS IN IMPROVING THEIR LEARNING**

Both the SLO annual assessments and the program self-study reports document how the University supports students to improve their learning. These reflective opportunities lead to new initiatives that directly assist students. For example, the Bio-DOME (Biology Development Outreach and Mentoring Enrichment), represents a second stage of support for undergraduate biology students taking more advanced courses, with an additional emphasis on preparing them for careers in biology. Students now can get walk-in tutoring for any advanced courses from peer tutors with demonstrated success in their assigned courses. In the Art program, faculty revised the curriculum to create more continuity among courses at each level, and the core requirements of the art history major itself were changed so that students would begin studying with full-time professors in the areas of their specialties at the introductory core level.

**PLANNING, CONDUCTING, AND SUPPORTING A RANGE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

ITLAL promotes and supports evidence-based teaching and professional practice to improve faculty careers and increase student learning. To fulfill this mission, ITLAL provides professional development to faculty, instructors, and graduate students. Programs and services focus on these key areas:

- Teaching and learning support to foster exemplary teaching practice.
- Career support for faculty at all levels on their path to and through promotion and tenure.
- Professional development and support for graduate students on their path to the professoriate.

ITLAL focuses on advocating for and supporting faculty to adopt teaching practices that are supported by research, including Team-Based Learning (TBL). The Institute provides support for UAlbany instructors in multiple ways, such as workshops on TBL and course design. The Early Career Institute for UAlbany Faculty is designed to help new faculty, with an emphasis on teaching effectiveness and success. They also offer specialized workshops (on request) for various constituencies on campus to respond to perceived instructor needs.

In addition to these structured offerings, services for instructors include the following:

- Individual consultations for instructors on any topic of interest (e.g., course design, assignment design, syllabus design, adoption of research-based teaching methods and strategies, responding to classroom
challenges, negotiating relationships with students, etc.).

- Classroom observations for instructors who would like feedback on their pedagogical approach.
- A survey system for instructors to collect anonymous and confidential feedback from students early in the semester (and the opportunity to discuss that feedback with a consultant).
- Training and support for faculty who adopt personal response systems (iClicker).
- Assistance with digitizing media and making it easily available to faculty and students for use in and outside of classrooms.

Individual professional development (PD) activities are difficult to attribute to improved teaching and student learning (as independent of other PD activities). However, ITLAL has developed case studies of four faculty members, tracked participation in offerings (e.g., 372 courses used the mid-semester survey in 2017-18, and recorded attendance at workshops (e.g., 228 graduate assistants attended workshops in 2017-18). See Appendix 5.7 for data tables.

Various departments also offer professional development opportunities for students. For example, the Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies (LACS) sponsors an all-day symposium of graduate and undergraduate research and supports a biennial graduate student conference. They encourage graduate students to discuss conference papers with their advisor before attending conferences. The Political Science department offers workshops in and outside of the classroom focused on professional development, including craft of the resume and cover letter, mock internships, etc. Students are encouraged to take RPOS/RPAD 397 – Thinking Ahead: Careers in Political Science and Public Policy where students meet with alumni who share their professional path and career guidance.

IMPROVING PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM

To improve pedagogy and curriculum, faculty make use of the ITLAL trainings, workshops, one-on-one instructional improvement meetings, and midterm course evaluations for professional development. In addition, they update curriculum maps and course offerings as part of ongoing curriculum assessments (e.g., SLO annual report). The University has a formal teaching evaluation system (SIRF), along with Principles for Effective Teaching, Peer Observations Resources and Guidelines, and suggested Peer Review of Teaching Strategies.

The Master’s in Public Administration program provides one clear example of how the assessment process improved pedagogy and curriculum. The department assessments are tied to the accreditation for the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). Each student submits a portfolio demonstrating performance in five key competency areas. In addition, the department relies on student surveys, reports from internship supervisors, and focus groups with alumni and employers. On the basis of portfolio reviews, two years ago the department changed its professional development sequence to provide more direct coverage on diversity topics and has changed its economics course to provide more direct coverage of economic justice issues. A concerning curricular weakness identified in the MPA review, given the University’s core strategic priority of Diversity and Inclusion, was coverage of diversity/cultural competency, where students could not articulate material covered across the various core courses. The department completely reworked a required course to devote one third of the semester to diverse populations.

One of the main assessment tools for teaching evaluations is the Student Instructional Rating Form (SIRF). Over the last three weeks of the semester, students receive multiple invitations to log into the SIRF system and provide feedback on the lecture and lab-based classes.
that he/she is registered for (during Fall 2018, the response rate was 49%). The assessment questions include a set of fixed questions where students can rank various qualities of the course and the instructor. This format allows us to compare individual courses with department and University averages. The SIRF form also includes a comment section where students can provide anonymous written feedback. We make this information available to instructors and Department Chairs after grades are posted; most instructors use this information to identify strengths and weaknesses in that course and take action to improve future iterations of the course. The SIRF data is also used in the evaluation of a candidate’s teaching ability during the tenure and promotion process.

**REVIEWING AND REVISING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

As previously described, the Program Review process and SLO annual reports document how faculty review and revise academic programs, including curriculum, assessments, and learning objectives. In addition, the university collects information on support services to improve educational effectiveness. For example, previous iterations of the SUNY Student Opinion Survey, which is administered across SUNY campuses every three years, identified that UAlbany students were not as satisfied with academic advisement in the major, predominantly for upper division students, as they were with centralized academic advisement in the Advisement Services Center, which primarily serves first-year students and sophomores. As a result, we have worked to improve the advisement experience and had begun implementing a four-year advisement model through the compact planning process in 2015.

Another improvement, targeted to all undergraduates, is the implementation of the UAlbany Advantage and its Student Success Center, based on EAB’s Student Success Collaborative. The EAB platform contains a number of components that provide a more seamless advisement experience, including a better system of recording notes from advisement meetings, which can be transferred from one advisor to another (i.e., at the department level). In addition, this system includes a data analytics model that predicts whether a student will successfully graduate in their declared major based on how his/her past grades compare relative to students over the past 10 years who have successfully graduated in the student's major. Each major has its own unique predictive model based on different sets of courses. This information can also be used by advisors to direct students toward majors that are better suited toward their strengths.

The University, in collaboration with EAB, is now in the process of developing a second analytical model to identify students who are at risk of not returning to UAlbany during the next semester or academic year. The model will have predictors that include grades and the difference between the cost of attendance and the student’s expected financial contribution toward their education (measure of the student’s need), since financial pressure is a key reason that students do not perform well and/or leave the University. The names of students at risk of not returning will be shared, without stigmatizing the student, with the student’s advisor and/or other student service organizations on campus, so that the student can be made aware of the opportunities and services that are available.

**INFORMING APPROPRIATE CONSTITUENTS ABOUT ASSESSMENTS**

Across assessment planning and program reviews, departments often engage with relevant constituents such as employers, students, parents, and the general public. For example, the IRPE website posts assessment information and surveys available to interested constituents.
For certain state regulations and/or accreditation requirements, some departments post state-level comparative certification test score links on their websites.

Within departments, faculty consult with employers for program improvement. For example, the Mathematics Department revised several core courses’ writing assignments to match suggestions raised by employers. In the School of Social Welfare, assessment procedures include direct observation of students in field placements using the field evaluation instrument. They established a process to engage tenure track, contingent, and agency-based field instructors through a set of planned forums, retreats and assessment work groups for ongoing inclusion of everyone with responsibility for students’ attainment of competencies. It improved the rigor of their assessment process and provided data on strengths and areas for development in preparing graduates to enter the workforce with requisite competencies.

KEY INDICATORS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

With improved technology platforms and database systems, the University is increasing the use of surveys and data collection to inform areas of student success. While some findings are easily accessible on websites (see Student Retention and Consumer Information), other information is available via ongoing reports (see Assessment Reports) and surveys (see Assessment surveys).

One of the chief ways we have used data analysis has been to diagnose UAlbany’s relatively lower first- to second-year retention rate relative to the other three SUNY University Centers. In order to document why some students do not re-enroll, IRPE has used the National ClearingHouse to track the students who do not return to UAlbany and identify why they chose not to return. This analysis has identified multiple factors as to why students leave the University, including students who transfer to other colleges and universities and those have not been successful academically. One method of improving the retention rate of the latter group of students is to identify them early in their UAlbany career and direct them to the appropriate student services. A key instrument for this is our Six Week Survey (Great Dane Welcome). Based on a student’s responses, we email targeted resources to these students to address specific issues they are facing.

For example, students who indicate they wanted to be more involved receive emails that outline involvement opportunities and events on campus. Students who respond “often” or “very often” to any of the wellness questions receive an email with resources about health and well-being. Finally, when students who responded feeling lonely “often” or “very often,” we ask if they would like a peer mentor to reach out to them. Mentors in the Middle Earth Peer Assistance program then reached out to these students (359 students in Fall 2018) to discuss their experience on campus to discuss engagement opportunities and why they felt lonely. We are currently analyzing data about the impact of this activity on students’ sense of belonging or retention. Also as part of this effort, in 2016 each academic unit submitted a plan to improve their retention rates. In the future, IRPE plans to increase the predictors of the model to include student financial aid information, which could be used to determine how financial factors impact academic success.

IMPLEMENTING OTHER PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Across programs, the formal processes and procedures are one means to improve programs and services. For example, the School of Criminal Justice made changes in response to every item (within their control) outlined by its external program reviewers, including but not limited to hiring a new dean, reinvigorating the IT concentration (and adding three additional
concentrations), hiring faculty with expertise in qualitative methods and institutional corrections, and adjusting the rates for faculty travel funding to favor junior faculty. The reviewers recommended changes to make the MA program more attractive to criminal justice professionals. Drawing on the recommendations, faculty made course scheduling more flexible by increasing the number of evening and online courses. They changed the curriculum based in part on focus group discussions with professionals in the field. They replaced the MA comprehensive exam with a Capstone Seminar that requires students to assess existing research and policy in a selected area; to write thoroughly, yet concisely; and to present their findings to the class.

Other changes happen through less formal procedures, with faculty drawing on grant projects, perceived needs for students, and opportunities for new activities. For example, the Biology department offers numerous opportunities for students to participate in a Community and Public Service Program (RSSW) for credit. These opportunities range from tutoring in the Bio-DOME to assisting in laboratories. Students are required to submit a writing assignment that reflects on their learning, and their supervisors submit an evaluation of the student’s progress.

**ASSESSMENT SERVICES BY THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS**

In our review of the University assessment system, we did not encounter any assessment services designed, delivered, or assessed by third-party providers.

**UAlbany Employs Continuous Improvement Processes for Educational Effectiveness**

Overall, the assessment framework indicated a successful means of evaluating student learning and achievement, with systems to encourage and suggest areas of improvement. The following list shows several ways in which the institution has engaged in changes to improve the framework:

- An active Council for Academic Assessment writes a written response to internal program self-studies, site visits, and department responses, in which they offer recommendations for improvement.
- IRPE staff monitor submissions of annual SLO reports and provide feedback to individual units, with offers to support any recommendations.
- Since 2010, a noticeable difference in expectations for assessment quality – moving from a focus on direct/indirect measures to building continuous improvement loops. The yearly assessment expectations, seven-year program review cycles, and improved feedback on SLO reports support these changes.
- Improvements to expectations for general education assessments and information, including expectations and procedures for annual review.
- Improvements to the program review cycle, including mentoring sessions for self-study writers and updates to the practitioner’s guide.
- Multiple updates and improvements to system software and platforms, including surveys, databases, wikis, and websites. With improved technology, the institution has access to improved data on student and faculty information.
- The new strategic plan’s priority on student success, inclusive of data that will document changes to student learning environments.

**Opportunities for improvement:** The processes and myriad examples cited above demonstrate that UAlbany not only has longstanding, organized, and systematic procedures in place for assessing student learning, but that it has improved these processes over time. In the spirit of adhering to the concept of continuous improvement and that we can always be better than we currently are in regards to Student Learning Objectives (SLO) and Institutional Learning Objectives (ILO), assessment plans, seven-year program reviews,
administrative reviews, on-going database/survey improvements and other assessment work, we commit to:

- Exploring the need for additional staff support for both administrative and academic assessment activities in support units such as IRPE and in the academic units; developing a systematic process for following up with units that have not submitted their annual assessments; and continuing discussions to flesh out ways to improve our assessment processes.
- Offering additional professional development opportunities to educate faculty, staff and campus leaders about assessment and continuous improvement and their role within it.

**STANDARD VI - PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT**

UAlbany’s objectives, both institution-wide and for individual units, are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, and are informed by systematic assessment

As described in Chapter 2, the University has a strategic plan guided by a clear mission and vision statement. The process to develop the plan was comprehensive and consultative. The plan – *Authoring Our Success* – was reviewed by all levels of University governance including the University Senate, Undergraduate and Graduate Student Associations, the University Council, the Alumni Association, and the University at Albany Foundation.

Subsequently, schools, colleges, and administrative divisions developed action plans to address our five core strategic priorities of Student Success, Research Excellence, Diversity and Inclusion, Internationalization, and Engagement and Service. A Strategic Plan Advisory Committee (SPAC) developed key criteria to monitor and track strategic goal attainment, periodically review unit-level action plans, guide the strategic budget allocation process, and provide advice and counsel to the University’s senior leadership on attaining institutional priorities and goals. During a time of fiscal constraint, over the last two fiscal years, the University has invested new funding of $3.3 million between the Strategic Accelerators (Appendix 6.1) and StAR awards, and reallocated $1.6 million (Appendix 6.2) to advance the plan. This includes positions that have been reallocated and new positions created in areas of strategic priority, such as academic advising.

**UAlbany has clearly documented and communicated planning and improvement processes that rely upon the use of assessment results**

The University adopted a formal administrative assessment process in 2017, the formal planning of which started in 2015, and has begun to utilize the results to influence planning. The protocol for assessing administrative units is included in Appendix 6.3. Facilitated by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) and under the oversight of the Administrative Assessment Advisory Committee, all administrative units now submit an annual assessment matrix that is standard across the institution. The template and checklist are included in Appendix 6.4. This matrix asks the unit head to determine the unit’s mission, vision, and to submit three to five SMART goals. We held an all-day training, facilitated by SUNY’s Center for Professional Development, on November 2, 2017, during which administrative leaders received instruction regarding the setting of mission and vision statements, along with how to set quantifiable SMART goals. Unit leaders included their staff in the establishment of unit mission, vision and goals, and in the development of their eventual assessment matrix.
The Administrative Assessment Advisory Committee, essentially a peer group of professional staff and teaching faculty with assessment experience, returns comments and suggestions back to each unit. The feedback includes suggestions on how to set effective goals, establish valid and reliable metrics, and ensure the measured activity will provide data on whether the goal was met. As part of the annual submission, units report on progress and include revised plans based on data derived from the previous year. We also gave administrators guidance about follow-up plans for the previous year’s matrices as well as submission of the subsequent year’s matrix.

In addition to the annual unit level assessment process, each dean’s office and vice presidential division head is required to submit a formal self-study report once in a five-year cycle. These reports must include an update of how mission, vision, goals, and objectives continue to be in line with the institutional strategic plan, overall budget and resource trends over the past five years, areas where resources are a challenge, measured outcomes, new goals and objectives, and a description of the improvement loop. Additional elements or components, such as utilizing external reviewers, were incorporated into the outline in the 2018-19 review cycle as a process improvement.

As an example, the 2018 Student Affairs self-study is included in Appendix 6.5. The division of Student Affairs already has acted on a number of recommendations from that formal self-study. One example is comments from the external review team from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) related to student housing on our Alumni Quad. Reviewers from the NASPA review team confirmed the sense of UAlbany’s residential life officials when they found that the conditions of the buildings result in lackluster student demand to live there. This finding contributed to the University’s decision to allocate $10 million to address needed capital investments beginning in summer 2019. New rate structures and additional perks were established along with a marketing program to increase occupancy.

UAlbany’s financial planning and budgeting process are aligned with its mission and goals, are evidence-based, and driven by its strategic plan.

The University’s All Funds budget of $585 million dollars consists of a variety of funding categories. In order to understand UAlbany’s financial health and budget process one must first understand the complexity of the funding sources and mechanisms utilized by the State University of New York (SUNY) system, and as mandated by New York State (Office of the State Comptroller and NYS Division of the Budget). These funds include State Aid, Tuition and Fees, and Special Revenue Funds known within SUNY as Income Fund Reimbursable or IFRs. IFR’s are funded by revenue from broad-based student fees, grant funding to support faculty release time and other departmental revenue-generating activities. Each of these funds and each of the accounts within the funds are administered under applicable New York State and SUNY rules and regulations.

In addition to state appropriated funds, UAlbany also is supported by related not-for-profit entities. The Research Foundation for SUNY (sponsored research), the University at Albany Foundation (gifts), University at Albany Auxiliary Services Corporation (dining, vending, books), Empire Commons Student Housing, and the University at Albany Bioscience Development Corporation (owner of the Health Science Campus facilities), are all separate not-for-profit corporations designed to provide ancillary services to the University. They all operate under their own boards of directors. These entities operate under an exclusive contract with the University to provide specific services to UAlbany. Each of the Boards of Directors for these entities include UAlbany representation.
The pie chart below summarizes the funds that are available for the campus to allocate. State Aid and Tuition together make up UAlbany’s State Budget.

In addition, the state adopted a Rational Tuition plan that provided predictable tuition increases for undergraduate and graduate students for a period of five years starting in 2011. This plan has been extended repeatedly, most recently through 2020-21. These two initiatives put UAlbany in a better position with regard to financial planning than in the past.

The SUNY Board of Trustees determine distribution of State Aid across SUNY’s 64 campuses; this has been unchanged since 2013-14. When factoring in inflation and unfunded mandatory costs such as salary increases, the state has effectively reduced UAlbany’s aid in each year since 2014. The Special Revenue Fund and related not-for-profit entity budgets

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Table 6.1. 2019-20 All Funds Revenue Sources

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<td>Foundation</td>
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<td>Depart IFR’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Res Halls</td>
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The amount of State Aid provided to the entire SUNY system is determined each year through the NYS Enacted Budget following the legislative process. Upon conclusion of the NYS legislative process, SUNY System Administration creates a Financial Plan, which is approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees; spending authority is provided to campuses through appropriation. In 2011, legislation was passed that provided SUNY with a Maintenance of Effort agreement. This agreement prohibited New York State from reducing the State Aid portion of SUNY allocations below the FY2011 level.
follow a different process that is tailored to each; these are be described later.

Combined, the three sources of revenue that include State Aid, Tuition and Fees, and Special Revenue Funds, are referred to as our Campus Financial Plan (CFP).

**UALBANY’S BUDGET PLANNING PROCESS**

UAlbany utilizes an incremental budget process to distribute the CFP funds. With a relatively flat revenue steam and very modest departmental budgets, this approach has served the university reasonably well. Our annual budget process kicks off with mid-year budget review meetings with all the divisions. These meetings assess the financial condition and future needs of units on campus, and begin the planning process for the future year budgets (e.g. January 2020 meetings begin planning for fiscal year 2021-22 budgets). The strategic allocation processes and a variety of campus consultations support the preparation of proposed budgets, which are presented to the President for approval at the end of the calendar year. The budget process is described in more detail in Appendix 6.5.1.

Beginning in 2016-17, an enhanced and refined budget process, referred to as the Compact Budget Process, replaced the previous process. The Compact process and its more recent iterations aim to improve campus budgeting by:

- Providing for allocation notification a year in advance of funding to enable more planning time for implementing units.
- Providing for additional collaboration among campus units.
- Expanding input into the final decision process.

The Compact Budget process allowed campus stakeholders to submit proposals online, with workflow built in for divisional approvals.

A Compact Team of executive staff made decisions centrally in alignment with campus priorities identified by then-President Jones. The Compact Budget Process allocated a total of $10.7 million in recurring funding and $13.2 million of one-time funding for fiscal years 16-17 and 17-18. Detailed summaries are provided in Appendix 6.6.

UAlbany paused the Compact Budget Process for 2017-18. This enabled the campus to address a minor budget deficit that resulted from missed enrollment targets. Allocations for the fiscal year recognized the funding commitments made in prior budget cycles, negotiated salary increases and other required allocations.

With the implementation of the strategic plan in 2018, we adopted two processes to link new investments to our highest priorities. In the first of these processes, work groups established under the Strategic Plan Advisory Committee (SPAC) reviewed unit action plans and identified initiatives to be considered for Strategic Accelerator funding. We created this one-time funding to jump-start initiatives that can have an immediate impact. Fourteen initiatives were selected to receive one-time funding, some spread over multiple years. In 2019, four additional initiatives were funded. A complete list of the initiatives and funding commitments is included in Appendix 6.7.

To complement the first-year accelerators and recognize that the SPAC, no matter how diverse, consultative, or transparent, does not own a monopoly on all good ideas, UAlbany implemented an additional budget process that is a modified version of the Compact Budget Process. The Strategic Allocation of Resources process (StAR) awards micro-grants of $5,000 to $50,000 in support of innovative programs and activities that support one or more of the strategic plan’s five priorities. We issued the first call for proposals in the spring of 2019, with available funding of $500,000. A subcommittee of the SPAC ranked the proposals and the
Executive Committee approved funding to 21 out of 88 applications submitted. The President shared the final list of funded proposals with the campus; this list is available on the University’s strategic planning website. This will be an annual process. The 2019-20 call for proposals was issued in October 2019, with funding decisions to be made by March 2020.

Special revenue fund budgets follow long-established planning processes. Our largest Special Revenue Fund is the Dormitory Income Fund (DIFR) which is a self-supporting fund pertaining only to the campus residence halls. With a budget of $60 million annually, the fund collects revenues from student room fees and funds residence hall operations. The annual DIFR budget is developed collaboratively between the departments of Financial Management and Budget, Residential Life, and Facilities to accommodate existing commitments and projected increases such as fringe rates, debt service, and contractually mandated collective bargaining raises.

The offices of Residential Life and Facilities develop plans for priority renovations and deferred maintenance of the resident halls, to be funded from the budget. The Vice President for Finance and Administration finalizes the proposed budget in consultation with the Vice President of Student Affairs; it is presented to the Student Association Senate and approved by the President. The 2019-20 DIFR budget workbook is included in Appendix 6.9.

We also manage mandatory student fees through an annual budget process. For budget presentation purposes and a simplified bill, UAlbany consolidates three mandatory student fees under the heading of a Comprehensive Fee. These include the Student Health fee, Technology fee and Transportation fee. In addition, UAlbany charges a Recreation and Campus Life fee, Intercollegiate Athletics Fee, University Fee and an Academic Excellence Fee. Each fee has an independent budget development and approval cycle. The Office of Financial Management and Budget works with each program area (e.g., Health Center, Athletics, etc.) in developing proposed budgets.

The student body is consulted on a proposed comprehensive fee increases via a presentation to the Student Association and email communications to all students. The Vice President for Finance and Administration presents the proposed fee package to the President for approval at the campus level. SUNY System Administration reviews and makes final approval. As of 2019, SUNY is transitioning to two-year approvals of fees, granting approval for the upcoming fiscal year, and preliminary approval for the out-year. This will allow UAlbany to plan on a longer time horizon for fee budgets, and to provide better information to students on what their out-year fee costs are likely to be. Broad-based fee submissions to SUNY for 2018-19 fee approval are included in Appendix 6.10 (fee memo) and 6.11. (worksheets). A fee waiver policy exists for specific situations such as online-only students (Appendix 6.12).

We believe we can strengthen the consultative process in student fee budget development by ensuring that each fee has an Advisory Board that includes student representatives and is charged with reviewing and adopting the budget annually. As part of fee budget development for FY 2020-21, each program area connected with a fee has engaged or formed their advisory groups to begin to develop more active engagement. We would also like to incorporate broader student consultation.

Most other Income Fund Reimbursable accounts are managed by departments that engage in revenue-generating activity. Examples include revenue contracts to provide services to other state agencies, faculty release time, and collections from campus services or course fees. The Office of Financial Management and Budget reviews annual spending plans (2018-19 instructions in Appendix 6.13. and template in
Appendix 6.14.) to authorize projected spending, and monitors revenue collected against spending plans throughout the year, adjusting plans as necessary to avoid overspending, and ensuring appropriate reserve balances are maintained.

Planning for faculty hiring and budget planning for the Colleges and Schools happens within the Division for Academic Affairs. Colleges and Schools submit annual budget requests to the Provost, who authorizes searches and budget allocations based on campus priorities and available resources. A combination of turnover resources within Academic Affairs, and campus investment from incremental revenue and reallocation funds faculty recruitment. See Appendix 6.14 for the 2019-20 Academic Affairs budget call letter.

Each division has a high level of autonomy to allocate their Temporary Services and Other Than Personal Services base budgets according to divisional priorities every year (see Appendix 6.15 for Budget office call letter). Based on this model, we established efficiency savings targets for each division in 2016-17 and 2017-18 in order to reallocate resources to support the compact plans. A summary of the divisional savings plans can be found in Appendix 6.8.

As discussed earlier, the Office of Financial Management and Budget conducts mid-year budget reviews with each division. We review all funds to compare revenue and expenditures to the planned budget. This is also an opportunity to discuss any unmet needs in the current year and anticipated issues in the out years. An example call letter and mid-year budget review materials can be found in Appendix 6.15.

The University budget process has served the campus well during times of funding increases to distribute funds to the most strategic areas and during times of financial constraint to absorb reductions in state funding in areas that would have the least impact on campus operations. In addition, a transparent and consultative process has helped to ensure affordability and accessibility.

Beginning in 2018-19, the CFO initiated a Financial Literacy Campaign to educate the campus community about the financial health of the institution, relevant budget processes, and to seek comments and suggestions. He held dozens of presentations and conversations across campus involving faculty, staff, and students. One important outcome was that we learned that we need broader student consultation, especially as it relates to student fees. The Fall 2019 budget presentation is included in Appendix 6.16.

**UAlbany has sufficient financial and human resources, and the physical and technical infrastructures, to support its operations**

**FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

The financial health of UAlbany can be classified as fair. We effectively manage revenue and expenditures, but as a largely enrollment-driven institution, we must be very mindful of our recruitment and retention efforts. To this end, we launched new academic programs to address market demand, and invested substantial resources in improving retention and graduation rates in 2018-19 to support projected enrollment increases through 2022-23.

Actual expenditure data for IPEDS core functional categories over the last three years is included in table 6.2 on the following page. Campus expenditure trends demonstrate a reallocation of resources to support our strategic priorities. For example, between 2015-16 and 2017-18, the largest percentage increases in spending can be found in Student Services (21%). The overall spending increase was 11%.
Table 6.2. Expenses by Functional Category
(in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSE CATEGORY</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction &amp; Academic Support</td>
<td>$259,229.6</td>
<td>$275,473.6</td>
<td>$288,582.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research &amp; Public Service</td>
<td>$70,694.8</td>
<td>$81,162.6</td>
<td>$73,276.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Services</td>
<td>$23,583.0</td>
<td>$27,871.4</td>
<td>$28,439.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>$69,177.1</td>
<td>$76,514.5</td>
<td>$81,210.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
<td>$17,997.9</td>
<td>$17,776.5</td>
<td>$18,933.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenses</td>
<td>$440,682.4</td>
<td>$478,798.6</td>
<td>$490,442.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University projects a relatively small deficit for 2019-20 as the result of a decline in overall enrollment. Our goal is to maintain an annual surplus that represents 5% of our State Tax Support or $3 million. We are taking a number of immediate steps to not only balance our modest deficit but to meet our stated surplus goal. The budget actions include:

- Commitment of new Indirect Cost Recovery funds from increased research activity.
- Increase in reclaiming funds via unfilled vacancies via the workforce planning committee.
- Reallocations in over budgeted Utilities and Rental property budgets.
- Additional programming against growing Summer Session tuition revenues.
- Elimination of a campus contingency line from budget.

UAlbany aims to increase student retention and overall enrollment for both in-state and out-of-state undergraduate and graduate students to avoid shortfalls in future plans. In addition, the campus anticipates it will generate increased tuition revenue over the next five years from increased tuition rates, modest enrollment increases, and possibly a greater percentage of self-paying master’s level students. UAlbany also will minimize planned expenditures and continue to make strategic investment decisions to maintain the financial health of the campus.

Unspent budget allocations at year-end are an indication of good fiscal stewardship but can also serve as a measure of adequacy. We typically generate about $4 million in budget savings per year, which represents about 2% of our $200 million base state budget. State tax support and tuition are together considered the University’s state budget.

UAlbany’s long-term viability is strong, as evidenced in our cash balances illustrated in table 6.3 on the following page. Cash balances have remained stable, and are projected to decline slightly in the out-years due to cash investments in facilities renovations, and cash commitments to cover the small deficit in 2019-20. Our goal is to maintain a cash balance that represents 15% of our State Budget (state tax support and tuition). Even with the projected drawdown in 2019-20, we sit comfortably with an 18% cash balance percentage of our State Budget.

Total financial plan revenue has steadily increased over the past three years as illustrated in Appendix 6.17. This change is the result of enrollment growth and subsequent tuition and fee revenue increases, as well as tuition rate increases. Over this period, State Aid has remained flat. The Maintenance of Effort agreement has not provided additional funding, even for inflationary costs and contractual salary increases, thereby making UAlbany effectively an enrollment-driven institution.

The pie chart of the 2019-20 All Funds Budget (table 6.1.) includes revenues generated from Special Revenue Funds and campus affiliated entities. These funds and entities must be self-supporting and produce sufficient self-generated revenues to cover expenses. The Special Revenue Funds include self-supporting activities designed to support the core instructional program,
but fall outside those activities supported by State Aid or Tuition. An example of this would be revenue agreements with external entities whereby UAlbany provides goods or services. Special revenue funds are assessed administrative overhead to help defray University-wide operational expenses. We also expect affiliated entities to contribute monetarily.

The University at Albany Foundation (UAF) provides support to UAlbany through advancement efforts, alumni and student relations, scholarships, and loan assistance. UAF manages over $70 million in investments and provides increasing amounts of funding – over $6.5 million in 2017-18 – to directly benefit students, faculty, and collegewide initiatives (see Appendix 6.18). The Foundation is currently nearing successful completion of a comprehensive capital campaign with a goal of $150 million.

University Auxiliary Services (UAS) also provides support to UAlbany, through services such as the University bookstore, UAlbany ID card, and food service and catering. UAS provides $4.5 million annually to UAlbany operations (see Appendix 6.19). In addition, UAS has made a new pledge to increase scholarship funding by $250,000 per year until it reaches $1 million per year.

Appendix 6.20 contains the last three years of the IPEDS financial reports submitted by SUNY System Administration on behalf of UAlbany. We use IPEDS financial reports to compare ourselves to peers and as a forensic tool to examine patterns of resource expenditure over time to corroborate that we are making investments in areas of strategic priority.

The IPEDS financial information is useful for reviewing the University’s campus revenue, overall expenses, campus assets, and overall liabilities, but not for drawing conclusions on the University’s overall financial position. This is because the IPEDS financial information reflects a number of expenses and liabilities, such as debt service, fringe benefit expenses, accrued health care, and vacation liabilities that are allocated to SUNY and individual SUNY campuses in an effort to reflect the true cost of state agency
operations. However, some of these liabilities are either paid from state funds held centrally by the New York State Comptroller or will be funded by future state appropriations, neither of which are allocated to or expended from the campuses.

As a result of reflecting these expenses and liabilities in the University at Albany’s IPEDS information without the offsetting revenue or assets, any net surplus/deficit or net asset balance amounts are not true reflections of the University’s financial position. For that, we maintain detailed financial information for the funds over which we have allocation and expenditure control, and we use that information to make management decisions.

SUNY System Administration compiles financial information for each campus using campus transactional information and from information it maintains. The information is forwarded to the New York State Comptroller for inclusion in the New York State financial statements, which are audited by an external accounting firm. SUNY does issue balance sheets for each campus; however UAlbany does not issue financial statements reflecting the results of our operations. The Financial Ratios in Appendix 6.20.1 show that UAlbany’s financial position is trending in a positive direction, and our Composite Score consistently sits in the band for Strong Financial Health.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND PLANNING

UAlbany utilizes a number of different methods to determine if our non-instructional workforce is adequate to support our operations. Benchmarking to peer institutions, student and faculty feedback, and individual unit assessment all help inform decisions regarding staffing levels.

One excellent example is in the area of facilities management. Facilities Management benchmarks its staffing against APPA (Association of Physical Plant Administrators) standards in the context of budget and operations rightsizing. New and renovated buildings, facilities acquisitions, and even expanded grounds and recreational features have created new operational needs that we must integrate into the University’s budgeting and staffing plan processes. The Facilities Department utilizes these APPA staffing standards to help justify new staff as well as to protect staff reductions during lean times. For key areas such as custodial, grounds, and trades and HVAC, APPA provides a range of staffing ratios based on five targeted service levels. For example, custodial staff coverage could be expected to provide Level 1 service providing “Ordinary Spotlessness” with a staff to square foot ratio of 1:10,000 versus Level 5, “Unkempt Neglect,” with staff expected to cover some 90,000 square feet per person.

Unfortunately, resources are not available to provide the highest levels of maintenance and service, but Facilities works with its budget and staffing plans to continue to steer resources to areas of underinvestment based on these benchmarks. UAlbany custodial staffing is currently at 1:29,882 staff to square foot ratio and falls closest to Level 3, the middle of the APPA standards.

Like many institutions that are grappling with scarce resources, UAlbany is closely evaluating vacancies with the intent to generate savings by reducing the workforce. Beginning in 2018-19, UAlbany established a Workforce Planning Committee to obtain efficiencies while minimizing negative impacts on students and faculty. Appendix 6.21 includes the committee guidelines. The Workforce Planning Committee meets monthly to evaluate requests to fill vacant positions. In its first year, the Committee realized savings of $1.5 million for the campus (Appendix 6.22). Some of these funds have been reallocated to new positions in areas of strategic investment, such as academic advising, where a new advising model is being supported with a commitment to 10 new positions. See Appendix 6.22.1 for planning documents for the advising model, including assessment metrics.
To orient and engage new University employees, the University hosts a mandatory new employee orientation. Beginning in December 2018, UAlbany transitioned from a half-day optional orientation program to a full-day mandatory program offered monthly. The program aims to connect with new employees as close to their arrival date as possible in order to educate them about our strategic plan, assessment culture, history of excellence, organizational structure, expectations and responsibilities, as well as to engage new hires as active members of the campus community. An example orientation schedule is included in Appendix 6.23.

We also offer professional and personal training opportunities for employees at all levels. The University has purchased a platform to transition all mandatory employee training online and was rolled out in Fall 2019. In addition to mandatory training, various departments such as the University Police Department provide voluntary training to the campus community.

UAlbany is developing procedures to promote workforce excellence. All supervisors are required to conduct formal performance evaluations annually based upon documented performance programs. The compliance rate for current performance programs was 96% as of September 2019. Human Resources put in place automated messaging to escalate notice of delinquent programs, first by repeated notice to the supervisor, then to the supervisor’s supervisor. The Vice President of Finance and Administration is also sharing compliance rates by division with executive staff regularly. Gaining 100% compliance on performance programs on file is a campus priority. The goal is to promote workforce excellence by ensuring that all employees have well-defined roles and receive evaluations to support their professional development.

In addition, all departing employees receive an opportunity to complete an online exit interview and if requested, a face-to-face meeting with a member of the Human Resources office. This effort is newly underway and has not yet yielded actionable data, but holds potential as another avenue for the University to address issues of workforce excellence.

The University’s orientation, training, performance monitoring and exit interviews help us to continually assess our staffing levels. We also rely heavily on the feedback from the NSSE survey and SUNY Student Opinion Survey (SOS) to identify areas where student dissatisfaction may be the result of inadequate staffing. For example, UAlbany placed last among the four SUNY University Centers (including Binghamton University, University of Buffalo and Stony Brook University) on the 2018 SOS survey on metrics such as Student Health Services, Health & Wellness Programs, and Help in Finding Jobs During College. In response to these data and requests from program staff, we built four additional positions into the Health Fee budget beginning in 2019-20 to address high need areas within our health and wellness programs. In addition, a new Career Services fee is under consideration to support additional staff in the Career Services Center.

**FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Provost’s Office develops annual faculty recruitment plans using data profiles (Appendix 6.24) compiled by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness to help make strategic recruitment decisions. Deans submit proposed hiring plans to the Provost’s office for review and approval. The University formulates hiring plans one year in advance to allow sufficient time for recruitment.

To onboard new faculty, in 2017 the Provost’s Office reinstated our new Faculty Orientation, which provides general information about the University to incoming faculty. At the college level, the College of Arts and Sciences has mounted a faculty orientation online, which is available to all faculty, new and veteran.
For classroom and teaching development, ITLAL runs instructional, curriculum, and career development, and regular workshops on grant applications, effective teaching, and improving scholarly activity. For graduate students, there are workshops on the academic job market and interviewing for jobs in academia.

**UAlbany plans comprehensively for facilities, infrastructure, and technology**

**PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

UAlbany has a robust inventory of buildings across its three campuses and is complemented by several leased properties. The Uptown Campus is the University’s principal location due to the concentration of facilities and programs located there. The Downtown and Health Sciences Campuses are smaller in scale with a reduced quantity of facilities and programs. Together the three campuses comprise 164 buildings, 6.4 million gross square feet covering 571 acres. Approximately 498 staff maintain our safe, functional, beautiful, and accessible campuses.

To manage this infrastructure, the University utilizes AiM from AssetWorks, a comprehensive suite of integrated facility management solutions that helps us manage property, space, projects, work orders, and energy usage.

A formal benchmark has been developed by the SUNY Construction Fund, in consultation with SUNY, to assess the renovation needs of campus facilities. The Facility Condition Index (FCI) measures the immediate renovation need of campus facilities divided by the current replacement value. The data for 2018 (Appendix 6.24.1) and 2019 (Appendix 6.24.2) show that UAlbany facilities are moving in a positive direction, going from slightly above the SUNY needs average in 2018 down to the average in 2019.

To ensure the viability of past capital investments and maximize the value of spaces for the future we regularly conduct formal and informal assessments of buildings for physical condition and program suitability. We also meet with the deans on an annual basis to discuss their vision for future space needs, monitor the five-year enrollment plan and trends across our various majors, and work with the Vice President for Research to anticipate future research needs.

**PLANNING FOR FACILITIES**

Capital infrastructure investment decisions are made years, sometimes decades, in advance. These long planning and implementation horizons are dictated not only by the time necessary for design and construction, but also to carefully consider and implement sequential enabling work while minimizing ancillary disruption to the University community. At the same time, comprehensive facilities planning must be as nimble as possible to amend designs and future work to adapt to revised mission, updated goals, and new programs and services.

UAlbany has successfully navigated the need to be far-reaching in capital planning while amending construction and upgrade work for new and emerging needs that are derived from the University’s Strategic Plan. Working with our capital construction partners, the State University Construction Fund (SUCF) and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY), the University has a culture and practice of facilities adaptation and responsiveness. Facilities leadership staff routinely meet with deans to explore high priority program needs and changes in enrollment and staffing.

We hold similar meetings with Athletics, Student Affairs, Residential Life, and other divisions. Feedback also is provided at the University Senate level, primarily with its targeted resource and facilities committees. Routine feedback and direction is also more formally provided by the
Facilities Strategic Planning Council, comprised of University vice presidents who meet bi-monthly to discuss and approve changes in space allocation and endorse and amend facilities policies and major capital project plans. Wider feedback and information sharing with the University community is provided each spring through three open presentations to discuss major projects in design and construction and to share upcoming work still in the concept and planning phases. See Appendix 6.25 for the spring 2019 presentation, available in the document inventory, due to its length.

The framework for long-range, large capital project planning is the 2012 Facilities Master Plan (FMP, Appendix 6.26) is also available in the document inventory. Developed over the 2010-2012 period, the FMP was intended to address deferred maintenance and renewal needs while also right-sizing the built environment for enrollment and program change. The plan remains viable today given its focus on building-by-building renovation sequencing and documentation of limitations and opportunities of existing building design. The FMP was developed to cover a 10-year period through 2023 and involved outreach to all sectors of the University, including over 100 meetings, open forums, workshops, interviews, round tables, and vetting with the University Senate.

From this plan emerged the commitment to implement a meaningful gut renovation cycle to the aging 50-year-old Uptown Academic Podium, beginning with Building 27 (formerly “Business Administration”) and continuing through to the phased renovation of the Lecture Centers, and Earth Sciences as the early start projects in a 30-year concept plan to address all buildings.

While the 2012 FMP was far-reaching and ambitious, its benefit continues to be providing milestone building-by-building gut renovation and construction goals, but flexible enough to alter plans to adapt to emerging trends in programs and enrollments. For example, these feedback and adjustment loops led to changes in plans in the ETEC building, to include the new College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity as a key occupant.

Similarly, we are renovating the Schuyler Building, the former City of Albany high school, on the Downtown Campus to house the new College of Engineering and Applied Sciences in lieu of other programs that were earmarked for occupancy. Neither of these colleges existed in their current form when the 2012 FMP was drafted.

Deferred maintenance and renewal needs are continually assessed and quantified by the University, working with SUCF to manage a database of major building systems (for example, HVAC, plumbing, windows, etc.) and the remaining useful life of said systems to arrive at near-term and long-term investment needs. These condition assessment studies put the 5-year facilities investment needs at well over $500M. Current annual construction funding from the State of New York, however, totals between $20M and $40M (Appendix 6.26). These grants do not cover residential work, which by state statutory and regulatory policy must be covered by student room fees. Residence hall work totals some $15M-$20M annually and is directed in conjunction with the Office of Residential Life to the most pressing maintenance and student comfort needs.

Another key consideration of renovation planning is the University’s commitment to sustainability and energy efficiency. Indeed, UAlbany is a recognized leader in these areas. In September 2018, the University was recognized as a “Top 10 Performer” in the “Building” category by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). AASHE’s Sustainable Campus Index highlights the most sustainable colleges and universities in the world, providing UAlbany a No. 8 ranking out of 477 institutions that submitted materials to AASHE. The high score is a reflection of the University’s sustainable building operation.
practices, robust indoor air quality plan, high levels of energy efficiency and sustainability in its new and renovated buildings, and our seven LEED-certified buildings, including the most recent LEED Platinum renovation of Building 25. In 2018, AASHE awarded UAlbany a STARS Gold rating.

In Spring 2019, we embarked on the development of a Climate Action and Sustainability Plan for the campus. The plan will be based on four core groups: Curriculum & Access, Operations, Research & Development and Engagement & Planning. The process, facilitated by a consultant specializing in this work, was endorsed by the President and includes dozens of stakeholders across campus.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES AND PLANNING

TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Housed in a LEED Gold data center that opened in 2014, Information Technology Services (ITS) is the centralized provider of IT services and resources for the campus. The operation is comprised of multiple departments charged with ensuring IT service management in the areas of infrastructure, applications, information security, education and research technologies, client support, and portfolio and business process management. Approximately 115 professionals provide staffing expertise and accountability for the reliability and stability of platforms, systems, business processes and numerous support activities.

UAlbany has made significant recent investments in strengthening its IT network to provide better access to campus users as well as the Internet2 computer networking consortium, of which it is a member. The UAlbany campus network includes over 500 switches, more than 12,000 active network ports, and over 1,400 wireless access points – providing greater throughput to the data center, the 10G Internet, and the 10G Internet2 research network. In addition, the UAlbany residential IT network was upgraded from just over 400 wireless access points in 2010 to the 1,900 access points that are now installed across all campus dormitories, and includes 24/7 support.

The Academic & Research Computing Center and Educational Technology Center provide a host of services in support of faculty research, teaching and learning. Classroom technology is installed in all Registrar-scheduled classrooms (see Appendix 6.31 for listing of classrooms and technology), numerous conference rooms and public spaces but more investment is needed to standardize equipment in each room. The ITS Service Catalog includes various free or discounted software options for faculty, students, and staff.

The Course Management System used at UAlbany is the Blackboard Learn System (BLS). All fully online courses are delivered through BLS, and many face-to-face courses also utilize a BLS shell for electronic reserves, grade posting, assessments, etc. A number of third-party tools have been incorporated into BLS including Lumen Learning, Top Hat, and Courseware. The Online Teaching and Learning Steering Committee, through two ad hoc sub-committees, is considering Blackboard cloud hosting and which Learning Management System (LMS) we will use going forward.

Information security has been widely recognized as a global issue. We have adopted policies and practices that safeguard the University network and digital assets while educating the campus community on how to protect their identity and institutional information. Since the last Middle States review, the University has acquired an enterprise level vulnerability management tool, dedicated firewalls, and a cloud-based Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) protection system. These capabilities strengthen our defense-in-depth posture, and enable us to identify and address vulnerable systems, as well as provide protection from external attempts to compromise those systems. These tools,
in combination with our other intrusion detection systems, provide daily metrics on the number and types of attacks experienced by the University.

PLANNING FOR TECHNOLOGY

The past decade has seen unprecedented growth in the use of, and dependence on, technology. ITS works with every division in an effort to introduce new web-based services, automate processes, and streamline business practices. Campus demand routinely outpaces both human and fiscal resources, and ITS often juggles projects and reassesses priorities in order to ensure the organization is working on initiatives that support the University’s strategic goals and objectives.

ITS also has seen changes in leadership, with a new CIO being appointed in 2018. At that time, ITS was moved from a stand-alone division to Finance and Administration. This new organizational structure shifts ITS under the same umbrella as many of its campus business partners. Working more closely with others across the division positions ITS to make greater progress in building campus efficiencies, tying technology more closely to budget and costing practices, and streamlining operations. Several measures have been initiated to address the University’s persistent demand and continuously improve services and service delivery:

- We have established advisory groups for all major ITS service categories to solicit input from the campus community regarding IT project prioritization and service delivery. This feedback will be used to better meet campus needs, align with University goals, and drive decision-making.
- ITS has embraced the principles of Information Technology Service Management (known as ITSM in the profession) in an effort to continuously improve the organization, management and delivery of services to the campus community.
- We have employed budgetary measures to better estimate the costs of service delivery and developed a centralized procurement and budgeting process across ITS.

ITS plans to develop a more formal prioritization committee in the near future and create a multi-year strategic plan.

UAlbany has well-defined decision-making processes and clear assignment of responsibility and accountability

The University’s organizational chart is included in Appendix 6.27 and reflects a well thought-out and balanced structure. Annual performance programs and evaluations are required for all non-teaching employees. We provide standard templates to supervisors and compliance rates are nearly 90% as of March 31, 2019, with an institutional goal of 100%.

ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT

UAlbany is committed to the highest standards of ethics, honesty, and integrity and recognizes that academic and research activities as well as proper student support involve significant regulatory and ethical responsibilities and associated risks. As described in Chapter 2, the Office of Enterprise Risk Management and Compliance (ERM&C) is charged with creating processes, structures, and services, along with the associated monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the University can meet this commitment.

Under the direction of the Office of ERM&C, the Internal Control staff work closely with Counsel’s Office, Internal Audit, the Information Security Officer, the Policy Coordinator, Human Resources, and other stakeholders to review and assess unit internal controls in order to mitigate risks to the University. Internal Control staff have been trained on and adopted components of the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) Framework. Components of the COSO framework are
applied to each internal control review and communicated to faculty and staff through training. The ultimate goal of the Internal Control Program is to support management in fulfilling its responsibility for ensuring operations and resources are managed ethically, effectively and efficiently.

An annual plan and outcomes of the previous year are submitted to SUNY Systems Administration each year after review by the Internal Review Committee and approval of the President. The 2017-18 report is in Appendix 6.28.

Internal Control staff continually develop and offer new compliance training to academic and administrative units. Trainings include online internal control training, information security training and email phishing training as well as in-person training at employee orientation. In addition, the Internal Control Program manages Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) and New York State Project Sunlight compliance efforts and offers trainings in those areas. During the 2017-18 academic year, UAlbany was certified as fully compliant with PCI DSS. This certification was the result of an intensive two-year process of reviewing and improving the University’s handling of credit card receipts and information security in an effort to protect the personal and financial data entrusted to the University by our students, faculty, staff, and other community members.

In 2018 the University engaged in a comprehensive initiative to standardize University-wide, institutional policy development and administration under the auspices of the ERM&C. We created a Policy Coordinator position to centrally manage policies. A new policy library serves as the central repository for all institutional policies and procedures. A formal approval process is in place and we have a standard template used to frame all policies (Appendices 6.29 and 6.30).

UAlbany conducts audits confirming its financial viability and adherence to NYS financial procedures and statutes

Many disparate components reside on UAlbany’s three campuses. Because we are a public university, the largest component comprises the assorted state-funded departments and programs but, as mentioned previously, we have several related not-for-profit entities that support our mission. Each of these entities undergoes an annual financial opinion audit performed by external auditors who are certified public accountants in public practice. SUNY and SUNY Research Foundation audits cover UAlbany state funds and research funds, respectively. The SUNY Annual Financial Report for 2019 is included in Appendix 6.30.1.

New York’s Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) has license to audit all state entities and related entities, and conducts many audits of SUNY System Administration, SUNY-wide programs, and campus-based programs. In recent years, OSC has issued audit reports for UAlbany regarding Sabbatical and Other Paid Leave, Travel Expenses, and Disposal of Electronic Devices. SUNY-wide audits addressed Campus Foundations, Compliance with Payment Card Industry Standards, and Compliance with the Clery Act. OSC’s Bureau of State Expenditures employs several initiatives designed to enhance and enforce internal controls over the procurement function at the campus level.

UAlbany takes audits and audit recommendations seriously and responsive positive reaction to audit reports is the norm.

Opportunities for Improvement: As documented above, UAlbany meets and in many cases exceeds expectations for adherence to Standard VI. Our planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill our mission and goals. That said, the University could benefit from a multi-year strategic technology plan that establishes a vision for the technological
development of the institution as well as addresses more fundamental issues such as determining unit responsibility for shared technology and a standardized plan for faculty/staff hardware replacement.

In addition, the University has identified the following areas for continuing improvement:

• Increasing the annual surplus of revenue over expenditures in the Campus Financial Plan (CFP) to 5% of State Tax Support.
• Strengthening the student consultation process in developing student fee budgets.
CHAPTER 5
GOVERNING THE UNIVERSITY
AT ALBANY

STANDARD VII - GOVERNANCE,
LEADERSHIP, AND
ADMINISTRATION

UAlbany has a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure with roles, responsibilities, and accountability that support decision making.

The system of leadership and administration at the University at Albany is tiered, involving the State University of New York (SUNY) system and the University at Albany. The Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees articulate the main components of the system.

The SUNY Board of Trustees appoints a Chancellor who functions as the chief executive officer of the university system. The SUNY Board of Trustees selects the Chief Administrative Officer of each college (at UAlbany, the President). A University Council supervises the operations and affairs of the University in accordance with the rules established by the Board of Trustees. The University faculty are responsible for the conduct of the University’s instruction, research, and service programs.

This chapter reviews the roles, responsibilities, and accountability of the SUNY Chancellor, the SUNY Board of Trustees, SUNY Shared Governance, the UAlbany President and senior administration, the UAlbany University Council which is advisory to the President, UAlbany Shared Governance, and Assessment procedures of such.

SUNY SYSTEM GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The State University of New York (SUNY) is the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the United States with a total enrollment of 424,051 students as of Fall 2018. SUNY is comprised of 64 college and university campuses (29 state operated campuses, 30 community colleges, and five statutory colleges) with a SUNY campus located within 30 miles of every home, school, and business in the state. These campuses include research universities, four-year colleges, specialized and technical colleges, health science centers including hospitals, and land-grant colleges. SUNY is a corporation within the State Education Department, and all of the powers of the State University, derived from the statute, are vested in and exercised by the Board of Trustees. The University at Albany meets the Requirements of Affiliation 1 under SUNY.

SUNY LEADERSHIP: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

SUNY’s leadership structure consists of a Chancellor, Board of Trustees (Bylaws), Chancellor’s Cabinet, and Campus Presidents. The Board of Trustees, the governing body of SUNY, consists of 18 members, 15 of whom are appointed by the Governor with consent of the New York State Senate. Its broadly representative membership includes the President of the Student Assembly (student Trustee ex officio), the President of the University Faculty Senate and the President of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges (faculty trustees ex officio with no vote). The roles, responsibilities, and accountability of the Board of Trustees are articulated in the Board of Trustees Policies.

The current Chancellor, Dr. Kristina M. Johnson, appointed by the Board of Trustees in September of 2017, serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the SUNY System and reports to...
the Board of Trustees. The Chancellor’s senior administrative team comprises the Chancellor’s Cabinet. The members of the SUNY leadership operate as public officers and as such must abide by the § 74 Code of Ethics. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Chief Financial Officer oversees all aspects of SUNY’s financial resources and a $12 billion budget. The SUNY Office of Finance and Budget is responsible for SUNY’s financial operations and budgetary allocations.

SUNY engages in a shared governance system in which faculty, professional staff, administration, governing boards, and students participate in decision making and creation of policy. SUNY has three main bodies that interact with each other and with the Board of Trustees: The University Faculty Senate, Student Assembly, and Faculty Council of Community Colleges. In 2014, a performance system called SUNY Excels was implemented to ensure SUNY’s commitment to continuous improvement and to excellence in five key areas: access, completion, success, inquiry, and engagement.

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF OPERATING WITHIN THE SUNY SYSTEM

There are distinct advantages to UAlbany being a part of the SUNY system, not the least of which is the national and international reputation of the SUNY system as a premier example of public education in the United States. In addition, benefits include an overarching shared governance system, common goals, and shared centralized services. For example, the Research Foundation participates in grants management and negotiation, manages grants and contracts across the SUNY system, and leverages resources and expertise. The SUNY Human Resources Association negotiates with United University Professionals (UUP) and other unions on behalf of its constituents across SUNY. The SUNY educational mission performs as a single service, providing boundary free online education to students across all colleges with a Seamless Transfer guarantee. This “systemness” is clearly a distinct advantage to UAlbany. However, there are also challenges. UAlbany, like other SUNY campuses, does not control the level of direct state support. The SUNY Board of Trustees sets tuition; however, New York State legislative action is required in order to allocate the dollars to the individual campuses.

UALBANY’S ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The University Administration is organized under the President, the senior administration, and the oversight and advisory body of the University Council. Appointed by the Board of Trustees, the President serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the University at Albany and reports to the Chancellor of the SUNY System. As such, the University at Albany meets MSCHE’s Requirements of Affiliation 1.

University President

Havidán Rodríguez, Ph.D. was appointed by the SUNY Board of Trustees as the 20th president of the University at Albany in June 2017. He took office in September 2017 after more than 25 years as a leader in higher education. Before coming to UAlbany, Dr. Rodríguez was the founding Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). A respected scholar, he studies the socioeconomic impacts of disasters and the economic well-being of minority populations in the mainland United States and Puerto Rico. The president is supported by a chief of staff, a senior assistant, deputy chief of staff, assistant for strategic communications, an administrative assistant, and a graduate assistant.

Senior Administration

The senior administration at UAlbany (reporting structure) includes six vice presidents who report directly to the president. These include
the provost and vice president for academic affairs, and vice presidents for government and community relations, student affairs, finance and administration, research, and university advancement. The offices of the Director of Athletic Administration and Intercollegiate Athletics, Office of General Counsel, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness also report directly to the president. The qualifications and experience of those directly reporting to the President can be found in Appendix 7.1.

Assisting the president is the Executive Council, which includes the vice presidents and other direct reports. A University Council, appointed by the governor, supervises the operations and affairs of the UAlbany campus in accordance with rules established by the SUNY Board of Trustees (more details below).

Some reorganization of senior administration offices has occurred since the last self-study report. These changes were implemented in President Rodríguez’s first year in office at UAlbany. The Office of Communications and Marketing now operates within University Advancement. Information Technology Services is now under Finance and Administration. The Vice President for Planning, Policy and Compliance position was eliminated and the Office of Enterprise Risk Management & Compliance was established, to which Equity & Compliance, Internal Control, and University Policy all report. We implemented these changes to achieve efficiencies and better align unit responsibilities with key priority areas.

**University leadership – Context**

Recent history at UAlbany has been marked by a number of senior leadership transitions at the presidential and vice presidential/provost levels. UAlbany has been served by five presidents/interim presidents and four provosts/interim provosts between 2010 and 2018; in the decade prior, the University was under the leadership of six presidents or interims. The absence of consistent senior leadership has posed challenges to UAlbany, including sustaining the working relationships between senior administration, academic leadership, and SUNY System Administration. These relationships are necessary for effective stewardship of innovation and excellence, progression toward identified strategic initiatives, and institutional identity.

Despite leadership transitions over the course of the self-study period, UAlbany has remained focused on a number of key areas of strength. Following the launch in 2013 of its largest academic expansion in 50 years, UAlbany hired 137 new full-time faculty, opened two new colleges, the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) and the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity (CEHC), and signed an innovative academic affiliation agreement with Albany Law School, the nation’s oldest independent school of law. We also have deepened our relationship with Albany Medical College and initiated new articulation agreements with feeder institutions such as Hudson Valley Community College.

**Administrative unit function:**

**Roles, responsibilities, accountability**

**Roles/responsibilities**

The President has an active role in maintaining the academic excellence and fiscal integrity of the University and has the authority and autonomy to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. The responsibilities of the President are provided in the State University of New York Policies of the Board of Trustees (April 2017).

These responsibilities include: promoting the development and effectiveness of the University; appointing professional and non-academic staff or recommending for appointment of such staff to the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees; supervising the members of the professional and non-academic staff; preparing and recommending the annual budget requests of the University; reporting and making
recommendations about the operation, plans and development of the University to the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and the University Council; appointing employees to positions at the college in the classified service of the civil service of the state; preparing and publishing a University Handbook, subject to the approval of the Chancellor; and making an annual report to the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, the University Council and the faculty concerning the affairs of the University.

The senior leadership team covers a comprehensive array of administrative responsibilities. The Provost oversees the nine schools and colleges at the University and the offices of International Education, the Graduate School, The Office of Undergraduate Education, the University Libraries, General Studies and Summer Session, the Educational Opportunity Program, Access and Academic Program Enrichment, the Art Museum, and Faculty and Professional Development. The Provost also has the primary responsibility for advancing the University’s mission in the areas of teaching, scholarship, research, and creative activity.

The Vice President for Research supports all research endeavors at UAlbany and oversees regulatory research compliance, sponsored programs, technology development, and the University’s research centers, institutes, and laboratories.

The Vice President for Student Affairs provides opportunities and support for students to learn the intellectual and personal skills necessary to succeed in an academic community and in a global society. This vice president manages the student affairs portfolio including Enrollment Management and Undergraduate Admissions. This includes administering a comprehensive range of campus programs and services; assisting in creating a campus culture that promotes the academic achievement and personal development of all students (undergraduate, graduate and professional); supporting crisis response and institutional initiatives; advocating on behalf of students; and fostering collaborative relationships among students, faculty, and staff.

The University’s chief financial officer, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, is responsible for all campus financial management and budgeting activities. This VP oversees the office of the controller, facilities management, human resources, environmental health and sustainability programs, auxiliary services, university police, and information technology services.

The Vice President for University Advancement oversees campaign/development, and corporate, foundation and advancement services to raise funds for the University. This division also includes the Office of Communications and Marketing, University Events, and the Alumni Association.

The Vice President for Government and Community Relations works to maintain positive and effective relationships between the University and all levels of government and the community, and acts as the University’s liaison and primary point of contact with elected and appointed officials and staff. The unit’s staff works to strengthen the University’s visibility and image, particularly at the State and local levels, and to create an advocacy strategy that supports the University’s strategic vision.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is a resource to the UAlbany community and is charged with ensuring that all UAlbany faculty, staff and students learn, live and work in an environment where they can be successful and feel valued and respected. The office provides education, training, and consultation designed to foster inclusive excellence.

The Director of Athletic Administration and Intercollegiate Athletics provides leadership for UAlbany’s NCAA Division I, 18-sport intercollegiate athletics program and its scholar student athletes. The director acts as a liaison between the University, athletic administration, and student-athletes, providing academic support
services for student-athletes through academic tutoring, counseling, and monitoring.

The Office of General Counsel protects and defends the University’s legal interests in accordance with the laws of the United States and the State of New York and provides legal advice to the Board of Trustees, System Administration, the State University’s campuses, and other components of SUNY. Counsel tracks legal developments, issues legal guidance to campus professionals and provides training on understanding and complying with legal requirements. The satellite office on the University at Albany campus serves the legal interests of the University at Albany while interfacing with the main General Counsel Office located at System Administration.

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) is a major source of official data about the University. Its responsibilities include joint development of campus administrative databases, as well as database information management and analysis; campus compliance with external reporting requirements of SUNY, the State of New York, the federal government, national organizations, and public and private information services; ongoing support for campus planning, budgeting, and enrollment management activities which meet the operational information needs of the president, vice presidents, deans, directors, chairs, and various management and planning committees within the university; and conducting special studies and survey analyses to support campus management.

Accountability

The President is accountable to the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees and the University Council. According to the SUNY Board of Trustees Policies, “At any time during the period of appointment, the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor may evaluate the services of the chief administrative officer.” Additionally, each year, the President’s annual report of the state of the University is shared with the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees and the University Council.

To establish a forum for broad sharing of information regarding key priorities and institutional initiatives, as well as responsibilities for implementation, the President established a President’s Council. It has representation of internal leaders and stakeholders including vice presidents; deans and their senior staff; University Senate leadership; and representatives from graduate and undergraduate student government bodies. The group meets approximately twice each semester to discuss critical issues facing the University. Council members are responsible for sharing information from the meetings with their constituencies and bringing feedback to the Council as appropriate.

UALBANY’S SHARED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

University Council

Power is granted under New York State Education Law, Article 8, Section 356, which provides for the establishment of a local council to supervise the operations and affairs of each state-operated institution of the State University. Duties include, but are not limited to, serving as an advisory board to the President by reviewing all major plans for its more effective operation, make regulations governing care, custody and management of lands, grounds, facilities and equipment, and governing the conduct and behavior of students, review budgetary requests and name buildings and grounds. The Council functions subject to the general management, supervision and control of and in accordance with rules established by the State University Trustees.

The Council consists of 10 voting members, nine appointed by the Governor and one elected by and from the University’s students. The chairperson is appointed by the Governor of New York, pursuant to the provisions of the Education Law. The vice chairperson is elected
by the Council, by majority vote, at the first meeting of the University’s fiscal year. There is no term expiration date for this appointment. The President, in consultation with the chairperson or acting chairperson, shall appoint a staff member to serve as liaison to the Council and coordinate its administrative activities.

University Senate

The University Senate, with its councils and committees, is the principal academic authority and has a consultative role in all issues that affect the faculty and students. Authority is given to the Senate by the Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees. The University Senate is an inclusive governing body that represents three constituencies: teaching faculty, professionals and students. The composition of the membership is representative of the schools, colleges, libraries, professional staff, part-time faculty, and both graduate and undergraduate student populations.

As an advisory body to the administration, the Senate additionally includes ex-officio members of the administration (non-voting). Three SUNY-wide senators and three Senate Officers maintain active communication with the SUNY Faculty Senate. The Faculty Bylaws state the mechanisms by which the faculty should discharge the responsibilities for the conduct of UAlbany’s instructional, research, and service programs and guides the governance philosophy, organization and procedures of the University Senate. The Senate Charter specifies, subject to the Faculty Bylaws, the mechanisms by which the Senate shall accomplish its duties and exercise its rights. A Senate Handbook provides an overview of the responsibilities and operation of the Senate for use by the University members as a whole.

Student Governance

The Student Association (SA) is an elected group of active students at the University that creates, oversees, and advocates for policies to serve students and enhance student life. SA is a not-for-profit corporation that is independent of the University at Albany. All undergraduate students who pay the student activity fee are eligible for the services provided.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the governance body for the graduate students at the University at Albany. The GSA serves the graduate population in three ways: advocacy, professional development, and service/resources. Its mission is to encourage and support professional development, social, and intellectual interaction between all graduate students at the University at Albany.

ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND ADMINISTRATION ASSESSMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

The University initiated its Administrative Assessment program to ensure that each administrative unit demonstrates its contribution to strategic goal attainment by providing evidence of its use and allocation of resources, as well as planning and effectiveness. We established a detailed assessment protocol that provided the scope, purpose and methodology for administrative assessment and called for an administrative assessment advisory committee to meet on an ongoing basis and help guide activity. The protocol required in-depth program reviews by each vice presidential area and dean’s office on a five-year rotating cycle. In addition, each administrative unit is required to provide, and update annually, mission and vision statements as well as SMART goals (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Results Focused, Time-Bound). In accordance with the protocol objectives, the University’s Administrative Assessment Advisory Committee, an internal working group, developed an assessment matrix. Initial assessment training, coordinated between SUNY’s Center for Professional Development and the Administrative Assessment Committee, was rolled out in November 2017. A follow-up training was then held in February 2019. Following the on-site training workshops, personalized one-on-one training/consultations
were implemented for those unable to attend workshops. Assessment matrix forms were distributed to each administrative unit in December 2017. The assessment incorporated both direct and indirect measures of intended outcomes (direct measures evaluate actual performance; indirect measures evaluate perceived performance).

Upon completion, the matrices were returned to Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE) for evaluation and review. Once received, assessment experts from the administrative assessment committee reviewed each matrix individually and provided custom feedback to each administrative unit. We also provided opportunities in the February 2019 training for administrative leaders to ask questions about how to improve their submissions. The February 2019 training also was used as an opportunity to share the next year’s matrices, which utilized a new, custom designed, electronic data collection system. See Appendix 7.2 for a summary of the Advisory Committee’s work to-date, which was presented to the University Planning and Policy Council of the University Senate in spring 2020.

Assessment of Governance

The Committee on Assessment of Governance and Consultation, a committee of the University Senate’s Governance Council, is mandated by the Charter of the University Senate to evaluate, every two years, the effectiveness of the Senate in representing its constituencies, addressing issues and concerns, and in affecting institutional decisions. The 2016 assessment of shared governance, a cooperative effort between faculty governance and the administration, through the Office of the President and IRPE, was summarized in two reports: a faculty and staff evaluation and a student evaluation.

The 2016 shared governance survey evaluated the effectiveness of governance in representing its constituencies, transparency of institutional communication, and quality of joint decision-making, and requested participants to answer “What are the top three University or Higher Education-related issues that [the survey taker] would like the Senate and/or Administration to engage?” The survey instrument was sent to all faculty and staff and to a sample of 5,000 graduate and undergraduate students.

The Committee on Assessment of Governance and Consultation summarized the key findings and recommendations of the faculty and staff governance survey. First, based on survey findings, the report recommended that the Senate needs to improve in transparency, communication, and its ability to engage the administration in effective consultation. Second, the survey report calls for the Senate to have more say about what the University does, how it does it, what direction it’s going, what resources should be used, and what disciplinary areas are promoted. Third, the report summary holds that the University is not funded at appropriate levels, and needs to be a more effective advocate for increased state support of the University. Fourth, the report called for the University to prioritize resources that strengthen the quality of teaching, research, libraries and support for student success. Fifth, the report reinforced the notion that the University should improve compensation and working conditions for contingent faculty.

From the student governance survey, the key findings were: First, it is difficult for students to find information on issues in which the Senate is engaged. Second, a concern among student respondents regarding the cost of attendance and tuition was the number one recurring theme to the question about “What are the top three University or Higher Education-related issues that you would like the Senate and/or Administration to engage?” Diversity and Inclusion issues were the next most cited theme. Poor quality of food in the cafeteria and lack of food choices were also cited as a recurring theme to this question. Finally, stipend levels for graduate teaching assistants and salaries paid
to contingent faculty were raised by enough respondents to merit noting in the Committee’s report.

We have addressed these findings to varying degrees since the survey summaries were shared with the campus community, and with the administration. The University has made progress on some items, such as teaching assistant stipends and contingent faculty wages, on an incremental annual basis. In his spring 2019 University address, President Rodríguez noted the progress made to date and plans to revisit both again in advance of the next academic year, which were then followed through on in fall 2019. The President’s Office redesigned the shared governance website in spring 2018 to support better communication of Senate business to the campus community, and we instituted annual trainings for the professional staff assigned to Senate Councils and Committees to help in the yearly transition of Senate leaders in charge of each Council or Committee.

Perhaps most important, beginning in Fall 2017, and to the current day, monthly Campus Governance Leadership (CGL) meetings were initiated between governance leaders (the Senate Chair, Past Chair, and Chair-Elect) and the University’s academic and administrative leadership (Provost, Provost’s Chief of Staff, and President’s Chief of Staff). The CGL meetings have been effective in identifying issues that should be brought before the Senate for advice or consultation and for ensuring that this is in fact done. Additionally, the CGL meetings are a means for Senate leaders to signal to the administration other issues or concerns that might be percolating on campus, such as the desire to be involved in the budgetary process or allocation of resources to address strategic priorities earlier in the decision making process. This led to Senate and student government representation on the Strategic Allocation of Resources (StAR) team that made the final recommendations for funding to the President in spring 2019, and to faculty participation in forming recommendations for first year strategic plan accelerators.

Other items unearthed in the governance assessment surveys are front and center in our new strategic plan, as exemplified by the fact that Diversity and Inclusion is identified as a core strategic priority and is being addressed by a number of initiatives and action plans across the schools and colleges and vice presidential divisions. Food quality and choice were addressed in large measure by expanded food offerings in our new Campus Center addition, which opened in Spring 2018. The proof is in the data though, and student satisfaction with campus food will again be assessed during the next iteration of the SUNY Student Opinion Survey.

We administered a second iteration of the governance survey to faculty, staff, and students in fall 2018. As of this writing, those survey results are being compiled by the Committee on Assessment of Governance and Consultation, and we look forward to the findings so that we can continue to improve our campus governance process in a collaborative manner.

In summary, we believe we have a collegial and effective governance system at work here at the University at Albany. While there will always be disagreements on certain issues or in how to address particular challenges, we have nonetheless demonstrated that we are working collectively toward common goals and objectives in support of the University’s mission.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

As noted earlier in this self-study, IRPE maintains a comprehensive list of surveys conducted on campus each year. This process helps to control the number of times each potential respondent receives a request for a survey, and to provide assistance to those who require expertise in survey development and
analysis. IRPE also produces a number of reports each year based on the surveys it conducts makes them publicly available.

We hold that our academic assessment processes across our academic programs and in General Education, coupled with our administrative assessment processes and guided by the establishment of baseline strategic goal metrics, demonstrate that UAlbany has undertaken a multi-method approach to assessing its institutional effectiveness. This entire self-study is a testament to this fact. ✷