PERIODIC REVIEW REPORT

Presented by:

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
State University of New York

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ROBERT J. JONES
President

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1. Executive Summary
Introductory Overview of the University at Albany

The University at Albany, State University of New York, continues its evolution from distinguished teachers college in the 20th Century to a high-quality research university with an internationally recognized and highly productive faculty, an accomplished student body of nearly 18,000, and a profile of nationally recognized academic programs. Its traditional missions of undergraduate and graduate teaching, research, and service are distinctively integrated to produce an intellectual and programmatic synergy that defines the University. This synergy emerges from a rich collaborative environment that joins the foundational disciplines of the humanities, arts, social sciences, and natural sciences with strong professional programs in business, education, public administration, public health, criminal justice, social welfare, computer science, and information science and policy.

Indeed, the University’s rich collaborative environment gave rise to the newly created State University of New York Polytechnic Institute which is in the final process of spinning off from the University at Albany to stand on its own as a fully independent institution, with self-ownership over its authorized degree programs and Middle States’ accreditation. This same entrepreneurial spirit is now focused on developing a computer engineering program in what will be a renamed College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and to establish the nation’s first College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity. Thus, today’s University at Albany is distinguished by excellence within distinctive disciplines and professions, and by extensive scholarship and teaching across disciplinary boundaries, including many combined accelerated degree options that meld knowledge and application. University at Albany undergraduate and graduate students benefit from their immersion in this research environment, and they, in turn, enrich and advance scholarship and evidence-based practice in service to society at-large.

As a research university, the University at Albany recognizes that its graduate and undergraduate programs are intrinsically linked in terms of quality and breadth, and in support of the creation of new knowledge that is the hallmark of its mission. The University currently offers 54 bachelors, 84 master’s, and 39 doctoral programs, to approximately 13,000 undergraduates and 5,000 graduate students. These programs feature closely related curricula, are offered by a faculty teaching at all levels, and are distinguished by a range of accelerated bachelor’s-master’s degree options.

Many of the University’s academic programs are also substantially strengthened by their interdisciplinary nature. This is a characteristic that the University has cultivated for many years to ensure that educational programs reflect the increasingly complex nature of knowledge. Even in newer and emerging program areas like informatics, forensics, and computer engineering, strong dependencies on existing programs and faculty are essential to increasing the breadth of academic programs.

The University’s full-time faculty of 606, although smaller than faculty of peer institutions, offers an exceptionally strong array of academic programs. Many doctoral programs
are nationally ranked by the National Research Council (NRC) and in the latest graduate school rankings from U.S. News & World Report, the University at Albany landed six programs in the top 25 in the nation, including the criminal justice program (#2), information and technology management (#3), and public management and administration (#14).

According to the 2016 edition of the annual "U.S. News Best Graduate Schools," UAlbany has 16 programs listed in the top 100, including:

- Clinical Psychology - 47
- Criminal Justice - 2
- Economics - 76
- Education Schools - 56
- English - 91
- Information and Technology Management - 3
- Library and Information Studies - 31
- Mathematics - 87
- Nonprofit Management - 18
- Political Science - 76
- Public Affairs Schools - 16
- Public Administration - 14
- Public Finance and Budgeting - 16
- Public Health - 31
- Social Welfare - 24
- Sociology - 28

In addition, UAlbany’s School of Business was ranked #1 in the U.S. in “10 MBA Programs That Lead to Jobs” in U.S. News’s last three Best Graduate Schools edition as the school continues to place 100 percent of its full-time MBA graduates in jobs within three months of graduation.

UAlbany’s school psychology program is ranked 7th in scholarly productivity among the nation’s 59 APA-accredited school psychology doctoral (PsyD and PhD) programs by the Journal of School Psychology.

Several University at Albany programs have achieved national or international distinction, and several others represent areas of emerging strength. Today, the University at Albany, as one of the four SUNY University Centers, is a flagship campus for research and education in:

- Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences
- Criminal justice
- Public Affairs and Policy
- Demography
- Literacy and Writing
- Education
- Public Health
- Information Resources Management
Social Welfare

The following emerging graduate and research programs are poised to take their place alongside the disciplines of distinction noted above:

- Forensics
- Functional Genomics and Molecular Structures
- Life Sciences
- Information Technology

While the University at Albany ranks among the smaller of the 108 public universities classified by the Carnegie Foundation as RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity), despite its size, University faculty generated over $515 million in total research expenditures in 2013-14, processed through the SUNY Research Foundation and Health Research Incorporated, which is the sponsored research administering agency for UAlbany faculty affiliated with the New York State Department of Health, as well as through Memorandums of Understanding with New York State agencies. The University’s future research expenditures will be impacted by the evolving separation of the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering from UAlbany, discussed more fully below.

Since its 2010 Middle States review, the University at Albany has moved aggressively under Governor Andrew Cuomo’s NYSUNY 2020 program to make itself a leading catalyst for job growth throughout the state and New York’s capital region, and to further strengthen its academic programs.

In this context of significantly expanding research and graduate strength, the University is defined by its undergraduate enterprise as well. As a moderately selective institution, the University offers undergraduate curricula enriched by an environment of graduate program and research strength. The University attracts a student body that is ethnically, culturally and geographically diverse, substantially more so than our peer institutions. Bachelor’s degrees are offered in 54 majors, including the core disciplines of the arts and sciences in a number of nationally and regionally recognized interdisciplinary areas, such as political science, criminal justice, social welfare, and in business and accounting. In the last five years, the undergraduate program has been enhanced by a growing Honors College, the establishment of Living Learning Communities, and the creation in 2013 of a new Writing and Critical Inquiry freshman writing program, which is mandatory for all first-year students. From our data bank of regular and systematic surveys of students and alumni, our students indicate that they highly value their experience at UAlbany, and 85 percent of our baccalaureate recipients proceed immediately to graduate school or career track employment following graduation.

In recent years, the University’s stature and achievements have also been greatly accelerated through increased capital investment, a successful Division I athletics program that has won forty championships in the five years since our reaffirmation of accreditation by Middle States in 2010. Finally, increased outreach and advancement efforts have earned the University at Albany a spot on the U.S. President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.
Periodic Review Report Preparation

Preparation of the Periodic Review Report (PRR) was aided considerably by the sole recommendation of our 2010 Middle States external review team – “to be focused on the University’s soon-to-come new strategic plan and its implementation outcomes during the next five years.” As documented below, the University community expended considerable time and energy over the five years following the 2010 site visit developing and implementing initiatives in pursuit of our new Strategic Plan. The contents of this PRR are therefore largely a matter of summarizing our Strategic Plan implementation record and achievements along the way. The new President has set for us four goals, called “stakes in the ground,” that are discussed below and will be incorporated into the next strategic plan that will begin in fall 2015.

This PRR was vetted with deans and vice presidents. The document was also shared with the chair and chair-elect of the University Senate prior to submission, with a request for feedback and comment when the faculty returns in fall 2015, as time did not permit a full campus-wide vetting in spring 2015.

Major Institutional Changes and Developments since Decennial Accreditation

The University notes the following major institutional changes and developments since its decennial accreditation in 2010:

- Degree programs in Classics, French, Italian, Russian, and Theatre were deactivated in 2011. The Theatre major was reactivated in 2014.
- The 19th President of the University at Albany, Robert J. Jones, took office in 2013.
- A new School of Business building opened on the main campus in 2013.
- The College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) in 2013 petitioned and was granted status by the State University of New York Board of Trustees that renders it independent of the University at Albany. As of this writing CNSE is in a transition phase to full independence as it pursues its own accreditation with MSCHE.
- A major revision of undergraduate General Education requirements was launched and completed during the 2011-12 academic year by the faculty via campus governance processes, effective for the fall 2013 entering freshman class.
- Under Governor Cuomo’s NYSUNY 2020 program, since its UAlbany inception in 2012, the University has begun to modify and/or expand 31 academic programs; hired 187 full-time faculty in cutting edge fields; and implemented a rational tuition plan with predictable yearly tuition increases for students and their parents while providing $2.5 million in increased student aid. Critical to the University at Albany’s NYSUNY 2020 plan is the construction of a $165 million Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (E-TEC). A combination of state and campus funding will be used in the design and construction of the E-TEC facility.
• In February 2015, New York Governor Cuomo announced that the nation’s first College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity would be housed at the University at Albany. Preparations are now underway to establish the academic and support infrastructure of the new college.

• We have just renamed our College of Computer and Information Science, to the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, to reflect a broadening of our efforts in STEM and are as of this writing awaiting final approval for a new Computer Engineering program with the State Education Department.

PRR Highlights

The University at Albany has energetically engaged the 2010 decennial accreditation site team’s recommendation to be focused on the University’s new strategic plan and its implementation outcomes during the following five years. As described below, the University’s strategic direction has matured from our 2010 Strategic Plan while tightening focus on four core areas laid out by President Jones in his 2013 inaugural address.

While the University at Albany is in the process of transitioning to a new senior leadership team as a result of the natural turnover that occurs with any new presidential change, it has maintained and enhanced programmatic excellence, expanded the faculty base, and is moving forward with modest growth in student enrollment. The University will continue to face its challenges and opportunities through processes that include shared governance, formal consultation and community participation.

From 2011 into 2013, the University’s Strategic Plan Steering Committee was at work exploring initiatives, reviewing resource requirements, and providing direction for administrative units and academic programs to pursue the campus’s new strategic objectives. At the completion of the construction and development stage of the Strategic Plan, which involved the entire University at Albany community’s participation through town hall meetings and electronic communication, the University was well prepared to move into the implementation stage. With the detailed Strategic Plan guiding them, seven working groups, led by Strategic Planning Steering Committee members, were formed. The working groups were staffed by 118 representatives from various academic and administrative areas, student government, and included faculty governance liaisons.

Progress and background materials concerning Strategic Plan implementation are detailed in Section 2 below, and available at http://www.albany.edu/strategicplan/implementation.shtml. In addition to the initiatives developed by the Strategic Plan working groups, the narrative in Section 6 details how the University links planning with budgeting to foster institutional renewal. The University adapted its incremental budgeting approach. Building from its current budgetary approach, the University leveraged the NYSUNY 2020 matching grant program sponsored by New York State to direct new resources purposefully towards initiatives aligned with the Strategic Plan goals and objectives, while also satisfying expectations and requirements set forth by the state. Section 2 below lists the numerous initiatives and programs advanced by the University in pursuit of its six Strategic Goals. While the impact of these initiatives are
measured and monitored in the Strategic Planning Metrics developed by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, with some successes and some areas still in need of attention, it is broadly understood that pursuit of the strategic goals is a long-term iterative endeavor.

No public research university is without challenges, and the University at Albany is no exception. Some of our challenges are internal, and others emanate from the external environment, as Section 4 below details. Soon after its 2010 Middle States reaffirmation of accreditation, the University continued to be confronted with the deleterious effects of cumulative reductions in base state support, resulting in part from the 2008 national financial meltdown and subsequent effects on the state funding environment. This funding crisis compelled difficult, and at times controversial decisions, but the University that rose from those financial challenges is now stronger and better positioned for future success. Challenges also emerged in meeting enrollment projections from 2010 through 2014. A number of new programmatic initiatives, coupled with re-calibrating graduate enrollment projections for the 2015 through 2019 period and initiatives to increase undergraduate student retention, have put the University on sound financial footing for the foreseeable future. The mechanics of enrollment and financial projections are fully described in Section 4, and we believe that they, combined with new programmatic initiatives, produce honest appraisals of the future expected enrollment and tuition revenue levels upon which the University bases its financial plan.

The University has a long history of educational evaluation, and has designed particularly robust processes and organizational structures for the direct assessment of student learning in the major (in both graduate and undergraduate programs) and in its General Education program. We believe our General Education assessment process, in which assessments of student learning are conducted and reported by the faculty teaching General Education courses, are particularly strong in meeting external accountability demands and in providing instructors effective means of formative assessment that can strengthen their teaching and student learning. Assessment in the major is more challenging, with mixed results reported across the disciplines, and Section 4 below details the steps the University has taken over the past five years to strengthen its processes for assessment in the major.

Institutional effectiveness has been evaluated regularly through high level dashboards and measurements of progress achieved in meeting strategic objectives, through centrally administered survey programs of both faculty/staff and students, and through the survey activities of individual academic and administrative units. While evaluations of institutional effectiveness and of administrative units are not as formalized as are academic assessments in terms of mandated reports and campus-wide review, they occur regularly and are germane to annual budget formulations. Section 5 below discusses revisions to the University’s Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP) that were initially considered in 2013-14 by the vice presidents and deans, and which need to be revisited in 2015-16 to provide more structure and attention on administrative unit assessments.

The final section of the PRR describes in detail the campus’s budgeting processes and how the NYSUNY 2020 program was harnessed to link planning with budgeting processes since the University’s reaffirmation of accreditation by Middle States in 2010. This section describes a new Compact Planning process that will guide budgetary allocations beginning in fiscal year
2016-17. It will use, as mentioned above, President Jones’s four stakes in the ground to focus campus energy and direction on 1) Expanding the University’s portfolio of degree-granting programs; 2) Recruiting more out-of-state and international students; 3) Broadening the institution’s role as a University engaged in the community; and 4) Growing our financial resources to fulfill our ambition.

2. Institutional Response to Recommendations from the Previous Team Report and Institutional Self-Study

The external site team that visited the campus in 2010 was overwhelmingly pleased with the University’s self-study document and self-assessment, and praised the candor in which the University engaged in the self-study process. The site team made only one recommendation in the report, and the University is pleased to report on progress to-date.

Recommendation - We recommend, in the light of the many important events now in course at UAlbany and in its state and national environments, that its next Periodic Review Report be focused on the University’s soon-to-come new strategic plan and its implementation outcomes during the next five years.

In the 2010 self-study, the University suggested 156 recommendations (including suggestions) for itself and listed each in an Appendix of Recommendation after each chapter in its self-study. Each of the recommendations was based on an analysis of the data and context provided in the self-study itself. Since they emanated from the campus community, these recommendations and suggestions underlay much of the thinking that went into the then-developing Strategic Plan. In the five years since the Middle States review was completed, the University has indeed finalized its strategic plan, initiated implementation, and begun developing key performance indicators for tracking strategic goal attainment.

The 2010 self-study detailed the numerous key leadership vacancies at the University in the latter half of the decade leading up to the self-study submission year. That trend continued to some degree, as President Robert J. Jones was installed in January 2013 as the University’s 19th president. President Jones has taken the opportunity to revisit the 2010 Strategic Plan and build upon it in concentrating campus energy, resources, and ambition, as discussed below.

The Strategic Plan itself is divided into six “strategic themes.” Each theme contains multiple objectives, and those objectives have largely been met in the years following the University’s reaffirmation of accreditation. Below are the six goals of the Strategic Plan accompanied by a summary of the steps and initiatives the University has taken to address them through strategic plan implementation. In the course of addressing the Strategic Plan goals and objectives since 2010, the University community has addressed 143 of the 156 self-initiated recommendations from the self-study report submitted to Middle States in 2010. A complete accounting of these recommendations, and as well as the Strategic Plan overview, can be found in Appendices 2.1 and 2.2, respectively. The complete (77 page) Strategic Plan that contains suggested action steps for each objective is available at
Strategic Goal I - To enhance the quality of undergraduate education at UAlbany and attract and serve a highly qualified and diverse group of students.

Addressed through:

- Created and adopted a new General Education program -- recommended by the University Senate, and signed by the President on June 13, 2012 (Bill No. 1112-15). In addition to realigning our General Education domains with new SUNY-wide mandates, we are now moving through the final stages of implementation as the academic competencies in Advanced Writing, Oral Discourse, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking within the majors are being phased in under the auspices of faculty governance. The Advanced Writing competency in particular will enhance the availability and quality of writing instruction for all students, in every major.

- Developed and launched a new required writing program for incoming first-year students - - Writing and Critical Inquiry. This included hiring a new director and sixteen full-time instructors specializing in writing instruction.

- Enriched the educational experience by working with academic departments to create capstone courses within all majors, establishing preceptorships or peer-mentoring for qualified upper division students, and enhancing honors-in-the-major programs. This is still underway, with progress attained.

- Increased the diversity of our highly qualified undergraduate students, raising the numbers of both international students and students of color.

- Created and implemented a new “Community College Connections” collaboration between the Office for Undergraduate Education and Undergraduate Admissions, to enhance the opportunity for highly qualified undergraduates to transfer from community colleges to the University.

- Developed new opportunities for students considering UAlbany to interact with current students, faculty and staff.

- Created a program to communicate to the student body the academic achievements and excellence of their peers.

- Increased the full-time faculty by 57, beginning fall 2011, with plans for recruiting over a hundred more over the next 5 years. This new cohort of faculty is the most diverse to come to UAlbany – just under half are women, and just under half are persons of color.

- Increased student access to drop-in, outside-of-course tutorial support for student writing throughout their academic careers at UAlbany.

- Developed mechanisms to increased the number of UAlbany undergraduates studying abroad and engaging in international research.

- Developed initiatives to double the percentage of enrolled international undergraduate students within five years.
- Expanded opportunities in which UAlbany students learn collaboratively with international students to increase the availability and frequency of globally-infused experiences on campus.
- Increased full-time faculty engagement with students through exploring new policies for tenure and promotion, along with a stronger mentoring program and supporting multiple faculty career paths.
- Promulgated principles (and rewards) for excellence in teaching in the faculty development, promotion, and tenure processes.
- Explored support structures and incentives for departments to orient, mentor, and evaluate their non-tenure track faculty.
- Strengthened the campus infrastructure and supports for online education for traditional and non-traditional learners.
- Identified and marketed select programs to target out-of-state and international students.
- Developed a new strategy to enhance engaged learning throughout the undergraduate curriculum, in concert with SUNY’s goal of providing opportunities for experiential education (or applied learning) for all its students.
- Created “Advising PLUS,” a program offering academic assistance – online tutoring, study groups, review sessions, departmental tutoring, and peer tutoring—and connecting students with engaged learning experiences, such as undergraduate research, community-engaged courses, community and public service programs, study abroad, and internships.
- Created a peer educator class sequence, piloted with 10 different academic and academic support departments across campus, and including a peer educator (3-credit) and advanced peer educator (3-credit) curriculum. Funded to expand to up to 9 sections per year which are housed in the Educational Administration and Policy Studies department.

Strategic Goal II - To create an excellent student experience that integrates academic and co-curricular experiences, engages the surrounding community and the world, and fosters lifelong pride in the University.

Addressed through:

- Enhanced our advisement services—in the central Advising Services Center, in the academic departments, and online in the Degree Audit and Review System (DARS) tutorials and videos about our majors.
- Developed and launched a new website for new students (“U A – U Know!”) containing helpful tips from current students on topics such as how to succeed in class, making connections with faculty, and about life in general at UAlbany. It is worth noting that “U A – U Know” has become a campus cheer at sporting events, an indication of the impact of this initiative.
• Expanded opportunities to connect the faculty with students by promoting their participation in new and traditional community building events such as Candle Lighting, Torch Night, and Commencement traditions. Also increased opportunities for informal student-faculty interaction through a “Food for Thought” program which encourages faculty to have lunch with students, and developed a “Munch with the Major” program for sophomores to lunch with faculty while learning about prospective program areas prior to declaring their major.

• Enhanced new faculty/staff orientation and ongoing support structures, such as mentoring and the new Guide to UA, to provide information about academic and extra-curricular events across the divisions throughout the year.

• Utilized a recent audit of uptown campus spaces to support new mentoring programs and create more social environments for students and faculty.

• Enhanced resources for advising, including a series of “Major Videos,” better communication to departments regarding advising, a template for departments to use in advisement, and a concerted effort to use data-driven decision models to plan for adequate course availability for incoming freshmen and transfer students, as well as rising sophomores and majors/minors.

• Developed an online assessment for students on probation, to provide earlier intervention for students academically at-risk.

• Started requiring all student clubs and organizations to have a faculty/staff advisor. Club advisor support and recognition was developed and institutionalized.

• Expanded and improved the “first year experience,” including improved and expanded Living-Learning Communities, Freshman Seminars, and Transfer Seminars that address first-year transition issues. These, along with our new Writing and Critical Inquiry classes, are providing all incoming freshmen with a small class environment in the fall of their first year at UAlbany.

• Created 17 Living-Learning Communities (L-LCs) which offer incoming freshmen with similar interests, majors, or lifestyles, the opportunity to live together in the same residence hall, take one or two courses together, and meet regularly with faculty, advisors, and upper-class students who share their interests. Subsequently expanded to 21 interest areas as of this writing, the L-LCs are continually re-tooled, and strengthened under the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Studies. Additional noteworthy developments around L-LCs are:
  
  o Increased the number of faculty involved with L-LCs to expand the number of new freshman to 550 by fall 2015.

  o Developed the World of Sustainability, a living-learning community for incoming freshmen. This L-LC has lobbied campus dining contractor for more locally grown and organic foods. This L-LC has ties into the existing Sustainability Council, thus keeping students engaged throughout their four years at UAlbany.
- Strengthened partnership with the Residential Life and Housing to modify and improve L-LCs, and have now been able to expand this program as additional housing capacity has come on line.

- Added an additional orientation for L-LCs to bring faculty and new freshmen together at the start of the academic year.

- Improved the sign-up process for L-LCs, which will make it easier for international students to participate.

**Strategic Goal III - To advance excellence in graduate education in support of the University’s reputation, role, and stature and the preparation and competitiveness of graduates.**

**Addressed through:**

- Developed a new set of 12 consensually derived external and internal criteria for evaluating doctoral programs.

- Designed a new campus-wide professional development series for graduate students that includes workshops on teaching, grant writing, and preparing for professional and academic careers.

- Explored how graduate program evaluation data can be used in faculty/staff position funding decisions and in directing and/or re-directing available graduate student support funds.

- Made recommendations to use new and reallocated resources to significantly raise the stipend levels, number, and duration of individual graduate student support awards.

- Examined how best to invest in library and IT resources, services, and staffing critical for graduate study.

- Expanded our graduate education delivery systems, regulations, and curricula toward serving new, different, and non-traditional student populations.

**Strategic Goal IV - To increase UAlbany’s visibility in, and resources for, advancing and disseminating knowledge, discovery, and scholarship.**

**Addressed through:**

- Increased the number of full-time tenure-track faculty by 57 since fall 2011, with plans for a total of 187 total new full-time faculty by fall 2019 through the NYSUNY 2020 program.

- Created three new units within the Division for Research to address faculty pre- and post-award issues, with another three yet to come.
• Established a new problem-solving process to detect and prevent disruptions in the smooth management of post-award management.

• Developed a year-three discretionary leave program dedicated to enhancing time for faculty research, and creating recognition programs such as the proposed Innovation/Emerging Technologies Scholars and Early Career Investigator Award.

• Examined proposals to strengthen faculty mentoring in the research enterprise into departmental mentoring programs (for tenured and pre-tenure faculty) and assessments of faculty research productivity.

• Developed proposals to prioritize and expedite the retention of faculty with proven scholarly and creative records.

• Studied the percentage of overhead returned to units and principal investigators, with an aim of instituting a flexible incentive account for principal investigators who obtain federal funding for postdoctoral associates and graduate students.

• Created an Undergraduate Research brochure that explicates the pathways and support structures students can use to leverage the research university environment (and opportunities) in their undergraduate experience.

• Enhanced undergraduate engagement with the research enterprise through undergraduate fellowships and colloquia, and composed a team of faculty and staff from each school to work with the Undergraduate Research Committee on identifying the opportunities available for undergraduate research in each school/college.

Strategic Goal V - To add to, and reconfigure, our teaching, research, student life and support spaces in a manner compatible with our contemporary mission.

Addressed through:

• Opened Liberty Terrace in fall 2015, a new 500 bed environmentally friendly apartment-style living complex with furnished apartments featuring single bedrooms and full kitchens.

• Constructed and opened a new $30 million data center (funded by NY State capital construction funds) that provides faster, more efficient computing, improved network capability, and IT applications for the 23,000-plus UAlbany students, faculty and staff.

• Completed the conversion to “smart” classrooms in 100% of the uptown teaching spaces.

• Upgraded our Learning Management System (Blackboard) and provided new mobile access for students and faculty.
• Completed the decennial Facilities Master Plan, mapping a plan for the renovation, expansion, and reconfiguration of our administrative, instructional, and research spaces over the next twenty-five years.

• Added three new outdoor recreation fields dedicated exclusively to our intramural and club sports programs.

• Received our first LEED Silver certification (Husted renovation), and are on track for two LEED Gold certifications (Liberty Terrace and the new building to house the School of Business).

• Strengthened the campus infrastructure and supports for online education for traditional and non-traditional learners through the work of the Online Teaching and Learning Taskforce and its 2013 report and recommendations, as well provided sustained leadership in the online arena through the establishment and appointment of a new Associate Provost for Online Learning.

• Explored the development of a Virtual Desktop service prototype.

• Supported increased online and blended learning options for students and faculty through a new online course development grants program.

• Continued working with the Classroom Committee, on an ongoing basis, to determine faculty requirements for instructional spaces, instructional supplies availability, and technical equipment.

• Initiated (2012) a new business intelligence program to bring real-time operational and planning information to academic and administrative decision makers through a data warehousing and reporting environment that integrates student headcount enrollment, course enrollment and instructor information, and position budget and human resources data. At this writing, the new system is being expanded to integrate within its analytical framework externally funded research data and All-Funds financials.

• Converted Human Resources’ employee data/transactions systems to SUNY’s HR system to better leverage the advantages of “SUNY systemness” and achieve cost savings that can be redirected to the academic enterprise.

• Began implementing the SUNY DegreeWorks project to help transfer students plan their course trajectory to graduation as efficiently and effectively as possible. This system will also be leveraged to enhance course planning for first-time freshman students.

• Enabled online appointment scheduling for Student Health Services to better meet the mental health needs of our students.
- Developed a prioritized plan for enhancing the physical structures on campus (e.g., new garden areas with seating, impromptu gathering areas, walkways, etc.) to facilitate more interpersonal interaction among students, faculty, and staff.

- In 2013 opened a new $24 million multi-sport complex. The new stadium is a source of pride for both the region and UAlbany’s 164,000 alumni.

**Strategic Goal VI - To engage diverse communities in strategic partnerships to increase public, scholarly and economic benefits.**

**Addressed through:**

- Increased programming, support, and emphasis for community-based partnerships, resulting in the 2011, 2012, and 2013 designation for the U.S. President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

- Recognized three University-Community partnerships in the inaugural President’s Award for Community Engagement and issued a 2012 Baseline Report that enables us to track future progress.

- Operationalized the work of the Strategic Planning Community-Engaged Scholarship Working Group, resulting in a campus forum on community-engaged scholarship models and methods, and the completion of a white paper on how to incorporate these ideas for UAlbany researchers. This work culminated in the launch in March 2015 of a four-pronged systematic data collection effort to monitor, track, and support the future development of the University’s public engagement activities.

- Prioritized increasing curricular engagement with our local, regional, and global communities to enhance students’ academic and civic learning, enrich scholarship, and foster community well-being through online and other resources.

- Began developing policies, guidelines, and institutional supports to encourage faculty to conduct research relevant to diverse local to global communities.

- Developed resources to connect students and their advisors to community-engaged academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities that will enrich students’ educational experience.

- Expanded the portfolio of the new “Engaged Learning” unit to coordinate and expand opportunities for undergraduates to participate in co-curricular activities—such as service learning, internships, co-operative education, research, etc.—that provide career-enhancing exploration and experiences.

- Beginning in 2013, recognized University-Community partnerships in the annual President’s Award for Community Engagement.

- UCAN, created and managed by Alumni Affairs, is a web-based software application connecting undergraduates with willing alumni for informational interviewing and career guidance.
• Undertook a market analysis for Professional, Adult, and Continuing Education.

In addition to the tenets and ideals laid out in our Strategic Plan, President Jones’s 2013 inaugural address described his vision for the future of the University at Albany with a refined focus. He put forth to the University community four tangible objectives that build upon the University’s 2010 Strategic Plan. Again, those stakes are: 1) Expanding our portfolio of degree-granting programs; 2) Recruiting more out-of-state and international students; 3) Broadening our role as a University engaged in the community, and 4) growing our financial resources to fulfill our ambition. These four foci are what President Jones dubbed his “tent stakes.” They dovetail nicely with the 2010 Strategic Plan by building upon rather than supplanting it. All that we have accomplished to date in implementing our strategic plan supports the four stakes, which have quickly become integrated into the modus operandi of the university, and future budgeting processes, as discussed below.

1. Expanding our portfolio of degree-granting programs. Appendix 2.3 lists the 33 academic programs that have been developed or changed in some fashion since 2010. Of these, seven are new undergraduate programs, most notably computer engineering, which we expect to soon achieve final approval in order enroll students in fall 2015. Six new graduate programs are at various stages in the approval pipeline at this writing. In addition, 13 programs have undergone revisions requiring either internal campus governance, SUNY, or New York State Education Department approval. The University has in spring 2015 renamed the College of Computer and Information Science, Engineering and Applied Sciences, to reflect a broadening of University efforts in STEM disciplines, and have applied for creating a new Department of Computer Engineering with the State Education Department. More recently in January, 2015 New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced $13.5 million in seed funding to construct new facilities to house the nation’s first College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity at the University at Albany. New program offerings will be forthcoming as we begin forming this new college and its requisite academic programming. These new and revised programs are a direct effort to educate students in high-need, high-growth areas upon which the state’s economic vitality depends, and in the process enhance the University’s enrollment profile.

3. Recruiting more out of state and international students. As the University expands its degree program portfolio, it will seek to broaden the makeup of the campus community by recruiting more out-of-state and international students. This will accrue benefits from a global range of backgrounds, perspectives and insights. The “branding” of the University at Albany already includes the tagline “The World Within Reach.” The University at Albany has the smallest percentage of out-of-state and international students of the four SUNY research centers (12% in fall 2012), yet it places more students in study abroad and exchange programs than any other SUNY campus. The University does very well in putting the world within reach of our students, but it appears less so within the reach of the world’s students. Given the shifting demographics in the northeast, the University will look beyond its borders to meet its enrollment goals. Having more students from other countries and states diversifies the experiences and viewpoints on our campus, and expands our worldview. Students who learn in such an environment are better equipped to thrive in today’s global society. President Jones has set a five-year goal that UAlbany will have the highest percentage of international and out-of-state students of any SUNY research university, instead of the lowest. Several of the initiatives outlined above under our strategic planning initiatives
already address this stake. Since 2010, out-of-state and international student numbers have increased by nearly 400, moving us to 14% of the total student population originating from outside New York State in fall 2014.

3. **Broadening our role as a University engaged in the community.** This principle further amplifies the University’s sixth strategic goal, outlined above. The substantial progress made to-date in the public engagement arena, as noted above, puts the University on firm footing to reach President Jones’s goal of logging 2.5 million community engagement hours every year in meaningful reciprocal relationships between our faculty, students, and staff with communities, whether local, national, or global.

4. **Grow our resources to fulfill our ambition.** This goal is, admittedly, the most challenging. While external research funding is clearly important, and initiatives have been undertaken already, as noted above, this stake clearly involves philanthropic, state, and other non-public dimensions that the University will need to tap into to achieve success. With the help of New York state and Governor Cuomo, the University is participating in NYSUNY 2020, a program that links a rational tuition increase policy over a five-year period with dedicated capital funding that will allow us to hire nearly 200 new full-time faculty and construct new research facilities. At this writing the University is in year four of a faculty hiring campaign linked to current programs, and the new program initiatives listed in Appendix 2.3. The University has also committed to an enhanced effort at student retention to grow our enrollments in the best way possible, by holding onto more of the students we have already admitted. The University’s endowment currently stands around $40 million, far below endowments at other major public research universities. President Jones has set a goal to increase our endowment to more than $100 million over the next five years. This will provide leverage to support student scholarship and faculty research.

While the above narrative addresses the single recommendation of our Middle States evaluation team to report on our progress in implementing our newly adopted Strategic Plan, we as a University suggested 156 recommendations for ourselves in our 2010 self-study. Through the course of implementing our 2010 Strategic Plan and pursuing the four stakes that President Jones laid out, we have explicitly addressed 143 of these 156 recommendations. Appendix 2.1 organizes the self-initiated recommendations under the University’s 2010 Strategic Plan framework.

In Appendix 2.1, we score each recommendation with a 1.0 of it was fully addressed. Those recommendations that were only partially addressed were scored with a 0.5, thus allowing us to arrive at the figure of 143 noted above.

Thirty-four of the self-initiated recommendations concerned the first strategic goal, to enhance the quality of undergraduate education at UAlbany and attract and serve a highly qualified and diverse group of students. All but four of these recommendations were addressed through the course of strategic plan implementation and/or ongoing administrative processes, such as the internal program review process or admissions office functions. The four recommendations not yet formally addressed include asking governance committees to discuss the current make-up of instructors in the General Education program and to monitor the mix of
full- and part-time instructors, and to ask the General Education Committee (GEC) of the Undergraduate Academic Council to review these data, and to also review the process of student petitions and exceptions. These issues may have been taken up over the past four years by the governance councils, and the administration will circle back to them in fall 2015, providing any needed information, should it be requested.

The University’s 2010 self-study made forty-one recommendations grouped along the strategic goal of creating an excellent student experience that integrates academic and co-curricular experiences, engages the surrounding community and the world, and fosters lifelong pride in the University. All of these self-initiated recommendations have been addressed.

Under the Graduate Education related strategic goal to advance excellence in graduate education in support of the University’s reputation, role, and stature and the preparation and competitiveness of graduates, the University’s 2010 self-study contained fifteen self-initiated recommendations, all of which have been addressed through the course of implementing the strategic plan.

In the strategic area of Research, and with the goal to increase UAlbany’s visibility in, and resources for, advancing and disseminating knowledge, discovery, and scholarship, the 2010 self-study made seven self-initiated recommendations. All have been addressed or are in-progress as of this writing.

All fifteen of the self-initiated recommendations falling under Physical Infrastructure and Support and which touch on the University’s intention to add to, and reconfigure, our teaching, research, student life and support spaces in a manner compatible with our contemporary mission have been addressed in one fashion or another. These recommendations concern both physical facilities, as well as infrastructure supports such as the University Libraries and resources provided by the Division for Information Technology Services.

The 2010 self-study only contained one self-initiated recommendation relating to the strategic initiative on Alumni and Community Engagement to engage diverse communities in strategic partnerships to increase public, scholarly and economic benefits. The recommendation for the University to play a more prominent role in establishing community connections, carry out educational activities to attract prospective students, and to build new partnerships with organizations throughout the region are all primary components of President Jones’s community engagement initiative described later in this report.

Appendix 2.1 also lists twenty-seven self-initiated recommendations from the 2010 self-study that did not fall under the University’s Strategic Goals but rather under its guiding values of Excellence, Access, Collaboration, Engagement, Respect, and Integrity. Several of these recommendations concern revisiting the Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP) to better focus and execute the evaluation of administrative areas and institutional level effectiveness. These are processes and issues that have begun to be addressed, but are not yet completely addressed, and which are indeed in the institutional best interest. These are discussed further in the Section 6, Linked Institutional Planning and Budgeting Processes.
Finally, also listed in Appendix 2.1 are the six self-initiated recommendations around the Resource Allocation chapter of the 2010 self-study, and twelve self-initiated recommendations from the Leadership, Governance, and Administration chapter, that did not fall under the University’s new Strategic Plan umbrella. The resource allocation recommendations have all been met through the course of the Strategic Plan implementation and the NYSUNY 2020 process described below. The Leadership, Governance, and Administration recommendations revolve around steps to increase faculty/staff participation in the University Senate and ways to better share information. All but three of the recommendations have been addressed in some fashion or other. Two of the recommendations concern the election of part-time faculty Senators and extending Senate representation to emeriti faculty. The administration has not requested action from the Senate on these issues, but will do so along with requesting feedback on this Periodic Review Report. Also not addressed yet is a recommendation to place all school/college bylaws online, currently only done by the College of Arts and Sciences. This will be taken up summer 2015.

3. Major Challenges and Opportunities

The University began the decade following reaffirmation accreditation by Middle States in June 2010 with continuing challenges from the prior decade. From 2008 through 2010 the University experienced a permanent base budget reduction of $46 million in state tax support. To cope with these budget challenges over this time period, the University eliminated 338 position FTEs through attrition, reduced services, curtailed non-essential travel, reduced graduate student support, and developed a set of guiding principles for future direction that emerged from a series of Budget Advisory Groups over this time period. In October 2010, then President George Philip announced that the University would be suspending admissions to five program areas – Classics, French, Italian, Russian, and Theatre. While courses continue to be offered in these areas, degree program study in these majors was formally deactivated in 2011. Many full-time faculty in these programs have retired or otherwise left the University by 2013. No faculty were retrenched. The Theatre undergraduate major was reinstated in 2014, and is now offered in the Department of Music & Theatre.

The announcement and subsequent program deactivations were extremely controversial. Whether necessary consultation with the University Senate occurred over the preceding years was debated, and then studied in a formal Governance Council Task Force report (2012). The Task Force report concluded that

“After careful review of all pertinent documents pertaining to this matter, and thoughtful and comprehensive discussion, the task force did not come to consensus on whether the President’s actions rose to the level of a violation of the bylaws; nor did we feel that the term “violation” provided a useful framework for discussion. However, we wish to state in the strongest possible terms that in the future, the administration must remain mindful of the need to consult with the Senate, and to inform the Senate directly about its decisions with sufficient detail to satisfy reasonable concerns and questions, both before and after decisions have been reached. We recognize that the Senate also must bear some responsibility
for the dissatisfaction surrounding these events, specifically in its failure to request specific and detailed information.”

Following the Governance Council Task Force report, a Senate resolution (1213-01R) calling on the Senate to find President (Philip) in violation of Article 1 Section 2.2.2 of the By-Laws for failing to consult formally with the Senate prior to the October 1, 2010 announcement of program deactivations was defeated in Senate vote on September 24, 2012.

While this backdrop presented considerable challenges to academic and administrative operations, the delineation of the Strategic Plan implementation activities outlined above stands as testament to the success of shared governance. University Senate representatives, as well as undergraduate and graduate students, served on the Strategic Plan Steering Committee and work groups responsible for much of the University’s progress. The implementation of the 2010 Strategic Plan was a galvanizing force that enabled the University to move new initiatives forward in pursuit of shared new goals and objectives.

Other challenges continue, of course, some specific to UAlbany as a public institution in New York State, and others faced by institutions around the country. Like almost every institution in the Northeast, the University at Albany faces changing demographic realities. Changing demographics in the number of students graduating from high school create an even more competitive environment for recruitment, especially for students prepared to succeed in a selective research university. At the graduate level, declining national trends in new graduate student enrollments since 2010 in mainstay graduate programs like Education and Business has been evident at the University as well.

While the University has responded to these challenges with creation of new programs, as noted throughout this report, the protracted process of program approval in New York State has hampered the University’s ability to move as quickly as it would like to respond to changing student demand and employment opportunity in emerging fields. As discussed in Section 4 below, the University has 13 new academic programs, developed through shared governance and formal consultation with the University Senate, at various stages in the state’s program approval process. With these programs comes new opportunity to strengthen the University’s enrollment foundation.

Enrollment has major implications for the University’s fiscal health. For more than a decade, enrollment-driven funding has exceeded state tax support for the University, creating additional pressure to maintain and even grow enrollment. While in the past five years, the University has benefited from a state-wide tuition policy creating predictable annual increases, and a differential fee for the four SUNY research centers, of which the University at Albany is one, the renewal of this policy beyond 2015 is not yet determined. State support has otherwise been largely flat.

Declining trends in federal research funding from 2010 through 2014 also present considerable challenges to the University, as our faculty compete for shrinking resources on the national stage. According to NIH data compiled by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), NIH research program grants declined from $15.9 billion in
2010 to $14.9 billion in 2013, and returned only to $15.6 billion in 2014. These data were extracted from the NIH FY 2014 Budget Summary by FASEB. In addition to creating a tighter extramural funding environment, the implications for research universities are lower overall indirect cost recovery dollars to finance the research infrastructure as grant opportunities have become even more competitive, which leads to the need for increased bridge funding and start-up costs for new faculty hires to enhance their chances for funding success.

Even with these and other likely challenges, the University nevertheless begins from a position of strength. The Strategic Plan has driven substantial and focused progress in many specific areas. New investment, thanks to NYSUNY 2020 in program expansion and faculty has meant sustaining a high quality faculty.

President Jones’s inaugural address has launched aggressive new program expansion and key strategic initiatives to ensure the enrollment and fiscal health of the University. Strategic opportunities are seen in new program areas the University will pursue, such as in computer engineering, discussed more fully below, and in the nation’s first College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity. Potential partnerships with Albany Law School and Downstate Medical Center are also being explored to broaden the programmatic opportunities for UAlbany students, whatever form they may eventually take with respect to these two schools.

Expansion of online learning options -- both courses and full programs -- especially at the graduate level, offers the University an avenue through which it can recoup some of its lost graduate enrollment and extend its reach to working adults across the state and beyond. Recent investments in online initiatives are quickly creating a strong foundation upon which to build such efforts. Partnering with SUNY System Administration through its Open SUNY Plus program is also providing broader support, especially in the delivery of online student services and marketing of the programs.

Finally, the formal separation of the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering from the University presents opportunities for the University to focus its energies on expanding the new programmatic areas outlined above and remove long standing distractions to administrative and governance processes as we turn to pursuit of President Jones’s four stakes in the ground.

All of these challenges and opportunities are discussed in more detail throughout this report. The University is enthusiastic in facing these challenges and in fully exploiting the opportunities that lie ahead.

4. Enrollment and Finance Trends, and Projections

As Table 4.1 below illustrates, the University’s enrollment between 2010, the year of our Middle States self-study, and 2014, our most recent official enrollment reporting period, has declined by 361 students. This resulted from falling short of planned enrollment targets, largely at the graduate level, in each of these years. It should be noted that the planned enrollment
targets listed in each fall semester in Table 4.1 are the most recent planned targets upon which revenue projections would have been constructed.

| Table 4.1 |
| Planning Bulletin, Institutional Research |
| Historical Enrollment Trends |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTUAL and PLANNED ENROLLMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment Targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Freshmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Degree-seeking Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total UG Degree-seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Matric Undergraduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Undergraduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Graduate Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Campus Headcount</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Fall 2014 subtracts an estimate of 116 continuing undergraduates transferring to SUNY Poly

A number of factors contributed to the enrollment decline, most notably a more challenging graduate student recruitment environment in which fewer (and increasingly less competitive) graduate assistantship positions were available due to the financial duress of the 2008-10 contraction in state support. Our analyses lead us to believe that our programmatic mix, disproportionately larger in the arts, humanities, and policy sciences than in the biological and physical sciences, and in engineering, compared to our peer institutions, has exacerbated challenges at the undergraduate level. We have also seen freshman retention decrease from 83.7% for the fall 2010 cohort to 80.7% for the 2013 cohort, which meant that larger freshman and transfer inputs were needed to replace students who left before their anticipated graduation year. This, in turn, has implications for the academic preparedness profile of the incoming freshman class, which in turn feeds into guidebook and reputational ratings. As the University has become more and more of an “enrollment driven” institution due to cumulative cuts in state support, we recognize the critical role that student enrollment plays in shoring up our fiscal foundation.

Indeed, in his spring 2015 faculty address, President Jones asserted that “…our most significant financial threat is declining enrollment.” The new SUNY rational tuition program (2011) that modestly increases tuition cost by $300 per year at the undergraduate level and $500 at the graduate level for New York residents, is effective for five years. This plan offered relief from the more episodic tuition increases of potentially 10%-20% in any given year, as has been the case in the past. The rational tuition program along with a new SUNY Academic Excellence Fee ($112) and the campus’s cash reserves, have enabled the University to weather the enrollment downturn in the short-term. Both the rational tuition program and Academic Excellence Fee will expire in 2015, and they are now under consideration by the governor and New York state legislature. Another mitigating factor in shoring up our operating budget in a
declining enrollment environment, detailed below, is an increase in out-of-state and international student enrollment, consistent with President Jones’s second stake in the ground. The differential tuition (+ $11,610 undergraduate; + $9,820 graduate) paid by increasing numbers of non-state residents has helped meet tuition revenue requirements since 2010.

While financial inputs are increasing through the revenue and fee increases noted above, our financial planning models tell us they need to be linked to higher enrollment levels to meet planned expenditures, or planned expenditures must be reduced.

In December 2014, then interim Provost Timothy Mulcahy held a series of recalibration exercises with each dean to ensure that their graduate enrollment targets for 2015 and thereafter were realistic, and to review the planned activities that each school/college would undertake to realize their enrollment targets. A primary concern driving this review was that the prior enrollment targets, which were used for revenue projections, did not prove achievable. This was borne out by successive shortfalls from 2011 through 2014 in reaching the targets, primarily, although not exclusively, at the graduate level. A new round of discussions with the deans was pursued, as the graduate admissions process is largely decentralized, with each school/college and department managing its own applicant pool in pursuit of its enrollment targets, while graduate applications are processed through the office of Graduate Admissions. In addition to detailing the planned activities of the schools and colleges to meet enrollment targets in these planning meetings, centralized operations that support school/college admissions activity were revisited, and efforts were instituted to more quickly process applications, increase the number and quality of communications with admitted students, and promotional materials in targeted areas of opportunity have been pursued. Many of these activities were previously carried in the school/college budgets, but were cut during downturns in state support pre-dating the 2008-10 period of reductions. Hence, reinvestment in these activities has proven necessary.

From the December 2014 meetings emerged a new five-year enrollment plan. The new overall fall 2015 graduate enrollment target (4,247), while appearing lower than the fall 2014 actual end of term enrollment (4,353), is actually higher when one factors in the transition out of the 160 graduate students in the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) from the University’s enrollment planning projections. Similarly, about 50 to 60 new freshman, through direct admission to CNSE, are excluded from the 2015 undergraduate enrollment targets. Table 4.2 shows the new five-year enrollment plan for the university as of May 2015.
Under this plan, graduate enrollment is to increase gradually to 4,466, and undergraduate enrollments to 14,401 by fall 2019. In both of these cases, the additional 187 full-time faculty hired through the NYSUNY 2020 initiative will help meet the increased instructional demand, and several new or modified academic programs currently in the program approval pipeline address anticipated student demand. Another noteworthy initiative at the undergraduate level is the introduction of a pathway program, described in more detail below, that targets international student enrollment. By 2019, it is planned that 302 of the 712 non-matriculated (non-degree) undergraduates will be international students entering the University via the pathway program. Upon completion of the pathway program, three semesters for undergraduates and one to two terms for pre-master’s students, these students will “flow-in” to degree-seeking status. The University’s well-established Intensive English Language Program (IELP) will assist those international students who would benefit from IELP. Also included in the planned non-matriculated numbers by 2019 are 160 anticipated CNSE students who will be fulfilling their general education requirements at UAlbany.

Each year, the University must submit to SUNY System Administration a five-year enrollment plan, and tuition revenue projections for the next fiscal year. Table 4.2 above is the most recent five-year enrollment plan. The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) projects undergraduate enrollment by using the historical transition ratios of each baccalaureate cohort as they progress from year-to-year to predict the transition ratio of future cohorts. Last year’s first-to-second semester and second-to-third semester retention ratios are used to predict the retention of the following year’s entering class, and so forth. While an alternative method would be to use multi-year differentially weighted averages of the cohort transition ratios in the calculations, our experience is that using the most recent transition ratio,
whether of first-semester to second-semester or fifth to sixth-semester, has provided remarkably good accuracy over the past 20 years in predicting the overall number of undergraduate continuing or returning students in any particular semester. IRPE predictions of undergraduate continuing/returning students (N ~ 6,000 per semester) have been accurate within 43 students on average over the past 10 years (when we started specifically measuring prediction accuracy regularly), with a median accuracy value of 43 students, and a standard deviation of 32 students. The IRPE projection model has been slightly more accurate with respect to transfer students. Appendix 4.1 details the historical accuracy of these projections semester by semester for continuing/returning students entering through the native freshman or transfer route.

As noted above, graduate enrollment planning is decentralized, and largely relies on the deans and their program directors to gauge master’s, doctoral, and graduate certificate program students at various stages in the program pipeline and to anticipate the number of new student inputs then needed to meet their enrollment targets. Funding plays a critical role in doctoral program recruitment. Due to the funding cutbacks from 2008 through 2010, master’s program students are now largely self-funded, as any resources returned to the graduate student support pool of funds have been targeted to increasing the number and value of awards primarily in doctoral programs. Again, the Office of Graduate Studies, and Institutional Research, have been working together more closely since 2013 with graduate program directors in monitoring graduate program applications, admissions, and enrollment activity. In addition, Graduate Studies has been collaborating, and providing seed funding in several instances, to increase outreach and marketing efforts in areas of opportunity.

The external environment that shapes the University’s undergraduate enrollment planning is one that is projected to experience modest growth in New York high school graduates over the next five years, according to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education’s (WICHE) latest projections (2012). While the University has a goal to increase out-of-state and international enrollment at the undergraduate level, and these enrollments have risen from 8% of the student body in 2010 to 11% in 2014, the fact remains that the vast majority of our student body will continue to originate in New York State. And this is in keeping with the University’s mission as a New York public research university.

The plan to increase undergraduate enrollment is supported both by the University’s recruitment plans – which include continued expansion of out-of-state enrollment and deeper penetration of in-state markets – and by projections of the size of the high school graduate pool in the coming years. Chart 4.1 below depicts New York State’s projected pool of high school graduates.
As important as the potential pool of applicants, the demographic make-up of the high school graduates pool is shifting in a way that will allow the University to leverage its demographic composition in recruitment as the University looks more and more like the population of prospective students in terms of race/ethnicity. Chart 4.2 shows that over the next five years, the high school graduates pool in New York state is projected to be less white, by about 6%, with increases in Asian students (about 34%) and slightly more Hispanic students (about 1%), with an expected decrease in African-American students (about 20%).

Source: WICHE [http://knocking.wiche.edu/](http://knocking.wiche.edu/)
These New York demographic shifts compare favorably with the demographic shifts the University has experienced over the past five years as efforts to serve a more diverse population of students in accordance with our mission as a public research university have been realized on the student demographic front. Minority undergraduate student representation has increased from 28% in 2010 to 40% in 2014. Table 4.3 below shows the racial/ethnic distribution of the University’s undergraduate student body. The one exception is that the number of African-American students has increased at the University over the past five years rather than declined, contrary to WICHE’s NYS high school graduate projections over this time period.

| Table 4.3 |
| RACIAL/ETHNIC ORIGIN OF UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE AND ALL STUDENTS |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnic Category</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American, non-Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>1,312</td>
<td>1,459</td>
<td>1,599</td>
<td>1,821</td>
<td>1,925</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>1,061</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and ethnicity unknown</td>
<td>1,221</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Unduplicated Headcount Undergraduates</td>
<td>12,071</td>
<td>12,728</td>
<td>12,876</td>
<td>13,818</td>
<td>12,283</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unduplicated Headcount Minority Students (incl. &quot;two or more&quot;)</td>
<td>3,049</td>
<td>3,553</td>
<td>4,406</td>
<td>4,853</td>
<td>5,761</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unduplicated Pell Minority</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Institutional Research, Planning, & Effectiveness

In addition to increasing racial/ethnic diversity, the University is also serves a sizable number of first-generation college students (about 43% according to our 2014 NSSE results), and has experienced an increasing percentage of Pell-eligible students over this time period. This is further evidence that we are fulfilling our role as a public research university. Chart 4.3 displays these trends for FAFSA filers in the current and recent aid years.
**Geographic Diversity**

As noted above, over the past five years, the University has seen important gains in the enrollment of undergraduate students from beyond New York State and expects to continue this trend. The University seeks to raise the proportion of entering out-of-state freshmen, including domestic, non-NY and international, to 15 percent or higher by 2019. From within New York State, the University expects to continue to draw new freshmen from all regions: As of fall 2014, approximately 40% of all undergraduates are from the New York metropolitan area and Long Island region, 22% are from the Capital Region, and 28% are from other parts of New York State. And, as noted above, 5.9% of all undergraduates are international, and about 5.1% are non-NY U.S. residents.

Enrollment of international undergraduate students has risen from 3.2% of the freshman class in 2010 to 6.5% of the class in 2014. As part of President Jones’s change agenda, the University plans to increase the number of international undergraduates by 500-600 by fall 2019.

At the doctoral level, the University draws from the kind of geographically diverse base that one expects in nationally ranked programs. In fall 2014, slightly fewer than half (46%) of new doctoral students were from New York State, 25% were from other states, and 29% were from other nations. Of course, there is considerable variability in geographic origin by individual doctoral programs as circumstances by discipline. At the master’s level, 83% of the student body draws from a part-time professional population in Albany’s Capital Region, and most master’s degree students are self-supported.

**Racial/Ethnic Diversity**

The University at Albany has a long commitment to valuing diversity as a primary resource for educational excellence. The freshman class of 2014 was comprised of 42% students of color: African American, 12.3%; Asian American/Pacific Islander, 9.9%; Caucasian, 50.4%; Hispanic/Latino, 16.4%; Native American, 0.1%; two or more races 3.1%, and unknown, 1.3%. When only minority groups are considered, in 2010, UAlbany enrolled 35.0% of its freshman class from minority groups. Overall, from 2010 to 2013, the most recent comparable data available, the University at Albany increased its overall undergraduate student body’s minority representation the most of the SUNY university centers, by going from 27 to 38% minority representation, an increase of 11%age points, and in 2014 minority student representation stands at 40%. Binghamton (27 to 31%), Stony Brook (40 to 43%), and Buffalo (21 to 28%) all experienced growth in their minority student bodies, but less growth than did Albany. As noted above, the University at Albany, as a diverse institution, is ably situated to attract students from diverse backgrounds who are making up a growing proportion of New York State’s high school graduate pool.
Table 4.4 shows that at the graduate level, minority group students constitute 16.9% of the graduate student population in 2014: 5.1% African American, 5.5% Hispanic/Latino, 4.4% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 0.2% Native American, and 1.7% two or more races. In total, minority student representation at the graduate level has increased from 14% in 2010 to almost 17% in 2014. In addition to a general university commitment to underscoring the importance of a diverse graduate student body, the University has helped enhance graduate student diversity by dedicating supplemental graduate assistantship resources to better recruit minority doctoral students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Racial/Ethnic Origin of Undergraduate, Graduate and All Students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEDS Method</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESD: Fall 2014</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Racial/Ethnic Category</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRADUATE:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonresident Alien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American, non Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native, non Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian, non Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races, non Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and ethnicity unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Unduplicated Headcount Graduate Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unduplicated Headcount of Minority Students, (incl. “two or more”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unduplicated Percent Minority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of minority graduate student enrollment, in 2013 the University at Albany (15%) is largely on par in terms of minority student representation with Binghamton (13%) and Buffalo (13%) and trails Stony Brook (20%), which has an Asian American student population of about 9%, versus Albany’s 4%, Binghamton’s 4%, and Buffalo’s 6% Asian American populations. With these as benchmarks, the University commits to increasing the enrollment of graduate students of color.

**Programmatic Initiatives:**

Since 2010, the University has developed a number of programmatic initiatives, the majority, but not all, linked to the NYSUNY 2020 program. In May 2013, the University held an academic retreat with over 100 faculty and staff from across the academic schools, colleges, and departments, staff from academic support areas, as well as with SUNY System and partner community colleges. The retreat’s intent was to envision who our future students might be, to imagine what it will mean to prepare the students of the future, and to consider what we as a University might do to position ourselves to reach our goals for them.

President Jones’s charge to the participants outlined the external environment of a changing higher education landscape, and how the University’s diverse student body, in terms of ethnic origin and national heritage, attitudes and expectations, age, preparation for college and
work, and life experience have largely mirrored this societal shift. At the same time, our economy and the jobs of the future do not look like the economy and jobs of the past, and as a result, students’ (and their parents’) aspirations are shifting, and employers are looking for different talents and skills than in the past.

Appendix 4.2 details the result of this retreat, which captured major themes and areas of broad agreement as follows:

1. The importance of expanding and developing “high needs” areas that correspond to job opportunities of the 21st century;
2. Areas of strength we can capitalize on and should invest in to serve our students’ needs and aspirations and prepare them for professional success and effective citizenship, while also recognizing that investment is also needed to insure that the institution as a whole is both comprehensive and comprehensively excellent;
3. The need for considering not only the ‘traditional’ disciplinary emphasis on what students know but also what the students can do with what they’ve learned;
4. The importance and value of sustaining excellence in the areas that help provide our students with knowledge and skills for effective lives and careers (e.g. critical thinking, problem solving, flexibility, writing, oral communication, understanding of diversity, global perspectives, etc.); and,
5. To achieve the above outcomes, the need to develop a wide-ranging set of partnerships and collaborations to meet the needs of our future students.

This guiding framework aligned with the University’s new plan for the infusion of resources, largely through faculty lines and start-up packages from competitively reviewed faculty proposals emanating from the NYSUNY 2020 program. In some instances, the program expansions were to leverage the enrollment reach of existing areas that have experienced increased student demand in recent years, such as in Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Psychology, Computer Science, and Criminal Justice.

Other NYSUNY 2020 program initiatives called for the creation of entirely new academic programs. The period since 2011 is one of unprecedented program expansion at the University. The new programs, we believe, will enable the University better to attract students and to strengthen its enrollment profile. As listed in Appendix 1.3, the University has created or is in the process of creating new undergraduate majors in Computer Engineering (B.S.), a faculty-initiated interdisciplinary major in Bio-Instrumentation (B.S.), Human Development (B.S.), Informatics (B.S.), Digital Forensics (B.S.), and Urban Studies and Planning (B.A.). In addition, a new freshman writing program, comprised of 16 full-time lecturers with formal training and expertise in the teaching of college level writing and led by a full-time director, was established in fall 2013. Building on this base, plans are in motion, as of this writing, to add an additional six new full-time writing instructors in order to decrease writing class size from 25 to 19 students to further increase opportunities for meaningful faculty-student interaction in such a critical foundational skill area (Writing and Critical Inquiry) to aid in our retention efforts.
The creation of the Digital Forensics undergraduate major is an interdisciplinary collaboration between our School of Business, School of Criminal Justice, College of Computing and Information, and Rockefeller College, and is founded on new tenure-track faculty hires in digital forensics, forensics and criminal justice, forensic auditing, cyber international relations and image forensics, to complement current faculty expertise. The Digital Forensics program enrolled its first group of undergraduates in fall 2014 after its late approval in August 2014. With the ability to now advertise and promote the program, beginning in fall 2015 and onward, this program is projected to contribute 25 new undergraduates each year.

The Informatics (B.S.) program, recently approved in April 2015 within the College of Computing and Information, was developed as part of an approved SUNY “high needs” program, and also includes a fully online concentration (100%) in Information Technology. This program expects to enroll its first group of students in fall 2016, and is in the beginning stages of promoting itself fully to new freshmen and transfers with concentrations that include interactive user experience, cyber-security, software development, data analytics, social media, and information technology. This undergraduate program will offer the first undergraduate fully online degree option at UAlbany and expects to contribute 25-30 new undergraduates a year when fully implemented.

Another new undergraduates program in Bio-instrumentation is in the School of Public Health. This interdisciplinary program approved in winter 2015 by NYSED, anticipates contributing 10-15 new undergraduates each fall beginning in fall 2016.

The Human Development (B.S.) program, housed in the School of Education, is in the midst of the approval process. Once approved, this program anticipates enrolling 30-40 undergraduates. The first undergraduates are expected to enroll in fall 2016.

The University’s application to establish a new computer engineering major was approved in April, 2015 by the campus governance structure and the State University of New York (SUNY) after a two-year planning process in which the curriculum was defined, resources requirements and funding mechanisms established, facilities identified and leadership hired. Developing a computer engineering program is the most ambitious new programmatic effort the University has undertaken since the establishment of the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) in 1999. The new major will be housed in the newly renamed College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Program development began in 2013 under the auspices of the New York State High Needs Program administered through the SUNY Chancellor’s Office, which provided $315,000 in seed funding. Building upon the University’s core strengths in Computer Science, Mathematics and Physics, an interdisciplinary collaboration of current University faculty from these core areas will be joined by four new Computer Engineering hires to welcome Computer Engineering’s inaugural class in fall 2016. The program curriculum was developed with extensive input from faculty in the participating departments, external consultants, and industry partners as well with potential feeder schools, such as nearby Hudson Valley Community College. The first cohort of incoming first-year and upper division transfer students will be admitted in fall, 2016. The program was built within the guidelines of ABET accreditation and will apply for accreditation upon the graduation of its first class, as required by ABET. Strong demand is expected for this program, as New York’s Capital Region, also known
as “Tech Valley,” has no public engineering bachelor’s degree opportunities for students interested in engineering. Over the next five years, the number of majors is expected to reach 99 students, a conservative projection. Once a firm foundation is established in the Computer Engineering area, related undergraduate and graduate engineering disciplines will be explored for expansion possibilities to further enhance the University’s program portfolio.

Since 2010, the University has also embarked on creating new graduate programs in English Studies (Certificate of Advance Study), Geographic Information Science (MS), International Affairs (MA), Graduate Certificates in Teaching Composition, Health and Human Rights, and Global Health Studies. All of these programmatic areas, to be housed in existing departments, are poised to attract new students to the University, and are consistent with the themes that emerged in the 2013 academic retreat.

Financial Trends and Projections

The University does not issue financial statements reflecting the results of its operations. SUNY System Administration compiles financial information for each campus using campus transactional information and from information it maintains. The information is then forwarded to the New York State Comptroller for inclusion in the New York State financial statements which are audited by an external accounting firm. Appendix 4.3 contains the last three years of the IPEDS financial reports submitted by SUNY System Administration on behalf of the University at Albany.

IPEDS financial reports have historically been used by the University for peer institution comparison purposes and as a forensic tool to examine patterns of resource expenditure over time to corroborate that investments in areas of strategic priority have occurred. Appendices 4.4 and 4.5 summarize the University’s IPEDS data over the last five years.

The IPEDS financial information reflects a number of State of New York expenses and liabilities, such as debt service and fringe benefit expenses and 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, and so are not included in Appendices 4.4 and 4.5, respectively. However, the IPEDS 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.

University Administered Funds:

While IPEDS finance data are useful as a tool to measure operations against other institutions, the University maintains detailed financial information for the funds over which it has allocation and expenditure control and uses that information to make management decisions.
The University’s financial categories emanate from the funding categories 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 (Income Fund Reimbursable, SUTRA and Dormitory Income Fund.) Each of these funds and each of the accounts within the funds are administered under applicable New York State and SUNY rules and regulations. The University is also supported by related not-for-profit entities that support the University mission. These include: the Research Foundation for SUNY (Sponsored Research), the University at Albany Foundation (Endowment, Gifts), University at Albany Auxiliary Services Corporation (Auxiliary Services), and Empire Commons Student Housing, Inc. (Student Housing).

Table 4.5a below summarizes the funds that are available for the campus to allocate and Table 4.5b shows the expenditure categories used to meet its mission.

### Table 4.5a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Aid Support</td>
<td>$71,042,200</td>
<td>$61,517,100</td>
<td>$61,840,200</td>
<td>$61,840,200</td>
<td>$57,020,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$88,198,400</td>
<td>$93,951,964</td>
<td>$98,962,700</td>
<td>$107,804,100</td>
<td>$118,735,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal: State Budget</strong></td>
<td><strong>$159,240,600</strong></td>
<td><strong>$155,469,064</strong></td>
<td><strong>$160,802,900</strong></td>
<td><strong>$169,644,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>$175,755,400</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Revenue Sources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dormitory Income (DIFR)</td>
<td>$42,062,807</td>
<td>$43,777,767</td>
<td>$49,203,375</td>
<td>$51,508,081</td>
<td>$54,447,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Financial Plan Income Fund Reimbursable (CFP IFR)</td>
<td>$38,665,974</td>
<td>$38,736,619</td>
<td>$40,333,005</td>
<td>$42,411,298</td>
<td>$45,351,189</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special State Appropriations</td>
<td>$11,121,708</td>
<td>$13,122,619</td>
<td>$12,495,616</td>
<td>$11,135,750</td>
<td>$9,746,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Departmental IFR (IFR)</td>
<td>$60,560,690</td>
<td>$72,045,987</td>
<td>$76,904,743</td>
<td>$59,798,807</td>
<td>$92,352,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR)</td>
<td>$15,388,122</td>
<td>$16,526,050</td>
<td>$16,546,497</td>
<td>$16,919,780</td>
<td>$15,717,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF Direct Research</td>
<td>$244,413,606</td>
<td>$311,555,059</td>
<td>$303,864,379</td>
<td>$391,642,696</td>
<td>$75,266,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Other Revenue Sources</strong></td>
<td>$470,039,507</td>
<td>$554,087,101</td>
<td>$557,975,878</td>
<td>$634,691,802</td>
<td>$356,626,372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) included in years 2011-14. As of 2015 CNSE moved from UAlbany to SUNY Polytechnic Institute

State Aid and Tuition together are referred to as the University’s State Budget. The amount of State Aid provided to SUNY 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 then approved by the SUNY Board of Trustees and spending authority is provided to campuses through appropriation.

As part of the NYSUNY 2020 program, 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. In addition, a Rational Tuition plan was adopted that provided predictable tuition increases for undergraduate and graduate students for a period of five years starting in 2011, as discussed earlier. These two initiatives put the University in a better position with regard to financial planning than in the past.

While campus distribution of State Aid is determined by the SUNY Board of Trustees, each campus projects its own estimated tuition revenue. At the University at Albany, projected enrollment numbers are provided to the University Controller’s Office by the University’s Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE), as described above in the Enrollment Planning section of this report. Using the headcount projections, and their estimated full-time and part-time, and in-state versus out-of-state composition, the campus Controller’s Office develops the campus revenue projection. The projection is then submitted to SUNY System Administration for approval and upon approval is incorporated into the campus State Aid budget.

Monitoring the revenue estimate against actual collections is performed regularly at the campus level and reported to SUNY twice during each fiscal year, once in the fall and once in the spring.

As shown above in Table 4.5a, University State Operating Revenues (the campus state resource base) has grown by about $16.5 million over the past five years. This change is a net decrease in State Aid of approximately $14 million and an increase in Tuition revenue of $30.5 million. The reduction in State Aid is reflective of the 2011-12 reduction to the campus, which occurred prior to the implementation of the Maintenance of Effort agreement, and the 2014-15 move of the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering to SUNY Polytechnic Institute. The Maintenance of Effort agreement has not provided additional funding, even for inflationary costs and contractual salary increases, thereby increasing the importance of the campus tuition revenue stream and by extension, the need to accurately project and meet campus enrollment and student mix targets.

Notable trends in campus based expenditures, shown in Table 4.5b below, which shows he budgeted expenditures by category for the University over the past five years, include:

- The decline in the Salaries category between 2010-11 and 2011-12 reflects the residual effect of the elimination of unfilled positions as a result of previous reductions in State Aid to the University. Since that time, increases in salary expenditures reflect primarily the addition of new faculty and staff positions as a result of increased tuition revenue rather than cost of living adjustments to existing salaries.
The increase in Supplies, Travel and Equipment between 2013-14 and 2014-15 reflects primarily a one-time expenditure of campus resources and external grant funding for start-up, space fit-out and support costs for new faculty positions and capital grants received by the University.

The increase in Undergraduate Student Scholarship expenditures over the five year period reflects the University’s efforts to attract and retain additional and highly qualified undergraduate students and a reinvestment of a portion of the additional tuition revenues resulting from the NYSUNY 2020 program.

The significant increase in Residence Hall Debt Service/R&R over the period reflects the addition of a new 500 bed apartment style living complex for students as well as the complete gut renovation of an existing 400 bed traditional student residence hall on campus.

The significant decline in Direct Grants and Contract (RF) between 2013-14 and 2014-15 reflects the movement of the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering from the University at Albany and into the SUNY Polytechnic Institute, a separate SUNY institution.

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**Table 4.5b: University Operating Budget Expenditure Categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries (regular and temporary)</td>
<td>$181,852,894</td>
<td>$174,527,893</td>
<td>$178,298,018</td>
<td>$185,409,078</td>
<td>$185,950,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>$15,834,949</td>
<td>$17,221,803</td>
<td>$19,652,922</td>
<td>$20,623,804</td>
<td>$20,776,648</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies, Travel, Equipment</td>
<td>$48,509,625</td>
<td>$48,065,876</td>
<td>$54,553,745</td>
<td>$52,780,420</td>
<td>$79,867,182</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facility Rental</td>
<td>$5,441,643</td>
<td>$5,540,237</td>
<td>$4,894,391</td>
<td>$4,927,076</td>
<td>$4,784,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student Scholarship</td>
<td>$13,985,407</td>
<td>$13,882,461</td>
<td>$13,908,584</td>
<td>$15,312,811</td>
<td>$14,980,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Student Scholarship</td>
<td>$8,132,798</td>
<td>$8,288,202</td>
<td>$9,586,258</td>
<td>$8,422,706</td>
<td>$10,513,064</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Student TAP aid</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
<td>$1,900,000</td>
<td>$2,900,000</td>
<td>$3,900,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Acquisitions</td>
<td>$4,676,294</td>
<td>$4,669,394</td>
<td>$4,931,894</td>
<td>$4,931,894</td>
<td>$5,546,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Setup</td>
<td>$1,300,000</td>
<td>$1,300,000</td>
<td>$1,300,000</td>
<td>$1,300,000</td>
<td>$1,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>$17,265,100</td>
<td>$17,265,100</td>
<td>$17,377,550</td>
<td>$16,617,550</td>
<td>$17,367,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Overhead</td>
<td>$4,469,075</td>
<td>$4,949,162</td>
<td>$4,486,787</td>
<td>$5,220,365</td>
<td>$4,397,524</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residence Hall Debt Service/R&amp;R</td>
<td>$8,355,359</td>
<td>$8,817,400</td>
<td>$12,632,877</td>
<td>$15,368,877</td>
<td>$17,556,429</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residence Hall other costs</td>
<td>$3,970,345</td>
<td>$4,585,081</td>
<td>$1,789,086</td>
<td>$1,787,309</td>
<td>$1,905,033</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>$316,879,137</strong></td>
<td><strong>$315,128,324</strong></td>
<td><strong>$328,884,051</strong></td>
<td><strong>$338,845,573</strong></td>
<td><strong>$372,086,388</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Grants &amp; Contracts (RF)</td>
<td>$244,413,605</td>
<td>$311,555,058</td>
<td>$303,864,387</td>
<td>$391,642,696</td>
<td>$75,266,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire Commons Student Housing Inc</td>
<td>$11,485,000</td>
<td>$11,843,000</td>
<td>$11,835,800</td>
<td>$12,187,100</td>
<td>$12,507,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts &amp; Grants (UAF)</td>
<td>$14,499,791</td>
<td>$16,044,900</td>
<td>$11,090,000</td>
<td>$10,836,555</td>
<td>$12,372,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University at Albany Biosciences</td>
<td>$5,429,000</td>
<td>$6,511,000</td>
<td>$6,423,943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Corp (UABDC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Auxiliary Services (UAS)</td>
<td>$31,141,600</td>
<td>$30,435,100</td>
<td>$30,273,463</td>
<td>$31,741,500</td>
<td>$32,439,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$618,419,133</strong></td>
<td><strong>$685,006,382</strong></td>
<td><strong>$691,376,701</strong></td>
<td><strong>$791,764,424</strong></td>
<td><strong>$511,096,655</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) included in years 2011-14 through 2013-14. As of 2014-15 CNSE moved from UAlbany to SUNY Polytechnic Institute

1 previously included in UAF
As Table 4.6 below shows, in 2014-15, the University did not generate the tuition revenue it had projected, nor in the three years prior to 2013-14.

**Table 4.6 – Projected vs Actual Tuition Revenues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projected</td>
<td>$88,198,400</td>
<td>$93,951,964</td>
<td>$98,962,700</td>
<td>$107,804,100</td>
<td>$118,735,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>$88,648,851</td>
<td>$91,375,509</td>
<td>$98713469</td>
<td>$108,749,900</td>
<td>$115,308,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>$450,451</td>
<td>($2,576,455)</td>
<td>($249,231)</td>
<td>$945,800</td>
<td>($3,426,400)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the University was able to meet its overall revenue expectations and fund the planned expenditure commitments for each of these years by:

- Realigning its funding strategy;
- Using uncommitted base funding;
- Recovering vacant line funding;
- Committing funds from University Financial Plan cash balance accounts; and
- Recovering additional tuition revenue from a larger than anticipated number of non-resident students who pay a higher tuition rate than New York State residents (2013-14).

Based on state authorized 2015-16 tuition rates, Table 4.7 below shows the University’s latest projections for incremental increases in tuition revenue over the next five years. These projections take into account the University’s latest projections for undergraduate and graduate enrollments, controlling for expected full-time and part-time, and in- versus out-of-state student body composition, and from increased first-year student retention gains. The incremental revenue increases are the additional revenue dollars raised each year over the preceding year.

**Table 4.7 – Projected Year-to-Year Incremental Tuition Revenue**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>$7,919,300</td>
<td>$6,216,400</td>
<td>$4,709,800</td>
<td>$4,041,800</td>
<td>$3,374,500</td>
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</table>

As noted earlier, the Provost is developing a plan 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 will generate increased tuition revenue in 2015-16 due to the final year of rational tuition in the NYSUNY 2020 program. The University will also minimize planned expenditures in 2015-16 and continue to evaluate the actions noted above to maintain the fiscal health of the campus.
Fiscal Year 2015-16 is the last year of the SUNY Rational Tuition plan. The program will require legislative action if it is to be extended. SUNY System Administration and the SUNY campuses have identified extension of the program as a legislative priority for the 2016-17 year.

Also included in Table 4.5b above are revenues generated from state Special Revenue Funds and campus affiliated entities. These funds and entities must be self-supporting and produce sufficient self-generated revenues to cover expenses and are often restricted to providing designated services to the University. 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. For example, Dorm Income, is a fund designed to collect and administer campus student housing activity. Income Fund Reimbursable (IFR & CFP IFR’s) captures revenues from fees, faculty buyouts, and revenue agreements with external entities where the University provides goods or services.

The Research Foundation for SUNY, The University at Albany Foundation, the University at Albany Bioscience Development Corporation, the Auxiliary Services at Albany, Inc., and Empire Commons Student Housing, Inc. are all separate not-for-profit corporations designed to provide ancillary services to the University and operate under their own Board of Directors. These entities generally operate under an exclusive contract with the University to provide specific services to the University. Each of the Boards of Directors for the entities includes University representation.

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 fiscal constraint to absorb reductions in State funding in areas that would have the least impact on campus operations. An enhanced and refined process, referred to as the Compact Budget Process, has been launched this year for development of the 2016-17 fiscal year budget. The new process incorporates many of the components of the prior process and is designed to improve campus budgeting in the following areas:

- Provides for allocation notification a year in advance of funding to enable more planning time for implementing units.
- Provide for additional collaboration among campus units
- Streamline the proposal submittal process, moving from manual input to electronic processing
- Provide for specific budget presentation times for key operational areas
- Expand input into the final decision process
- Provide for a metric centered process to monitor and evaluate progress of the initiatives funded through the process

As noted above, the University will not have a budget planning cycle for 2015-16. Allocations for the 2015-16 fiscal year will recognize the funding commitments made in prior budget cycles, negotiated salary increases and other required allocations. This will enable units to concentrate on the new Compact Budget Process for allocation requests effective FY2016-17 and provide a period of time for the campus to investigate, realign, and improve its
enrollment/retention processes to recover the shortfall in enrollment levels. A more detailed description of the Compact Budget Process is provided in Section 6.

5. Assessment Processes and Plans

The external review team report of the University’s 2010 Middle States self-study commended the University for “…the work of the Self-Study Committee in producing an honest and comprehensive assessment of the University.” In the introduction to their report, the external review team noted that they “…were particularly impressed by the objectivity and candor of the report.” Neither of these observations would have occurred if we as a campus did not take assessment seriously, nor if we shied away from critical (though constructive) institutional reflection. We trust the Commission will find the subsequent analysis of our assessment activities since 2010 as objective and self-critical as the external review team did in 2010.

The University has continued to make progress since 2010 in the assessment area, both in maintaining ongoing efforts, and in revisiting the assessment processes themselves. Most important, assessment results continue to be used to identify areas in need of attention, celebrate success, and reaffirm our trajectory towards achieving our Strategic Plan goals.

While no major modifications have to-date been formally made with respect to our Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP), the University’s assessment processes and procedures have evolved in constructive ways since 2010, and further changes are in the making. Largely continuing with the assessment processes and procedures that earned the University commendation from the external review team in its 2010 self-study, below we note how we have refined the processes for assessing student learning outcomes in the major, in our General Education program, and in evaluating overall institutional effectiveness.

By way of background, the University’s Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP), provided in Appendix 5.1, was developed in 2004 in consultation with representatives from each Vice President, each Dean, undergraduate and graduate student bodies, and the chairs of nine major Senate councils with governance responsibilities across the University’s academic mission. The IAP contains protocols and guidelines for assessment in the major, as well as a SUNY approved General Education Assessment Plan. The IAP builds upon the University’s long history of assessment and provides a formal framework for developing, conducting, utilizing, and communicating assessment activities in both teaching and learning, and in the evaluation of institutional effectiveness. The minutes of the meetings of the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee, which gave rise to it, for the historical record, are publicly accessible at http://www.albany.edu/assessment/paac.html.

Although the various activities and missions of a research university are very much interrelated, for organizational purposes the University’s IAP lays out procedures and expectations for assessment in the areas of: 1) Student learning – which encompasses overall educational outcomes, assessment in the major, and General Education assessment; and 2)
Institutional effectiveness in research, public service, academic support, and administrative services.

The IAP incorporates frameworks for assessment in the major, as prescribed in the program review process by the Council on Academic Assessment (CAA), and for assessing the General Education Program, as specified in the General Education Plan previously developed by the General Education Committee of the Undergraduate Academic Council, and approved by the SUNY General Education and Assessment Review (GEAR) group. These two formal processes are contained in their entirety within the campus-wide IAP.

The IAP calls for annual unit activity reports to ensure that assessment is a continuous rather than episodic process. Reflection, discussion, and descriptions of how results are used to affirm or improve operations are all integral parts of the assessment process. To-date, annual assessment reports have only been required of academic units, and the administrative units in the Division for Student Success, as this aspect of the IAP has not been fully implemented.

Under the IAP, the Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies are responsible for developing assessment plans for University-wide programs in their areas (e.g., Project Renaissance, Presidential Scholars, graduate student satisfaction surveys, etc.). IRPE and the Provost’s Office are responsible for developing an assessment plan for institutional level learning outcomes (e.g., retention and graduation rates, the Albany Outcomes Assessment Model, student satisfaction surveys, etc.). To-date, the campus systematically tracks retention and graduation rates, and time-to-degree for master’s and doctoral programs, and assessments of university-wide programs have annually been conducted by the Living Learning Communities and the Honors College. The University’s new (2013) Writing and Critical Inquiry (WCI) program, led by the Writing Program Director, is currently conducting an in-depth assessment funded by IRPE in which a team of paid independent reviewers are trained to evaluate students’ growth in college-level writing proficiency in their fall 2014 and spring 2015 semester long writing assignments. An additional, grant funded qualitative research component, with modest supplemental financial support from IRPE, is also underway as of this writing and is being led by the Writing Program’s Associate Director. This assessment research is utilizing structured interviews in spring 2015 and over the next academic year to discern student views on their other course-based writing experiences and their level of preparation for them, comparing fall 2013 WCI participants with juniors and seniors for whom the WCI program was not applicable.

The Division for Student Success (formerly Student Affairs) has implemented the administrative unit assessment requirements of the IAP, covering implementation of assessment plans and the preparation of annual activity reports within the Student Success division. IRPE has developed guidelines, stemming from the program review process, that coordinates the collection of academic unit assessments carried out in the previous year by each academic department. The administration, via the provost and deans, are actively engaged in ensuring that assessment of student learning is an ongoing activity across the University.

5.1 Assessment in the Major

Since 2002, assessment plans in the academic departments are an integral part of a seven-year program review cycle. The 2014-15 academic year concludes the second round of program reviews for most academic departments. Departments are encouraged to simultaneously conduct undergraduate and graduate program reviews as similar information is needed at either level, such as faculty profiles, departmental resources, and there is some overlap around student
learning objectives. In order to take advantage of efficiencies where possible, and to tie the assessment of student learning to a formal process reviewed by the faculty, the University phased in the development of academic assessment plans as part of the program review and self-study process.

The Director of Academic Assessment (DAA), working within the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE), is responsible for coordinating and assisting programs with the self-study process. The Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, working with the Council on Academic Assessment (CAA), have developed program review guidelines and procedures, based on SUNY Faculty Senate guidelines and Middle States expectations, that incorporate an assessment of student learning component. Appendix 5.1.1 details the Procedures for the Joint Review of Undergraduate and Graduate Programs. The guidelines, along with the current review schedule, a Practitioner’s Guide (Appendix 5.1.2) which provides the context, information, and directions for developing a program self-study, along with a helpful Q&A section, are available to department program review self-study teams at <http://www.albany.edu/assessment/prog_review.html>. At least two external reviewers are brought to campus for each departmental review, at the Provost’s Office expense, to provide external validation of program quality. The DAA holds an orientation meeting with the department chairs and school/college assessment liaisons in the spring semester prior to the department’s year of self-study.

Every self-study report contains the following components, with sub-item detail, except for the Assessment section, not listed below, but available in Appendix 5.1.1:

I. Mission and Learning Outcomes of Undergraduate and Graduate Programs –
II. Program Curriculum and Design
III. Undergraduate and Graduate Student Quality
IV. Faculty Quality
V. Assessment Plan and Outcomes
A. Assessment Plan – describe/identify:
   1. the timeframe and identify the faculty/student involvement at each stage of the assessment plan
   2. specific types of assessment (direct and indirect) and types of instruments used to elicit the information (see Appendix A for assessment examples)
   3. steps taken to ensure the quality of instruments in both qualitative and quantitative approaches to assessing outcomes in the program
   4. how direct assessment instruments map onto learning outcomes (where appropriate)
   5. how student academic advisement is assessed
   6. how the program involves student input in the design and implementation of its assessment activities
B. Assessment Results – present:
   1. any results of assessment activities performed in the years preceding the self-study
   2. results of direct outcomes assessment activities performed in the current year of the self-study (e.g. capstone courses, course embedded exams, performances, etc.)
3. results of indirect outcomes assessment activities performed in the current year of the self-study (e.g. student/alumni surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.)
4. results of indirect measures of student satisfaction/program effectiveness in the current year of the self-study (e.g. SIRF results, time to graduation, awards, honors, retention and graduation rates, etc.)

C. Improvement Loop – describe or detail:
   1. how the program will use the information gleaned from assessment to improve its quality
   2. plans (e.g., hard-copy reports, newsletters, postings on the departmental or University’s assessment Web site, etc.) for communicating assessment plans and annual assessment activity reports describing recent activities and/or how assessment results are being used to various campus constituencies
   3. assessment activities to be performed in the coming year(s)
   4. how the program will assess the assessment plan

VI. Support, Resources, and Facilities – present/describe/evaluate:

VII. Conclusions

Since 2009-10, the year of the University’s last decennial self-study preparation, 27 departments underwent program review up through and including the 2014-15 academic year. Six departments are scheduled for program review in 2015-16, and in fall 2015, a new seven-year program review schedule will be created, in collaboration with the Council on Academic Assessment (CAA) so that all departments have ample notice of their year of self-study.

While each academic program is responsible for the development of its own program review self-study document, considerable assistance and guidance are provided by the Director of Assessment (DAA). Generally, about five to seven departments conduct program reviews each year, covering both their undergraduate and graduate programs. Programs with specialized accreditation are exempt from the University’s internal program review process, as they undergo an externally led quality assurance review.

The Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) of the CAA, which includes the Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies as ex officio members, reviews the self-study document, the external reviewer report, and the department response to the external reviewer report, and makes its own report to the CAA. The APRC report is primarily an assessment of the (self-study) assessment, rather than an endorsement of claims or resource recommendations made by the department or the external reviewers. The APRC pays particular attention to the Assessment Plan and Outcomes section of the self-study. The APRC report, once reviewed and approved by the full CAA, is forwarded for informational purposes to the University Senate, the department chair, and dean to which the department reports.

The DAA stores program self-studies, external reviewer reports, the department response, and the CAA’s APRC report on a secure web-based wiki to which all members of the CAA, the Graduate Academic Council (GAC), and the Undergraduate Academic Council (UAC) have
access. The degree of interest by the GAC and UAC in the self-study materials varies by year, depending largely on their own agendas, but they do have unfettered access to these materials. The self-study materials are also available for review by members of the University community and other interested parties, upon request. As noted above, school/college deans are also provided with these reports for their respective units, and they meet with the external reviewers per review protocol. These reports and meetings are expected to inform departmental and school/college planning, and the information they contain have been particularly useful when making the case for resources in the annual budgeting process. The Undergraduate and Graduate Deans, and the Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Resource Planning collectively meet with the external reviewers toward the end of their visit in order to provide the administration’s perspective on important issues raised by either the program self-study or by the reviewers themselves. This final meeting also provides a preview for how the external reviewers regard the program and how issues and concerns they raise fit within an institution-wide context.

As academic programs develop their assessment plans, they are encouraged to take advantage of course-embedded mechanisms to utilize existing assessments of student learning to the extent possible. In order to facilitate these ends, the IAP encourages academic programs to spread out the assessment of student learning goals over multiple years in realization of the resource requirements of these activities.

With regard to assessing student learning outcomes, we have observed mixed results, as summarized in Appendix 5.1.3, which was crafted by the University’s Director of Academic Assessment (DAA) in preparation for this report. Some departments are directly assessing all program learning objectives and generating results that the faculty use to revise or affirm their curricula and its delivery. Several departments are directly assessing some of their learning objectives and generating useful results, and some departments are clearly struggling with assessment or rely too heavily on indirect measures of assessment or course grades. We suspect this is the case across higher educational institutions, and public research universities in particular, as the demands of a resource-constrained environment and a faculty reward structure tilted towards research present inherent challenges to the direct assessment of student learning as expected by Middle States and other accrediting bodies. This challenge was evident in the University’s 2010 Middle States self-study analysis of the state of assessment in the major. The DAA continues to follow-up with department chairs and departmental assessment liaisons both on his own initiative, and in response to recommendations from the Council on Academic Assessment.

University at Albany instructors assess their students’ learning continually. We find the difficulty comes in mapping instructor course-level learning objectives to their department’s program-level learning objectives and then translating their assessments into a form that external stakeholders, students, and other interested parties recognize, appreciate, and value.

To address this challenge, over the past five years since our decennial self-study, the University has taken a number of steps to further assessment of student learning processes. First, the Institute for Teaching, Learning, and Academic Leadership (ITLAL), the University’s center for faculty development, provides a number of resources, and conducts workshops for faculty with the mission of fostering excellence in university teaching and in faculty effectiveness. A
number of ITLAL’s workshops focus on defining student learning objectives and developing assessment mechanisms, but more importantly, they encourage faculty to regard the classroom as learning laboratory guided by purposeful activities all with the intent purpose of maximizing student learning and intellectual growth. Appendix 5.1.4 lists the 110 ITLAL workshops and events offered since 2010, the vast majority of which are directly applicable to student learning and effective teaching practice.

Second, to highlight more centrally the institutional importance of assessing student learning and its relationship with students’ academic engagement, a Provost’s Assessment Symposium (see Appendix 5.1.5) was held in fall 2013 that built upon an exercise the Provost and deans conducted in 2012-13 over several meetings in the Provost’s Executive Advisory Council (PEAC) to catalog and inventory efforts in the schools and colleges that address student satisfaction, academic engagement, and student learning.

Also in the category of keeping the spotlight on assessments of student learning, annual Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) reports are required of each academic department across the University. Each department’s report, due each August, need only contain a brief summary or outline of the past year’s assessment activities and results that were planned to be undertaken in the unit’s multi-year assessment plan (which was detailed in department’s program review self-study). Appendix 5.1.6 provides a framework for reporting the learning objectives assessed in the past year, the course or level of assessment, how the objectives were assessed, the date of the assessment, noteworthy results, and any changes or planned changes resulting from the assessments.

The annual SLO report is also an opportunity for the department to revise its multi-year assessment plan, given what it learned from or accomplished over the past academic year. Rather than merely a cataloging the activity, the SLO reporting process was constructed towards the end of providing constructive feedback to departments on how they could improve their student learning assessment processes. Appendix 5.1.7 depicts the rubric that the Director of Academic Assessment began using in 2012 to provide more meaningful feedback to departments. Two clear challenges that have arisen with the SLO reporting process are the timeliness of departments submitting their reports (August is less than ideal, as is anytime during the fall or spring semesters), and the timeliness of the Academic Assessment Office in providing feedback to the departments on how their assessment activities are progressing. Both parties are under substantial demands. This situation is something the University needs to address in some fashion if it is to continue making the assessment process useful to faculty rather than primarily as an accountability exercise.

The third approach taken to improve assessment in the major was an effort beginning in 2012 to address the foundational issue of properly defining student learning objectives by asking all academic departments to post their student learning objectives on their webpages. The underlying impetus in this initiative was that in order to assess student learning, one needs to first define clear and succinct learning objectives. Appendix 5.1.8 contains the 2012 recommendation of the Council on Academic Assessment (CAA), which the provost and deans supported and implemented. As of this writing, almost all departments have a link in the main menu of their departmental web page menu that brings students, parents, and other interested stakeholders to a
centralized repository <http://www.albany.edu/learning-objectives> that lists the student learning objectives (SLOs) of their academic programs. The very exercise of preparing to publish SLOs stimulated program faculty across campus to re-examine, and in many cases, to revise, their SLOs and align them to assessments that determine students’ level of attainment of the SLO.

Finally, in order to address an overreliance in some departments on indirect assessments of student learning (e.g., course grades, student evaluations of teaching, satisfaction surveys, or surveys of student self-reported learning gains) rather than direct assessments, the DAA has recently formulated a suggested revision to the Academic Program Review Guidelines discussed above and in Appendix 5.1.1 that would move nearly all indirect assessments and satisfaction-related survey results into an entirely separate report section so that these particular types of assessment, while still valued, are not inadvertently confused with the direct assessments of student learning which are required by the campus, the SUNY system, and Middle States. This suggested revision is now being considered by the Undergraduate Dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies, and will soon be vetted with CAA and its Academic Program Review Committee (APRC). It is anticipated that the new program review guidelines will be used, with no doubt some further revision, in the 2015-16 round of program reviews.

5.2 General Education Assessment

The development of the University’s General Education (GE) program and the high degree of faculty participation in formulating its GE Assessment Plan were detailed in our 2005 Middle States Periodic Review Report (PRR) and our progress in meeting the Middle States standard in assessing GE was described fully in the University’s 2010 Middle States self-study.

In spring 2010, shortly after reaffirmation of our accreditation by Middle States, the SUNY Board of Trustees (BOT) passed a resolution streamlining GE assessment requirements for SUNY campuses. This resolution allowed campuses the flexibility to re-design assessment procedures and protocol to better meet local needs in the hopes of fostering even more effective assessments – while also placing the onus on campuses to actually deliver on assessing GE learning outcomes, and to appropriately document their processes.

The two primary changes for the University at Albany with regard to GE assessment as result of the BOT resolution was to move to a five-year cycle for assessing the GE categories rather than the previously SUNY mandated three-year cycle, and to cease the reporting of each year’s assessment results to SUNY System Administration.

Table 5.2.1 below documents the GE assessment categories assessed by the University since 2009-10, and the percentage of students meeting or exceeding learning attainment in each category’s specific learning objectives, as required the University’s GE assessment plan, which is part of the larger campus IAP discussed above.

As evidenced in Table 5.2.1, the vast majority of students assessed meet or exceed the learning attainment goals set by instructors in General Education (GE) courses. The remaining students assessed are either approaching or not meeting the learning attainment goals set by the
faculty. According to the University’s GE Assessment Plan, instructors in courses sampled for GE assessment are responsible for mapping student assignments and performances to the specific GE learning objectives and for evaluating their performance in achieving the objectives.

The GE Assessment Plan lays out the general guidelines for approaching these exercises, and considerable latitude is afforded to instructors around how exactly they choose to measure student proficiency. Regardless of the approach taken by instructors, at the beginning of the semester of assessment, instructors participating in that semester’s GE assessment submit their plan for how they will directly assess student learning objectives, along with examples of test items or the assignments that will be evaluated. At the end of the semester, instructors complete a form that details the number and percentage of students meeting, exceeding, approaching, or not meeting the learning goals, along with reflections and comments about the assessment process and plans they might consider to improve student learning.

Examining Table 5.2.1, we see that in 2010-11 the Mathematics Statistics category had only 46 and 51 percent of the student works sampled meeting or exceeding instructor expectations for attaining learning goals 3 and 4. Upon review, it was found that the learning objectives, and how to assess them were not entirely clear to instructors, and confusion abounded as courses in Mathematics and Statistics, Psychology, and Philosophy were part of the assessment, as each had courses approved for this GE category. This category was not assessed again until spring 2015 (in progress as of this writing), in conformance with the new five-year GE assessment cycle. In the intervening years, the Mathematics learning objectives were revisited once again with faculty teaching these GE courses in Mathematics & Statistics, Psychology, and in Philosophy. The subcommittees re-examining these GE learning objectives were coordinated by the Associate Dean for General Education in 2013-14. The outcome was a much-improved set of four learning objectives, common to all courses in the category (previously, each of the three mathematics areas of calculus, statistics, and logic had its own set of learning objectives). This has resulted in greater consistency and coherence across courses in the category, and improved and streamlined the assessment process.
Also of note, the “UHS” designation in Table 5.1.1 denotes the campus’s University in the High School’s program. This program allows current high school students to receive University at Albany credit for successfully completing these courses as part of their high school curriculum. These courses follow syllabi approved by UAlbany faculty liaisons from the relevant UAlbany department, and a number of quality control procedures are in place to ensure that these courses meet UAlbany standards. As such, the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) of the CAA and the UHS program leadership believed it prudent to assess student learning attainment in UHS courses as it does in other GE courses. It can be observed in Table 5.1.1 that UHS students attain the learning objectives at higher rates than do “regular” UAlbany students. These trends were uncovered in IRPE’s GE assessment summary reports, which are

<table>
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<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>GE CATEGORY</th>
<th>N ASSESSED</th>
<th>Pct Exceeded &amp; Met by Learning Objective</th>
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<td>Challenges</td>
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</table>

Note: UHS = University in the High School program.
prepared at the conclusion of each GE assessment, and which are publicly available at <http://www.albany.edu/assessment/gen_ed_assess.html>. In this case, the results were forwarded to the GEAC for discussion. Further investigation is necessary to explain higher student achievement in UHS courses, but some probable contributing factors include high levels of motivation among UHS students (who are taking college-level courses while still in high school), high GPA requirements for admission into UHS courses, frequent contact with their instructors and larger numbers of contact hours in UHS courses (they run for a full year, rather than one semester, and meet five days per week instead of the two or three weekly meetings typical of the same courses when offered at UAlbany) which allows for more time to achieve proficiency.

In addition to the IRPE GE assessment summary reports, which include de-identified faculty observations and comments about the assessments and the assessment process, the GEAC reviews the full range of materials submitted by the sampled instructors in the semester after which the course was offered. These materials include syllabi, samples of student assignments and how they were assessed, and the instructors’ classification of student results in terms of the number and percentage of students meeting, exceeding, approaching, or not meeting the learning goals. All of these materials are de-identified with respect to the identity of the instructors and students by the Director of Academic Assessment (DAA), as the focus of the review is on the aggregate degree of student learning attainment, not the performance of students (or instructors) in any particular course. The GEAC submits its report on the prior year’s GE assessment results to the CAA, which after review and approval forwards them to the University Senate and to the deans of the participating faculty.

A number of changes have been made to the General Education assessment process (in practice) since 2009-2010, and a modified GE assessment plan is, at this writing, being revisited by the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education and the Associate Dean for General Education at the request of the Director of Academic Assessment (DAA). Any proposed changes will be vetted with the GEAC, whose approval is required by the University Senate Charter. Procedural changes since 2010-11 include:

1. **2010-2011: Returning to a Basic Listing of Learning Objectives.** The GEAC and Director of Academic Assessment (DAA) decided not to continue with a pilot version of “Assessment Form 1” developed by the DAA and the GEAC in which each learning objective was further delineated into several types of observations or competencies.
   - The premise was that if we could show instructors a number of more specific ways in which each learning objective could be relevant to their own classes, it would be easier for them to match the objectives up with assessment tools and conduct meaningful assessments. Unfortunately, the unintended consequence was a great deal of confusion in which many instructors thought that each of the suggested interpretations of the learning objectives was itself a required learning objective that they were supposed to cover and to assess. So while it seemed to be a good idea at the time (and may have actually helped in some cases) the overall impact on GE assessment was negative.
2. **2010-2011: Combining Two Forms into One.** In addition to discontinuing the pilot form with its breakdowns of each learning objective that sampled instructors were asked to fill in at the beginning of the semester, it was felt that splitting up the GE assessment into two separate forms made it less intuitive for instructors to see the connection between items included in the beginning-of-term “Form 1” and the end-of-term “Form 2.” In Form 1, instructors were asked to specify which “assessment tools” (i.e. items from tests, quizzes, reports, essays, exams, etc.) they would use for each learning objective; in Form 2, they were asked to enter their results (in the SUNY-mandated format of numbers of students who “exceeded,” “met,” “approached,” and “did not meet” each objective) and provide additional reflections and insights on their findings and the process itself. Thus, we decided to pilot a new version of a combined assessment form in which everything lines up clearly from left to right – learning objectives, assessment tools, assessment results, and finally reflections. Instructors were asked to submit the form with the first two columns submitted by a date early in the term and then to re-submit it with the last two columns completed at the end of the term. The new combined GE Assessment Form (for the Natural Sciences) is attached as Appendix 5.2.1. These forms are available to instructors on the IRPE [GE Assessment Resource](http://www.albany.edu/assessment/gen_ed_assess.html) webpage at

- The rationale behind combining Form 1 and Form 2 is that by adding to what they had already entered, instructors would see the end results as part of the process they began at the beginning of the term. In practice, this format was an immediate improvement over the previous two-form version, producing more coherent reporting.
- Based on entry errors observed each year, and upon suggestions by instructors, the DAA has continued to make minor revisions to the form each year, mainly with regard to making sure the instructions are as clear as possible.
- Along these lines, a video tutorial was created by the Associate Director for Academic Assessment for the 2013-14 GE assessment cycle, at the suggestion of the CAA. This video, found at the top level of IRPE’s [GE Assessment Resource](http://www.albany.edu/assessment/gen_ed_assess.html) webpage, provides step-by-step instructions to those filling out the new Form.

3. **2012-2013: Earlier, Better, and Higher Level Communication.** Upon review, it was discovered that there had been a lapse in what seemed to be a valuable part of the DAA’s contact protocols with GE instructors – for several years up until 2007, all instructors teaching courses in GE categories being assessed in a given term were contacted by the Associate Dean for General Education and the Dean for Undergraduate Education during the semester prior to the assessment letting them know: (1) about our GE policies; (2) of the upcoming assessment in their category; and (3) that their course might be sampled for that assessment. This was then followed by an e-mail from the DAA after the sample was selected.

- Starting in 2012-2013, we resumed the practice of the DAA coordinating the emails from the Associate Dean and Vice Provost to all instructors teaching in that semester’s GE category to be assessed. This was followed soon thereafter by an e-mail from the DAA, also to all instructors in the category, with further explanations, links, and a copy of the GE assessment form. Finally, that note was followed up approximately two weeks later with an e-mail to sampled instructors notifying them that their course had been sampled, and again including information, links and the assessment form.
The theory was that by starting with a number of contacts early on, including the preliminary one from the Vice Provost and Associate Dean, instructors would be aware of the process at an earlier stage (and thus have more time to prepare for it), and some instructors who might be inclined to ignore a message from the DAA would be more likely to read a message from the Vice Provost and Associate Dean. Because of other changes made at the same time, we cannot definitively state that this change is the sole cause of the large increase in participation and compliance rate that followed, but we are confident that it was a contributing factor.

4. 2012-2013: Working with Designated Assistant Dean Rather than Numerous Liaisons.
Prior to 2010, the DAA had a list of “assessment liaisons” in each department and school/college. These were designated faculty members and/or assistant deans who were meant to work with the DAA on assessment work, including GE assessment. The problem was that the list was often out-of-date, and some departments dropped the practice of having a designated assessment liaison altogether. Thus, the DAA was left with the only contact people being the individual instructors (who often felt lost in the assessment process) and deans and department chairs, who have numerous other competing priorities.

- Starting in 2012-2013, the DAA began working closely with the Assistant Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) as the primary liaison for assessment within that College (and the large majority of GE classes are CAS courses). That year, and ever since, the Assistant Dean has been tremendously helpful in communicating to faculty members the importance of participating in assessment, and she has added her own rounds of reminder calls and e-mails to those of the DAA. The combined effect of this, along with the additional communications discussed in the previous item, has been a marked increase in the participation and compliance rate.
- For the smaller schools and colleges, the DAA continues to work with a designated assistant or associate dean as before.

5. 2013-2014: Online Resources.
At the request of the GEAC and the CAA, the DAA and Associate DAA developed a number of online resources to assist instructors in both understanding and participating in the general education assessment process. These included: (1) as noted above, a 10-minute online video demonstrating how to complete the assessment form; (2) a frequently asked question page which answers many of the questions that have come up over the years related to how to assess GE learning objectives, and (3) a set of instructions on how to map items on scanned exams to learning objectives, and calculate learning outcomes based on them. All of these materials are accessible from IPE’s GE Assessment Resource web page at <http://www.albany.edu/assessment/gen_ed_assess.html>.

In the same year, the DAA and Associate DAA resumed a practice that had lapsed for several years, of conducting information sessions for sampled instructors. For 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, we have offered participating instructors a choice of two information sessions at which we present them with an overview of the process and explanation of the forms, and give them a chance to ask questions and compare notes with their colleagues. While attendance has only included a minority of participating faculty, we feel that attendees have found it to be a valuable source of information.

Summary and Conclusions of Changes to the GE Assessment Process Since 2010:
- Taken together, items 1-4 on the list have substantially improved data quantity by increasing faculty participation in the process, including not only participation overall, but also a marked improvement in the numbers of instructors submitting syllabi and other supporting materials.

- Taken together, items 5 and 6, combined with improvements in the instructions on the assessment form (item 2.b.), have shown a marked improvement in the quality of the data received, with far fewer instances of instructors entering the same numbers for all learning objectives without further comment, and far more instructors clearly assessing each learning objective separately and reflecting on their assessments.

- In 2010-11 we dropped the student perception survey as it was time consuming and did not exhibit much variance in results after the first several iterations. This will be revisited in the GE Assessment Plan in 2015-16.

- In 2011-12 the Associate DAA began to write reports for each General Education category separately, resulting in greatly improved clarity and providing more easily interpretable results.

- In 2011-12 the Associate DAA began to compare performance of native student populations to the students participating in the University in the High School program.

- In 2012-13 we began to compare historical data from previous Gen Ed assessments.

Appendix 5.2.2 lists the General Education categories that will be assessed in 2015-16 and 2016-17. Most likely, in 2015-16, a new five year cycle will be developed by the DAA in collaboration with the Associate Dean for General Education, and the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) of the CAA.

5.3 Assessments of Institutional Effectiveness

Apart from student learning, but very closely related to it, are assessments of institutional effectiveness which gauge the overall success of the University in achieving its goals. In addition to documenting student learning in individual academic programs, the University attempts to gauge student engagement with the academic and social environment, as well as with regard to broad barometers of success such as retention and graduation rates. As discussed below, some of these assessments are ad hoc internally-based activities, and others expected by SUNY System Administration. Many of the assessments of overall student satisfaction, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, are an outgrowth of the Albany Outcomes Assessment Model, which was the foundation for IRPE’s longitudinal student survey program prior to the more recent national attention on assessing student learning outcomes beginning in the late 1990s, and which is described in detail at <http://www.albany.edu/assessment/ualb_outcomes_model.html>.

Ad hoc assessments concerning such topics as predictors of college outcomes, advisement learning outcomes the Advisement Service Center, the Honor’s College, and our Living-Learning Communities have periodically been undertaken by either the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) or by the University Offices running these university-wide programs of importance, or, most often, through a collaborative research
project. While the Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP) calls for IRPE, the Provost’s Office, and the Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies to identify, catalog, develop, and make public assessment plans for major institutional programs that affect the overall academic experience, a formal plan for doing so has not yet been laid out. Resource limitations and a focus on assessment in the major and General Education assessment have hampered a more focused strategy and road map towards assessing institution-wide programs. Since institution-wide programs affecting overall educational outcomes are housed in administrative units, the adoption of an administrative unit assessment plan would facilitate more systematic assessment of institutional level outcomes. Section 5.4 below discusses this below in more detail.

The following report subsections highlight important educationally related outcomes that the University tracks on a continual basis in monitoring its overall performance.

### 5.3.1 Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates

Since 2010, the University at Albany’s freshman-to-sophomore retention rate has declined from 83.7 percent to 80.7 percent. The University’s 4-year graduation rate has consistently performed at or above the 50 percent mark since the 1996 entering freshmen cohort. The University’s 5-year and 6-year graduation rates have fluctuated slightly over this time period, but still compare favorably within SUNY, and across the nation’s public research universities.

![Table 5.3.1](#)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort Year</th>
<th>Degree Level Descri</th>
<th>Cohort Fall 1st sem</th>
<th>Spring 2nd sem</th>
<th>Fall 3rd sem</th>
<th>1st Yr Retent Rate</th>
<th>4Y Grad Rate</th>
<th>5Y Grad Rate</th>
<th>6Y Grad Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>2514</td>
<td>2366</td>
<td>2117</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>2393</td>
<td>2254</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>2325</td>
<td>2208</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>2232</td>
<td>2111</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>2418</td>
<td>2290</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>2562</td>
<td>2388</td>
<td>2082</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>2569</td>
<td>2394</td>
<td>2074</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Improving first-year student retention is one of new (February 2015) Provost Stellar’s highest priorities. At this writing, a new Undergraduate Experience Committee has been convened with the primary objective of advising the provost and the University on how to dramatically improve first-year student retention in short order. In addition to the work of the Committee, in spring 2015 the University issued a request for a proposal to create a data-rich predictive analytics environment, with the objectives of:
• Improving student retention rates through a robust academic “early warning” system for academically at risk students, drawing on data from both traditional and non-traditional sources;
• Improving student retention rates by providing rich analytics for advisors to help them guide students into academic areas that may be better suited for their skills, abilities, and interests;
• Fostering a richer student relationship with their advisors, faculty, and staff;
• Fostering improvements in admissions practices by predicting the likelihood of student success, potentially opening the door to applicants who might otherwise have been overlooked; and
• Supporting and promoting experiential education activities of students and faculty through monitoring, tracking, and development of these activities.

Through careful monitoring of student retention and graduation rates, now through the campus’s new Business Intelligence system that provided the data in Table 5.3.1 “on-demand,” the Office of the Provost and Enrollment Management have developed a number of initiatives to address the slight decline in first-year retention. All of these initiatives were noted above in the narrative addressing the University’s Strategic Plan implementation.

• Theme based Living-Learning Communities (L-LCs) that offer new freshmen the opportunity to live together, enroll in smaller classes, engage with a faculty mentor and connect with each other through a common interest. L-LC’s offer incoming freshmen with similar interests, majors or lifestyles, the opportunity to live together in the same residence hall, take some of their courses together, and meet regularly with faculty and upper-classmen who share their interests.

• Continue to develop the Advising Plus Program, which provides information and connects students to services that undergraduate students need to be successful. Advising Plus provides the full range of academic assistance services including tutoring, peer tutoring, review sessions, and study groups. It also exposes UAlbany students to the many engaged learning opportunities available to them including undergraduate research, community-engaged courses, community and public service programs, study abroad, and internships.

• Program in Writing and Critical Inquiry (WCI), a writing seminar required for all incoming first-year students where students benefit from small classes and one-on-one interactions with their instructor. Characterized by classrooms that will be capped at 19 students beginning in fall 2015, its purpose is to help develop new students as writers while introducing them to the University at Albany and research university expectations for writing. The WCI’s are also an effective way of communicating with the entire freshmen class during their first-year on other important topics and issues as they transition to the University.

• MyInvolvement - An initiative of the Division of Student Success to track each student’s involvement in the many extra-and co-curricular activities available to them on the University campus.
An ongoing initiative from the mid-2000s focusing on improving academic advisement continues apace. Based in part on feedback from Student Opinion Surveys (SOS), in 1999 the University began a major initiative to improve the quality of academic advisement, beginning with services for freshmen. Investments were made in staff in the Advisement Services Center to replace graduate assistants with professional advisors, who advise freshmen until they declare a major and move to department-based advisement. The Advisement Services Center has also structured its work to focus on “advisement outcomes” developed by the center staff, and regularly evaluates the quality of advisement through student focus groups and exit surveys. The University’s 2014 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (building on NSSE administrations in 2008 and 2011) utilized the NSSE advisement module, which found that the University’s first-year advisement practices were slightly more favorably rated by first-year students than those at peer institutions. These results are documented in the IRPE assessment report series on the IR web page at <http://www.albany.edu/ir/reports.htm>.

Table 5.3.1 suggests that UAlbany’s six-year graduation rate has been fairly stable since 2010. UAlbany’s graduation rates continue to earn credits from U.S. News in its Annual Best Colleges edition, and UAlbany ranks well within the top 100 for substantially exceeding expected graduation rates, given other factors.

These data continue to be reviewed regularly with academic leadership to improve upon students’ ability to complete in a timely way their major at the start of junior year – and contribute positively to the University’s overall graduation rate. Once first-year student retention is tackled in 2015-16 and 2016-17, Provost Stellar’s plans are to ratchet up attention on second-to-third year and third-to-fourth year retention through a potential expansion of experiential learning opportunities, consistent with a recent SUNY Chancellor’s initiative.

5.3.2 Transfer Student Success

In recent years, transfer students have represented about one-third of all new students and 41 to 45 percent of students receiving baccalaureate degrees annually. Thus, the University is committed to ensuring the successful recruitment, retention, academic progress, and success of transfer students.

The University takes steps to ensure transfer students, once admitted, are successful. Every transfer student attends a “planning conference” before the semester to meet with an academic advisor. In addition, several options for transfers continue to be available at the Planning Conference and Orientation programs, including invitations to campus welcome events, such as the Opening Convocation and a special meeting with faculty and other transfer students at the beginning of the academic year. These initiatives have been spurred, in part, by assessment research by IRPE that indicates that social integration is more difficult for transfer students, particularly those who do not live on campus or in student neighborhoods, and these data continue to bear out in more recent SUNY Student Opinion Surveys administered every three years since the mid-1980s.
In addition, a new transfer student coordinator position was created in 2009 to better integrate transfer students into the University environment. The transfer coordinator has collaborated with IRPE to mine extant survey data in the NSSE and SUNY SOS surveys, as well as new survey data (2013) from the Transfer Office’s own survey efforts.

Transfer students who come in at the upper division successfully complete their degrees at high rates. Table 5.3.2 shows that new transfer students have first-year retention rates slightly higher than first-year students, and with respectable four-year and six-year graduation rates. As part of the academic program review self-study process, academic units discuss their rising junior graduation rates, by program of study, that differentiate between freshman and transfer admits as means to keep ‘top of mind’ how transfer students fare compared to students admitted as first-time college students. Through the course of the analyses, departments note special orientations and advisement initiatives for transfer students. In addition, in fall 2015 a Living-Learning Community for new transfer students living on campus has been established.

| Table 5.3.2 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| **UG Retention and Graduation Rate report - Transfer Student Cohorts** |
| **analysis_retention_report_UG_10** |
| **Note:** Retention rate and counts for each semester includes "Enrolled or Graduated" Grad |
| **Date run:** 5/10/2015 |
| **Short Year** | **Degree Level Descr** | **Cohort Fall 1st sem** | **1st Yr Reten Rate** | **4 Yr Grad Rate** | **5Yr Grad Rate** | **6Yr Grad Rate** |
| 2007 | Bachelors | 1,366 | 81.0% | 66.5% | 69.5% | 70.9% |
| 2008 | Bachelors | 1,448 | 81.2% | 64.8% | 67.3% | 57.8% |
| 2009 | Bachelors | 1,315 | 83.2% | 67.2% | 69.0% |
| 2010 | Bachelors | 1,330 | 81.8% | 66.6% |
| 2011 | Bachelors | 1,347 | 83.2% |
| 2012 | Bachelors | 1,296 | 82.1% |
| 2013 | Bachelors | 1,328 | 81.0% |

5.3.3 Doctoral Time-to-Degree

As Table 5.3.3 indicates, the University’s median time to-degree for doctoral students compares favorably in all areas to medians reported in the national data (Time to Degree of U.S.)

| Table 5.3.3 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| **Degree Awarded in...** | **Physical Sciences (Math and Computer and Info Sci)** | **Life Sciences (Biology, Public Health)** | **Education** | **Humanities** | **Social Sciences\(^1\)** |
| 2007 | 5.3 | 5.5 | 7.0 | 8.0 | 7.0 |
| 2008 | 6.0 | 5.3 | 6.3 | 6.5 | 6.5 |
| 2009 | 6.0 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 8.3 |
| 2010 | 6.0 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 7.0 | 8.0 |
| 2011 | 6.0 | 5.5 | 7.0 | 8.0 | 7.0 |
| 2012 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 8.0 | 8.0 |
| 2013 | 5.8 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 8.0 | 7.0 |
| 2003 NSF | 6.8 | 6.9 | 8.3 | 9.0 | 7.8 |

\(^1\)Social Sciences include Economics, Political Science, Public Administration & Policy, School of Criminal Justice, School of Social Welfare, Psychology, and Sociology
Research Doctorate Recipients, NSF 06-312, 2006). The University continues to monitor these rates as well as the overall completion rates of students who begin doctoral study.

5.4 Assessments of Institutional and Unit Performance

Historically, the SUNY Student Opinion Survey (SOS) which is administered triennially by SUNY system administration with the cooperation of campus Institutional Research offices since the mid-1980s had been used to assess institutional and unit performance in a broad-brush general approach. The most recent administration of the SOS just wrapped up in spring 2015, with results anticipated to be released over the summer of 2015. SOS results are traditionally shared with the Executive Cabinet, Deans, Department Chairs, and various Councils of the University Senate. A report is also publicly posted on the IRPE assessment report web page for the information of the broader campus community, as the principles outlined in the University’s IAP are intended to facilitate a greater sharing of assessment results across the University community.

Beginning in 2008, as part of SUNY’s initiative to Strengthen Campus-based Assessment, the University participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement for the first time, with SUNY funding. SUNY has continued to fund the NSSE on an ongoing basis, and our participation in 2011 and 2014 has proved very useful to better inform the campus community about the extent of student engagement, and how our students’ experiences compare to national benchmarks.

Indeed, the University is committed to data-informed decision-making and continues to use many campus-based as well as SUNY and national surveys on a consistent basis. IRPE’s assessment reports, available on the IRPE Assessment Reports web page at <http://www.albany.edu/ir/reports.htm> demonstrate the University’s consistent commitment to using survey data to inform the overall institutional assessment environment. Of the seven reports published on the IRPE Assessment Report web page since 2010, six of the seven are extensions of longitudinal survey efforts begun in prior years. This sustained commitment to publicly sharing survey results concerning factors related to institutional impact has helped create an informed environment in which data is brought to bear on important matters. For example, Appendix 5.4.1 contains a PowerPoint presentation that provides the context of how student satisfaction with different academic and non-academic aspects of the University, as well as their degree of academic engagement (via the NSSE), have changed over the past twelve years. This information helped to set the background context to inform the new Undergraduate Experiences Committee that is hard at work to develop policies and initiatives to reverse recently fallen first-year student retention rates. Examples of using data from IRPE’s continuous survey activities to inform various campus committees, or individual faculty needs, abound.

Another case in point, this time at the graduate program level, is Research Report No. 31: "Graduate Student Assessment Survey (GSAS), 2014: Report on Trends and Key Findings" (February, 2015), also found on the IRPE Assessment Reports web page, and specifically announced to deans, chairs, and graduate program directors in spring 2015. In addition to sending survey top lines that update trend data from the 2008 and 2011 administrations of this IRPE developed survey to program directors in the semester prior to their
A publicly available interactive graphical tool was made available by IRPE that allows interested parties to explore the survey results by department, degree level, student sex, and race/ethnicity groupings. It also allows users to compare results across the 2008, 2011 and 2014 survey administrations. This new graphical tool is available on the IRPE Assessment Reports web page right next to the report PDF.

Next up for IRPE is to create an interactive graphical tool to facilitate exploration of recently published Research Report No. 32: "Survey of May 2010-May 2013 Bachelor's Degree Recipients" (May, 2015). This survey updates the 2008 multi-method survey effort to identify the post-graduation career trajectory of 2007 graduates. At this writing, discussions are underway with the Division of Student Success to begin in summer 2015 a multi-method survey to gather similar information for the baccalaureate class of 2014, who are now one year out from graduation, as the survey results are particularly useful in student recruitment activities, both to the University at-large, and to specific disciplines. For example, from the most recent survey, we have determined that a large majority of 2010-2013 graduates – 85% – have worked, including 37% who have engaged both in work and graduate or continuing education, and another 48%, who have only worked. The companies, careers, and graduate schools that these graduates have pursued after their UAlbany graduation are understandably of keen interest to prospective students and their parents.

A prime example of how student surveys are used to enhance the quality of services is food service and parking, and the SUNY SOS 2012 results have shown that student satisfaction with campus food services and parking exhibited (once again) the largest increase from the SOS surveys of the mid-2000s.

Appendix 5.4.2 details the 125 more intensive survey efforts focused on institutional or unit effectiveness conducted by IRPE or other campus units since 2010. The two major central surveyors of surveys on campus are IRPE itself and the University’s Division for Student Success, which conducts surveys on behalf of its units (some of which provide benchmark comparisons with other campuses) as part of its own assessment cycle. As Appendix 5.4.2 shows, units in the other divisions had also conducted a considerable number of surveys since 2010. For all of these surveys, IRPE serves, at the very least, as survey coordinator. Each fall semester, UAlbany’s Provost and the Vice President for Research collaborate to release a memorandum campus-wide, reiterating UAlbany’s policy on survey coordination. This memorandum asks all academic and non-academic units to coordinate the timing and content of their planned surveys with the Director of Academic Assessment and Survey Research.

The reasons for this coordination policy include: Avoiding conflicts in survey timing, to promote the use of scientific sampling techniques, limiting multiple demands on faculty/staff, students, and alumni to participate in several surveys within a given time frame; Limiting survey solicitations to those that support the University’s interests; Tracking survey activity for accreditation purposes; Ensuring that surveys that meet the federal definition of research involving human subjects; and ensuring that IRPE’s survey research expertise is available to assist with assessment efforts.

While serving as UAlbany’s institutional survey clearing house, IRPE provides a full range of survey research assistance, from merely coordinating survey timing to complete survey
administration, when needed. The following survey instruments are currently in use to assess the experiences, views, and satisfaction of UAlbany’s students, faculty, staff and recent graduates on a host of issues:

Surveys of students and recent graduates:

1. SUNY-wide Student Opinion Survey (SOS)
2. Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
3. Graduate Student Assessment Survey
4. Survey of Recent Graduates
5. Counseling/Health Center Survey of Student Behaviors (NCHA)
6. ACUHO-I Educational Benchmarking Instrument/Resident Survey
7. NACUFS Dining Survey
8. Division of Student Success surveys include: Student Activity Survey, Student Conduct Survey, Project CEO Survey on Co-Curricular Involvement, University Police Department Surveys, and various surveys on other topics, including freshman and transfer orientations, Campus Center facilities and programs, Living-Learning Communities, Career Services, and various other programmatic areas
9. UAlbany Student Athlete Surveys (end of first year, end of senior year)
10. UAlbany Dining Surveys
11. Advisement Services Center Exit Surveys
12. ECAR National Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology
13. Surveys on electronic instructional media, including Blackboard and online teaching
14. LibQual Library Usage Survey
15. UAlbany Student Transportation Survey
16. Numerous surveys of students and alumni at the school/college/department level

Surveys of faculty and staff:

1. Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)
2. Survey of Non-Tenure-Track Instructors
3. Disability Resource Center Faculty Survey
4. Faculty Survey on Online Teaching & Learning
5. UAlbany Faculty/Staff Transportation Survey
6. UAlbany Faculty Survey on Research and Scholarship Resources
7. UAlbany Survey on Mobile Device Security
8. UAlbany Classified Staff Quality of Life Survey
9. UAlbany Faculty/Staff Survey on Governance
10. Voluntary Surveys on Public Engagement Activities
11. UAlbany Survey of Contingent Faculty & Staff
12. Faculty/Staff Social Networking Survey
13. LibQual Library Usage Survey
15. CLUE Professional Staff Survey
16. CLUE Faculty/Staff Quality of Life Survey
17. Survey on Use of Mobile Devices
In addition to these centrally conducted surveys, numerous schools, colleges, and departments, as well as non-academic units, conduct surveys and focus groups of their own users, students, and alumni. Many of these are detailed in Appendix 5.4.2. These survey activities cut across vice presidential areas as well as across the University’s eight schools and colleges. Coordinated and planned survey research is one means the University uses to gauge institutional and unit performance.

Overall University effectiveness in different areas has more generally been measured by the University’s performance dashboard used from 2010 through 2014. Appendix 5.4.3 shows the general metrics areas tracked were Enrollment, Retention and Graduation, Faculty, Research, Finances, and National Rankings. These metrics served both internal and external needs, and were particularly useful with respect to informing external constituents, such as state legislators, about the direction of the University in particular areas given various external forces and opportunities.

As the campus’s new 2010 Strategic Plan took shape and implementation was initiated, a new set of strategic metrics was developed to track the University’s progress towards its strategic goals. Appendix 5.4.4 depicts the Strategic Planning Metrics that grew out of the work of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee during the first two years of the Strategic Plan’s implementation. These newer performance metrics, distilled down from 150 plus metrics initially identified by the Steering Committee, were also aligned with the SUNY Chancellor’s Report Card metrics to assure that the campus was in-step with the Chancellor’s vision for SUNY, and SUNY campuses. The Strategic Planning Metrics are a blend of hard data points, such as retention and graduation rates, the number of entering students with high levels of academic preparedness, externally funded research activity, and the number of online courses, along with softer, but still critically important data points such as student engagement and satisfaction benchmarks from the NSSE and SUNY Student Opinion Surveys, estimates of the number of hours students contribute to community engaged service, and faculty principal investigator satisfaction with pre- and post-award processing services based on Harvard’s Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey.

A review of the Strategic Planning metrics shows mixed performance over the baseline period, which is calculated by averaging the three measurement periods for each metric immediately preceding Strategic Plan implementation. These metrics are updated as new data points become available, with availability dates (and years) being highly variable. In assessing Undergraduate Education, NSSE benchmarks scores are up, General Education assessment results remain in the pre-implementation range for students meeting or exceeding faculty expectations for student learning, while the number of group one students enrolling to the University is down only slightly. With regard to the Strategic Goal of Student Experiences, the NSSE mentoring and student support scale is at its baseline level for the first post-Strategic Plan implementation data point, and the number of UAlbany students participating in study abroad opportunities is slightly down. Graduate Education and Research goal metrics are also mixed, with average time-to-doctoral degree completion down slightly (a positive development), the number of students supported on research grants up slightly, and the number of non-traditional learners is down slightly. Creative works by faculty are up slightly, and faculty scholarship,
measured by the aggregate number of refereed publications per year, is down slightly, as are overall research expenditures through the SUNY Research Foundation, after excluding activity by faculty from the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering. Student satisfaction is about level with baseline values for the Physical Infrastructure metrics, and the endowment value is up considerably over the baseline value. The Community Engagement metric is down slightly, as evidenced by the number of total hours UAlbany students contribute to community and public engagement, but this particular metric is rather imprecisely estimated until the campus’s new public engagement tracking mechanisms come online, beginning in spring 2016. Finally, all of the SUNY report card metrics, which are the more traditional output metrics commonly used across higher education, show improvement over the baseline period, except for first-year student retention, which has already been targeted by Provost Stellar for special attention.

Soon after President Jones laid out his four stakes during his inauguration as the University’s 19th president in September 2013, discussed above in the Major Challenges and Opportunities section of this report, the recently developed Strategic Planning Metrics were regarded as consistent with the four stakes – 1) Expanding our portfolio of degree-granting programs; 2) Recruiting more out-of-state and international students; 3) Broadening our role as a University engaged in the community; and 4) Growing our resources to fulfill our ambition. Pre-existing metrics are evident in the Strategic Planning Metrics for each of these stakes, and the campus to-date has not stepped back from any of the pre-existing strategic goals. As President Jones’s new leadership team takes shape, the campus expects to revisit its strategic plan and key indicators of success.

Any possible changes in campus strategic direction will remain consistent with the SUNY Strategic Plan, available at <http://www.suny.edu/powerofsuny/>, and under which the Chancellor has begun to measure the institutional effectiveness of individual campuses. Appendix 5.4.5 depicts the organizing framework of SUNY Excels, the SUNY Chancellor’s initiative to identify metrics and indicators that are: mission critical, understandable, and widely inclusive; easy to track on a regular basis and aligned with existing assessments; sensitive to external conditions and mission; drive continuous improvement; and which are ambitious and visionary.

Senior staff from the University at Albany and from across SUNY campuses gathered in spring 2015 at SUNY System Administration headquarters to begin defining the metrics that will drive the SUNY Excels performance indicator initiative. Many of SUNY Excels metrics are similar to, if not the same (e.g., retention rates, time-to-degree, number of online students, external research funding, etc.) as those in the existing UAlbany performance dashboard and Strategic Planning Metrics. The Chancellor has since rolled out a pilot program to begin evaluating selected campus presidents on these metrics, with all presidents, including the UAlbany president, to soon follow.

With regard to assessing unit performance in the administrative realm, the University has, to-date, not implemented the provisions in the Institutional Assessment Plan (IAP) that call for formal assessment activity and reporting across administrative units. Appendix 5.4.6 details a draft plan for assessing administrative units modeled after the University’s academic program review process. This draft plan has already been through one round of vetting with the deans,
vice presidents, and senior staff. The proposed outline is similar to the administrative unit provisions in the existing IAP, with notable difference being the phasing in of a five-year cyclical schedule of reflection by each unit via the creation of a formal self-study, and the requirement of subsequent annual reports summarizing the assessment activities carried out in the prior year, and how they were used.

As of this writing, the draft plan for the Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness in Research, Public Service, Academic Support, and Administrative Services detailed in Appendix 5.4.6 is still under consideration by the president, senior vice president, deans, and other senior staff. A number of senior leadership changes have occurred between late 2013 and early 2015, requiring that the proposed plan be revisited again, this time by the new leadership team. This should occur early in the 2015-16 academic year.

Administrative Unit Assessment

While a formal framework and guidelines have not been instituted to govern the exact procedures that should be followed in administrative unit assessments, activities to gauge unit effectiveness and the use of the resulting analyses to inform operations are nevertheless ongoing. The 2010 self-study conducted a spot audit on the divisions of Student Success and Finance and Business, and found both conduct regularized assessment activities. In the Finance and Business division, later named the division of Finance and Administration in 2015, activities that help ensure that the divisional units meet aspects of their missions in fiscally responsible ways have continued. External audits by both independent accounting firms, federal and state agencies, and SUNY for many of the units (State Accounting, Sponsored Funds Financial Management, Purchasing and Contracts, Equipment Management, Human Resources, and the Student Loan Services Center) continue to serve as a form of assessment for Finance and Administration units.

A review of the 2010-2015 campus survey log in Appendix 5.4.2 shows that five of the 125 institution-wide surveys conducted since 2010 have been sponsored by Finance and Administration units, demonstrating that multiple means of assessing unit activities and performance are actively pursued. In addition, state-mandated internal control program that provide periodic reviews of each unit’s missions, goals, policies, procedures, and operations has remained in effect since the University’s 2010 self-study. The reviews continue to be performed jointly by the campus’ assistant internal control coordinator, associate counsel, and information security officer. While the assessment activities noted above are not as structured or detailed as the assessments of academic programs, they do provide insight into unit operations and their effectiveness.

In assessing unit performance, the most mature approach across the University continues to be led by the Division for Student Success. Each unit with the division defines learning goals for its operations aligned with divisional goals, measures them, and reports out key findings and results to the administration, and to students, parents, faculty, and other key stakeholders.

Each of the Student Success units complete annual reports summarizing their activities during the preceding year. Information gathered from the Annual Report is used to compile the division’s annual Briefing Book, the most recent of which is located at http://www.albany.edu/studentsuccess/assessment/BriefingBook/BriefingBook_2014/BriefingBoo
The unit assessment results are used to inform the budgeting and planning process within the division by attenuating areas in need of attention or maintenance of effort. In addition, the Briefing Book details how each unit’s activities addressed the campus strategic goals in the prior year through new initiatives or ongoing operations.

Student Success’s staff development efforts in the assessment area have grown to be a regional draw. The third annual Capital District Student Affairs Assessment Symposium: Creating and Sustaining a Culture of Assessment held in 2014 drew 167 participants, with 90 assessment professionals coming from other colleges and universities, including out-of-state private institutions.

The Student Success assessment activities are led by an Assessment Council, comprised of staff from the Student Success units. The Assessment Council reviews unit assessment plans and provides feedback to units. This helps ensure continued improvement in assessment activities. An early example of this critical function was the Assessment Council’s advice in 2010 to re-focus unit activity on better defining learning goals for Student Success units. The Council developed an “Assessment Education Professional Development Program (AEPDP)” to provide staff within the division the opportunity to build their skill sets, knowledge base and confidence in the areas of assessment planning, design and implementation. The program drew heavily from the guidelines of the NASPA Assessment Framework and utilizes a mixture of webinars (provided through our institutional membership with Campus Labs), individual exercises and projects.

Finally, with respect to the Division for Student Success’s assessment activities, it is worth noting that the division’s assessment website, located at <http://www.albany.edu/studentsuccess/assessment/index.shtml> was featured in the August 2014 National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment’s (NILOA) Newsletter. The website is, most importantly, an internal resource for assessment briefs, details the annual review process the division’s units undertake, and provides links to numerous external resources to assist staff in developing their own assessment expertise and plans.

While the Student Success assessment activities are the most mature of the administrative units on campus, assessments of unit effectiveness other than through the survey activity detailed in the beginning of this report section are present in the other vice presidential divisions. Appendix 5.4.7 illustrates data the Vice President for Research tracks in assessing research activity across the University. These graphical tracking data, shared with each dean and the directors of research centers reporting to the Vice President for Research, depict annual trends in the dollar volume and number of grant applications, the dollar value of grants and contracts actually won, and the value of research expenditures generated by University faculty and units through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with New York State government agencies outside of those processed through the SUNY Research Foundation (RF). In addition, the research activity dashboards also show the overall annual expenditures generated by the units, along with the indirect cost recovery rates over time, or what the University refers to as the Finance and Administration (F&A rate).
These tracking data are critical to identifying growth areas within the disciplines that might be leveraged, and also to signal the need to look more closely into areas where research activity seems to have declined or failed to keep pace with national trends. In addition to these dashboards, detailed reports by PI are made available to deans, department chairs, and center directors on a quarterly basis that summarize activity in each area. To further enhance the tracking of extramural research funding, interactive management dashboards are now under development by the SUNY Research Foundation. In addition, the University now has in a development stage a business intelligence (BI) and data warehouse initiative of its own that allows deans and chairs the ability to view aggregate research activity data and then drill down directly into the details from the same interface to review individual grants and PI information. The University’s BI system is also integrated with instructional, budget and human resources information, and once moved to a production environment, will provide a more comprehensive view of faculty contributions toward the achievement of the University mission by tracking research and instructional outputs together.

A more global view of research activity data is captured by the performance dashboard maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Research, as illustrated in Appendix 5.4.8, and available at http://www.albany.edu/research/assets/ResearchPerformanceDashboard2013-14.pdf. In addition to tracking the aggregated research activity of the schools and colleges and research centers discussed above at a University level, the main dashboard also tracks human subjects protocol submissions, as well as animal subject submissions activity within the divisions Office for Regulatory Research Compliance. Finally, the division’s main performance dashboard tracks metrics related to innovation and development such as disclosures, patent applications, patents issued, options and licenses executed, and license income. These dashboard metrics support the campus’s strategic objective to increase UAlbany’s visibility in, and resources for, advancing and disseminating knowledge, discovery, and scholarship.

Internal to the Division for Research’s operations, institutional data about various research productivity indicators are used to assess activity at the Department level. Some corrections both up and down are not uncommon. Those units that have large portfolios or large contracts with one or few sponsoring agencies are most susceptible to large swings that affect the overall portfolio by several percentage points. These data allow the Vice President’s Office to monitor potential swings in activity and reach out to the directors of these programs to determine if there is a problem.

In addition, the Division has deployed part-time grant writers, used grant writing workshops and contacted faculty one-on-one to stimulate grants productivity and to get intelligence on any issues that may affect the ability of faculty and PIs to develop grant proposals or efficiently execute existing contracts.

These review processes led the Division to establish a cohort of six grants facilitators as PIs expressed feedback that they were spending more time than desired grappling with administrative issues when they could have been conducting research. The grants facilitators help PIs to address administrative issues, and they also spend time looking for grant opportunities, as well as encourage faculty to write grants. This program has been widely viewed as a positive development by faculty.
As a result of carefully examining research operations during the University’s Strategic Plan implementation, the Division for Research has, for the first time in the history of the University, combined all locally controlled Research Foundation (RF) offices (Pre-award, Compliance, Tech Transfer, Post-award, and HR) under one organizational umbrella, the Division for Research. Previously, these offices reported to two different divisions (Research, and to Finance and Administration). In addition the RF Operations Manager was the Vice President for Finance and Administration. Now the Vice President for Research is the Operations Manager, and his Deputy Operations Manager is also housed in the Division for Research. This has created “seamless pipeline” in the lifecycle of a grant, from birth to maturity. This too has been widely lauded as a positive change by faculty.

Most recently the President has launched a seed fund to support transformational interdisciplinary work. As this larger seed funding program gets underway, the division is being more intentional about assessing its smaller seed funding programs of FRAP A and FRAP B. A Division for Research analysis of how these funds were used by faculty to further their research showed a remarkable breadth of scholarship and success, and faculty were very positive about the value of the funds.

Finally, the Division for Research has assessed the undergraduate research activity across departments and was able to report on how differently each discipline conducts research and scholarship. This led to a brochure to explain to incoming students about what research is, wherever they find their academic home, and how is it done. This information was also incorporated into Advising Plus Clear Pathways program, another strategic initiative, for obtaining research experience across the disciplines. And now the division is working with the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education to formulate plans for how to scale-up undergraduate students’ understanding and participation in authentic research.

As noted above, a formal plan and timetable for each division’s planned assessment activities has not yet been established, but one is now under consideration by the President’s executive staff and the deans.

6. Linked Institutional Planning and Budgeting Processes

The Periodic Review Report (PPR) guidelines ask responding institutions to relate how their ongoing planning and resource allocation decisions are based on their mission and goals, how they develop objectives to achieve them, and how they utilize the results of assessment activities for institutional renewal. The discussion below describes how the University has complied with this mandate since the University’s reaffirmation of accreditation in 2010. Since 2010, the University has implemented its Strategic Plan, invested in areas on the basis of their contribution to Strategic Plan goals and objectives (as well as to our NYSUNY 2020 plan), and built in evaluation metrics to gauge the success of initiatives.

As noted in the Major Challenges and Opportunities section above, the University began the period right after its 2010 reaffirmation of accreditation by Middle States during the tail end of a multi-year downturn in state appropriation support. A series of Budget Advisory
Groups (BAG), utilizing the University’s Going Forward Plan, among other resources, developed general principles to use as a guide in handling the impact of the 2008 global financial crisis that resulted in $46M of state aid reductions to the University between 2008 and 2012. The BAG principles and priorities, covered in our 2010 Middle States self-study, are listed in Appendix 6.1 to provide an historical context, and were used to guide the 2010-11 and 2011-12 reductions in state support, which were on top of state appropriation reductions made in 2008-09 and 2009-10. Section 3 of this report detailed that during this four-year period the University experienced $46 million in state tax support reductions, eliminated 338 position FTEs through attrition and other means to meet savings targets, reduced services, curtailed non-essential travel, reduced graduate student support, and ended up discontinuing five degree programs, one of which was later reinstated. The reductions across these four years were painful for the entire University community, and the program deactivations especially so for the faculty and staff in those, and related, programs.

In 2011-12, the adoption of SUNY’s Rational Tuition policy, which was tied to the NYSUNY 2020 program, along with the SUNY Academic Excellence Fee, both of which were discussed earlier, provided an uptick in revenues that allowed for reinvestments from 2011 through present.

Before describing the process used to make new strategic investments over the past three years, largely through the NYSUNY 2020 program, it is worth noting that the bulk of operating unit budgets continue to be incrementally based. In this process the previous year’s base budget is reconciled in detail, then incrementally increased/decreased to reflect negotiated salary increases or budget additions or reductions related to changes in the state appropriation and expected tuition revenue generated. This is essentially the same base budget process that has been in effect for the past 20 years at the University. Faculty recruitment priorities and other requests flow from department chairs and directors up to deans and vice presidents, who then weigh needs along with institutional priorities as articulated in the Strategic Plan, and then present proposed budgets to the president.

Historically, the development of faculty recruitment plans signal the beginning of the budget planning cycle as faculty/staff hiring intentions by department and discipline for the following year are identified. The University provides resources to fund faculty positions from institutional resources in areas of strategic priority and through attrition of existing positions. From 2011 through 2014, within the Division for Academic Affairs, the provost established a Central Allocation Recovery (CAR) fund in which 30 percent of the base line support for each vacancy was set aside for strategic reinvestment and base unit needs. The CAR process was suspended in late 2014 prior to Provost Stellar’s arrival on campus, as other mechanisms for strategically directing resources were explored. Generally, in the spring, the impact of the enrollment plan and tuition collections, fee-based programs, residence halls, and food service is built into an overall budget. Models in both the offices of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) and Accounting are used in these calculations, as described in Section 4 above.

Throughout the remainder of the year, the base budget is further refined as it is developed for the next fiscal year and adjusted to reflect new commitments borne out of the NYSUNY 2020
process and other targeted hires. The end result of the process, after accounting for reallocations, special initiatives, the enrollment impact on tuition, residential housing projections, fee-based activities and food service, is to aggregate up the figures to the Campus Financial Plan (CFP), which summarizes the overall state of the University’s fiscal plans.

Concurrently, the Dormitory-Income Fund Reimbursable (DIFR) budget process unfolds in much the same way. Consultation and participation occur with multiple units, including IRPE, Residential Life, Student Affairs, Financial Management and Budget, Facilities, and the undergraduate and graduate student governance bodies. The DIFR process involves an analysis of campus enrollment, its impact on projected occupancy and room revenue, and a review and analysis of operating and capital budget needs. The measurement of the “yield,” or the portion of the enrolled student population, by class year, residing in on-campus housing, is a key data component that underpins the revenue projections of this self-supporting revenue program. Once the revenue projection is complete, it is contrasted against base-level spending needs, contractual commitments, debt service changes, and other factors that, when combined, dictate the financial position of the DIFR balance sheet. From this analysis emerges the level of room rate increases or budget reductions, if any, necessary to maintain a balanced budget. The undergraduate and graduate student governance bodies are consulted prior to finalizing the room rates, which must be established in early February in time for housing sign-ups in March.

In addition, the University has an extensive Income Fund Reimbursable (IFR) planning process, including a dedicated staff person in the Office of Financial Management and Budget. Each year, IFR account managers file a budget plan that is then analyzed to ensure solvency in each program/account. These plans form the basis for the allocation levels established and the authority to spend. Control over the majority of the IFR accounts is decentralized to the department/college overseeing the activity. A few accounts, such as Summer Sessions and those supported by the Comprehensive Fee, are managed more centrally and contemplated within the CFP planning process described above.

The preparation of base budgets, even though they are largely incremental from the prior year, is the opportunity for the vice presidents and deans to align unit priorities with the University’s strategic objectives, and to seek funding from the Campus Financial Plan (CFP) if unable to fund particular initiatives themselves. Generally, each vice president and dean can expect the same allocation in the next fiscal year as in the present one. Priorities within divisions are often funded through reallocations and payroll vacancy savings, although opportunities for vacancy savings have been dramatically reduced as the University shed 338 position FTEs in vacant positions in the 2008 through 2012 period.

Appendix 6.2 illustrates the supplemental materials used in the Academic Affairs budget submission materials for the 2011-12 through 2014-15 fiscal years used to both align the division with campus priorities and to analyze resource requests. These Condensed Department Profiles are a series of metrics that the provost in Academic Affairs uses to assess the need for faculty hires and other requested resources. They include instructional workload metrics such as the number of majors and student FTE taught by the department’s faculty, faculty FTE by rank, student-faculty ratios, and expenditure data in both the aggregate and on a per faculty FTE basis. In addition, they include comparative data on student credit hours taught per full-time faculty
FTE and external research funding per faculty FTE from the National Study of Instructional Costs and Faculty Productivity (aka the Delaware Study). Appendix 6.2 only contains the campus summary, but separate summary sheets are prepared and distributed for every academic department by IRPE. The Budget Planning Activities contained in Appendix 6.3 is a worksheet developed within Academic Affairs to align the planned activities of academic and support units with the UAlbany Strategic Plan, any existing school/college strategic plan, the NYSUNY 2020 Program, the SUNY Strategic Plan and/or the college/school Alignment Report.

Deans and vice presidents were not asked to formulate their own strategic plans. Rather, as part of the Strategic Plan’s implementation, then President Philip called for each division, school, and college to develop a “contribution plan” outlining the goals, plans, and activities to be undertaken that will advance the University’s strategic goals. Appendix 6.4 summarizes those alignment plans and anticipated activities, organized by strategic goal. These activities were supported by base unit budgets as well as by selectively earmarked funds provided centrally. The exercise was intended to speed up the pursuit of the University’s shared strategic goals.

Combined with the initiatives developed by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee and its seven working groups, initiatives from across the University were developed or refocused on the University’s strategic objectives. Naturally aligned with pursuing strategic objectives was a conscious effort by the Steering Committee to catalog and pursue the 156 self-initiated recommendations in the 2010 Middle States self-study, as it was so charged to do. Appendix 6.5 describes the Steering Committee’s charge, its composition, and the strategic objectives it pursued in the first two years of implementation.

Concurrent with the Strategic Plan implementation process, the Steering Committee developed a set of Strategic Planning Metrics for evaluating its success. Appendix 5.4.4 lists the metrics chosen to assess progress for each strategic goal. The metrics vary in timeframe taken, as some are based on data captured and reported out yearly as part of routine annual reporting by various administrative offices and others reflect survey data collected only once every three years. The Strategic Planning Metrics in Appendix 5.4.4 equip the University to track strategic plan progress by establishing a comparative baseline for each metric comprised its most recent three data points. It is understood that most if not all these metrics will take some time to reflect the influence of the initiatives that have gradually rolled out over the past four years.

The primary means of allocating new resources in the University’s pursuit of its strategic objectives and aspirations has been through the NYSUNY 2020 Challenge Grant program described earlier. Under this New York State sponsored initiative also available to the other three SUNY research university centers, the campus would receive seed funding to design, plan, and partially fund the new Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex (E-TEC) research facility, would participate in SUNY’s Rational Tuition program, and would be allowed to charge students an Academic Excellence fee to offset the costs incurred in operating a research university infrastructure. In return, the campus would invest the additional resources generated in programmatic areas that would impact New York State governmental leader’s intention to stimulate economic growth while strengthening the academic infrastructure. Thus, the University approached this initiative by designing an application process for faculty and/or
departmental proposals for new resources that was inclusive across the disciplines as long as they addressed UAlbany strategic goals and those of the NYSUNY 2020 program.

The NYSUNY 2020 program was initiated on the UAlbany campus by inviting proposals. All academic and research units were encouraged to develop proposals, as informational sessions were held to inform faculty and staff about the process, and web-based resources <http://www.albany.edu/academics/news_NYSUNY_2020_12_13.shtml> were developed to make forms and submission templates available, as well as to address frequently asked questions that arose during the training/orientation sessions. Two rounds of NYSUNY 2020 awards were made by the University, in 2011-12 and 2012-13, with the faculty hires being phased in, per proposal designs, out into 2015-16 in some cases. The 2012 proposal ground rules and submission form, contained in Appendix 6.6, describes the qualifying information upon which the proposals were reviewed, and importantly, required linkages to the University’s strategic goals, and to the NYSUNY programmatic areas laid out by the New York State governor. The review process was three-part: 1) proposals were reviewed by a Faculty Review Panel whose members were selected on recommendation of their deans to reflect the breadth of the campus academic areas, and to bring campus-wide perspectives in leadership roles such as department chair, distinguished faculty rank, and membership in the Budget Advisory Groups and membership on the Compact Planning/Selective Investment review panels of the mid-2000s. 2) the deans and the Provost’s Executive Advisory Committee (PEAC) reviewed each proposal, and the 3) the president and provost made final funding determinations. These review process is detailed more fully on the campus’s NYSUNY 2020 website at <http://www.albany.edu/academics/news_NYSUNY_2020_Funded_proposals_finalized.shtml>.

In the 2011-12 round of NYSUNY 2020 University faculty submitted 49 proposals, and 18 were funded. In the 2012-13 round, 29 proposals were submitted, with several being resubmissions from the prior round, and 19 were funded. Appendix 6.7 lists short descriptions of initiatives funded in the two rounds of the NYSUNY 2020 competitive proposal process. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were struck between the chair of the sponsoring unit, the unit’s dean, and the provost and/or the vice president for research, depending on the reporting line of the proposing unit. The MOUs outlined the hiring particulars (e.g., rank and number of hires, their timing, start-up packages, etc.) In all, 74 tenure-track faculty hires were committed to between fall 2012 and fall 2015, 21 visiting assistant professors or other full-time faculty, along with 6 new staff positions and 56 part-time adjunct. The MOUs also specified the number of additional credit hours and external research funding the initiative would generate each year over the baseline year. Appendix 6.8 details the resources allocated to each initiative and the output metrics to be produced over the five-year period. Review of progress in attaining the metrics are to be reviewed with the provost two years after the hires begin.

Beginning in 2011-12, in addition to aligning current activities and new programmatic initiatives though its long standing incremental budget process and the deans and vice president’s alignment plans, the University used the NYSUNY 2020 proposal process as the primary means of linking newly available resources over the five-year period through the 2015-16 fiscal year. As the last of the NYSUNY 2020 faculty hires are due to arrive on campus in fall 2015, President Jones announced in fall 2014 that the campus would be moving to a compact planning process to guide resource allocations effective for the 2016-17 fiscal year.
In some respects, this new Compact Plan process is similar to the NYSUNY 2020 process in that it seeks to provide an orderly mechanism for gathering and evaluating proposals from across the campus in pursuit of the University’s strategic goals and objectives. The Compact process’s organizing framework for proposed initiatives is focused on the four stakes identified by President Jones – 1) Expanding our portfolio of degree-granting programs; 2) Recruiting more out-of-state and international students; 3) Broadening our role as a University engaged in the community; and 4) Growing our resources to fulfill our ambition.

The fall 2014 announcement of the soon-to-be released Compact Plan process also noted that the 2015-16 budget plan would essentially roll forward the prior year’s budget plan, including any NYSUNY 2020 commitments already scheduled for execution, per the agreed upon MOUs.

In the Compact Plan process, each proposal will be reviewed twice - initially by an immediate supervisor, followed by the applicable vice president. Each reviewer decides whether or not to advance the proposal to the next level of review. All proposals selected for advancement will then be reviewed by a sub-group of the President’s Executive Committee, whose members will have the ability to comment and make suggestions on improvements to the proposals as well as identify opportunities for consolidation and collaboration of proposal between or among Executive Units. Final funding decisions for the 2016-17 fiscal year are expected to be announced by President Jones in September 2015. Appendix 6.9 describes the background context of the new compact planning process and its procedural details. The first round of reviews is underway as of this writing.