



Albany State University

INSTITUTION'S MISSION AND STUDENT BODY PROFILE

In the 2017-2018 academic year, Albany State University (ASU), as a consolidated multi-campus institution offered certificates, transfer associate degrees, career associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and an education specialist degree in five colleges: College of Arts and Humanities, College of Business, Darton College of Health Professions, College of Sciences and Technology, and College of Education. Two campuses are located in the City of Albany, GA. A small number of degree programs are also offered at three additional instructional sites at the Cordele Center (Cordele, Georgia), South Georgia State College (Waycross, Georgia) and Southern Regional Technical College (Cairo, Georgia). Albany State University was officially consolidated with two-year state college, Darton State College (DSC), by the Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Georgia (USG). Announced in Fall 2015, the consolidation became official in January 2017.

The mission of the consolidated institution, approved by the BOR in March 2016, follows.

Albany State University, a proud member institution of the University System of Georgia, elevates its community and region by offering a broad array of graduate, baccalaureate, associate, and certificate programs at its main campuses in Albany as well as at strategically-placed branch sites and online. Committed to excellence in teaching and learning, the University prepares students to be effective contributors to a globally diverse society, where knowledge and technology create opportunities for personal and professional success. ASU respects and builds on the historical roots of its institutional predecessors with its commitment to access and a strong liberal arts heritage that respects diversity in all its forms and gives all students the foundation they need to succeed. Through creative scholarship, research, and public service, the University's faculty, staff, students, and administrators form strategic alliances internally and externally to promote community and economic development, resulting in an improved quality of life for the citizens of southwest Georgia and beyond.

ASU registered 6,615 traditional and non-traditional students in Fall 2017. The number of registered students at the start of the Fall 2018 semester decreased slightly to approximately 6,400. On average, seven out of ten students were female and self-identified as African American. On-campus student housing reached full capacity of approximately 2,361 residents. The consolidated institution retained ASU's selective standards for freshman admission to baccalaureate programs, but also incorporated former DSC's standards for freshman admission to ASU's certificate and transfer associate degree access pathways. Admission to career associate degree programs offered in the Darton College of Health Professions at ASU continued to be selective. Below are tables showing ASU's student profiles.

FALL 2018 STUDENT PROFILE SUMMARY

ASU Total Enrollment	*Fall 2018	Fall 2017	Fall 2016	% Change from 2017 to 2018
Freshman	2862	2899	2608	-1.28%
Sophomore	1238	1426	2768	-13.18%
Junior	992	1051	541	-5.61%
Senior	860	886	797	-2.93%
Graduate	371	353	447	5.10%
N	6323	6615	7161	-4.41%

Sources: Historical data is from USG Semester Enrollment Report; Current year data is extracted from the local Enterprise System.

ASU Total Enrollment	*Fall 2018	Fall 2017	Fall 2016
Male	28%	29%	29%
Female	72%	71%	71%
African American/Black	72%	70%	64%
White	16%	22%	30%
**Others	12%	8%	6%
**Others: Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Multiracial and Not Specified			
ASU Total Student Enrollment Status			
Full Time	68%	62%	57%
Part Time	32%	38%	43%
Average Age of Fall Class	23	24	26
ASU Total Student Enrollment by Degree Level			
Certificate	0.17%	0.32%	0.54%
Associates	53.58%	53.39%	54.62%
Bachelors	40.38	40.95	38.60%
Masters	5.87%	5.34%	6.24%
Total	100%	100%	100%

*Data as of 9-4-2018

ENROLLED UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AVERAGE CREDIT HOURS IN FALL *2018 (11.95)	Fall 2017	*Fall 2018
Undergraduate students who have registered for 15 or more credit hours	25%	29%
Undergraduate students who have registered for less than 15 credit hours	75%	71%

ASU FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN SUMMARY DATA

ASU First-Time Freshmen Students	*Fall 2018	Fall 2017	Fall 2016	% Change from 2017 to 2018
N	*1644	1430	862	14.97%

ASU First-time Freshmen Students	*Fall 2018	Fall 2017	Fall 2016
Male	28%	31%	34%
Female	71%	68%	66%
Undeclared	0%	1%	0%
African American/Black	81%	87%	80%
White	2%	3%	14%
**Others	17%	10%	6%
**Others: Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Multiracial and Not Specified			
Average Age of Fall Class	18	18	19

NEW FRESHMEN AVERAGE REGISTERED CREDIT HOURS (14.02)	Fall 2017	*Fall 2018
Undergraduate students who have registered for 15 or more credit hours	38%	43%
Undergraduate students who have registered for less than 15 credit hours	62%	57%

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETION GOALS, HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 1: PEER TUTORS IN COURSES WITH HIGH DFW RATES

Albany State University has assigned peer tutors to assist students enrolled in courses with high rates of failure through recorded grades: D, F, or W. Peer tutors primarily work in a designated tutoring or learning center and conduct one-on-one or small group (fewer than 3 students) tutoring.

COMPLETION GOAL:

This strategy aligns with the USG goal of restructuring instructional delivery to support educational excellence and student success.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY OR IMPACT:

Retention and progression are major concerns for the university. This strategy is designed to assist students who are experiencing difficulty in completion of courses, which in turn, delays completion of a credential. The strategy is implemented to provide academic support to improve student performance in courses with high failure rates.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

During the 2017-2018 academic year, Albany State University continued modification of its peer-tutoring program in an effort to consolidate and expand services that previously were delivered inconsistently. Currently, peer tutors work in a centralized tutoring or learning center. Peer tutors conduct one-on-one or small group sessions in courses associated with high rates of recorded failing grades: D, F and W. Peer tutors assist the professionals in the Writing and Math Centers during daytime operating hours, while the centralized tutoring centers are open from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. every Monday through Thursday. Friday is reserved for training for the peer tutors. Students in need of assistance who cannot attend tutoring during regular business hours are encouraged to make appointments directly with a tutor.

MEASURE OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS:

In the Fall 2017 semester, there were 1,154 unique visitors to the tutoring centers. This is a significant increase over the previous year of 140 total visitors. The passing rate of students who attended tutoring in the Fall 2016 semester was 77.14%. The passing rate at the end of the Fall 2017 semester was 81.60%. Therefore, this practice resulted in a 740% increase in student participants and a pass rate increase of 4.46%.

Final Grade Fall 2016	Final Grade Fall 2017
Total A, B, C, S- 108	Total A, B, C, **S- 665
Total D, F, U- 32	Total D, F, **U- 119
Total W, WF, WU-0	Total W, WF, WU-31
Total - 140	Total - 1154
Passing Rate: 77.14%	Passing Rate: 81.60%

**Grade of S = Satisfactory; Grade of U = Unsatisfactory

During the Spring 2018 semester, there were 894 unique visitors to the tutoring centers. This is a significant increase over the Spring 2017 total of 127 total visitors. The passing rate of students who attended tutoring in the Spring 2017 semester was 79.07%. The passing rate at the end of the Spring 2018 semester was 78.43%. Despite the slight decline in the Spring 2018 semester pass rate relative to the prior year, 0.64%, the increase in student participants by 604% is a significant improvement.

Final Grade	Final Grade
Total A, B, C, S- 102	Total A, B, C, S- 509
Total D, F, U- 27	Total D, F, U- 117
Total W, WF, WU-0	Total W, WF, WU-23
Total - 129	Total - 894
Passing Rate: 79.07%	Passing Rate: 78.43%

**Grade of S = Satisfactory; Grade of U = Unsatisfactory

LESSONS LEARNED:

This has proven to be a very successful strategy overall for students who take advantage of peer tutoring. We have learned that most students are not aware of the services offered. To address this issue, more targeted information regarding tutoring services is embedded in the First Year Experience (FYE) classes. Also, first year English classes are given Writing

Center/Tutoring orientations at the start of the semester. We also found it effective for faculty to include information about the centers in course syllabi. The website for Academic Advising has also been updated to provide more details on the program and to encourage participation. Finally, locations in which peer-tutoring services are offered have been strategically consolidated and expanded to make it easier for students to gain access.

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HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PORTAL

Albany State University implemented a scholarship process that promotes student access and retention through the award of financial assistance based on both need and merit. The multi-pronged approach provides better access to scholarship information, applications, and assistance through collaborative efforts of multiple departments. This new strategy enables electronic and paper applications to be submitted, reviewed, and awarded in an efficient manner.

COMPLETION GOAL:

This strategy supports the ASU and USG strategic goal of increasing the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by assisting students with financial barriers to continuous enrollment and progression.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY OR IMPACT:

This activity aligns directly with the university's strategic plan, specifically ASU Institutional Goal 4, which states: **Expand Access to Higher Education** - Albany State University will promote student success for all by welcoming students from varying levels of academic preparation, keeping costs low, offering flexible class times and instructional modalities, and pairing high student expectations with exceptional mentoring, advising, and tutoring. It is also directly related to Institutional Goal Five (5), which states: **Elevate Historically Underserved Populations** - Albany State University will recognize and address the many challenges that face African Americans and other students of color, adult learners, first generation students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and others from underserved populations, and form strong partnerships with K-12, government agencies, and community outreach organizations to increase access and success rates.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

Matching of students to appropriate scholarships was accomplished through incorporation of an online scholarship application process that took into account student demographics including, but not limited to, desired course of study, current academic standing, and ability to finance education. The online application portal is linked to the Financial Aid tab of the university's website under "Types of Financial Aid." Furthermore, scholarship opportunities were marketed through faculty, staff, and student email accounts; announcing deadlines, and locations of the scholarship portal as well as hardcopy applications. The opportunities were also distributed by the Office of Financial Aid. Awards were made in a timely fashion as a result of collaboration among the Office of Institutional Advancement, Office of Financial Aid and the ASU Foundation.

Building on the prior year when ASU significantly elevated its scholarship application and award process, the Office of Institutional Advancement used a coordinated marketing strategy to increase the number of students who were aware of the streamlined application procedures. This resulted in an increase in the number of registrants and applicants (students who actually completed an application). The appointment of a dedicated person to assist students with application for university scholarship opportunities resulted in more students completing the applications correctly. The online scholarship portal, which allowed for identification and review of available scholarships by students and more effective matching of students' applications to appropriate opportunities proved its worth as nearly twice as many students registered in this year as compared to the prior year.

MEASURE OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS:

The period of July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 covers scholarships applied for, reviewed and awarded for Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Summer 2018 semesters. In addition to online scholarship applications, Albany State University allowed the continued use of the paper submission process.

The Foundation has utilized the online software for two years. Year to date results show a significant uptick in the number of students inquiring about scholarships and actually completing applications. The chart below shows progression in the number of applicants when comparing the prior two fiscal/academic years. Many students completed multiple applications, which when tallied, resulted in a total of 3,268 applications for FY 2018.

Applicable Period	Number of Students Registering at site and Viewing Scholarships	# of Students completing Scholarship Applications	# of Applications completed	# of Scholarships Awarded	Total Scholarship Dollars Awarded
July 2017 – July 2018	898	588	3092	483	\$113,629
July 2016 – June 2017	595	383	1588	152	\$77,123

Note: The total number of students completing applications for both periods is an unduplicated number.

LESSONS LEARNED:

There have been numerous lessons learned from implementation of the online scholarship portal. One of the most important is the need for adequate marketing, training, and orientation for students and parents. This would include informing them of the availability of the online applications and the necessary documentation for consideration of an award. The Office of Institutional Advancement will collaborate with the Enrollment Management unit to include a session on the AwardSpring portal in the schedule for new student orientation sessions. More direct communication will be distributed via email.

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HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF ELECTRONIC FINANCIAL AID DOCUMENT SUBMISSION PORTAL

The Office of Financial Aid instituted an electronic document submission process in 2016. This process streamlines use of the financial aid system by simplifying financial aid forms and allowing students to upload requested documentation online. Documents are also stored and can be reviewed by financial aid counselors from this site.

COMPLETION GOAL:

This strategy aligns with the ASU and USG goal of increasing the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by USG institutions by removing barriers to timely review and award of financial aid funds, where students are eligible. This award of funds to eligible students, in turn, allows student to continue progression toward timely completion of a credential.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY OR IMPACT:

This process increased access to the financial aid system for students who were missing documents that inhibited review to determine eligibility for an award. This also increased efficiency of document submission and packaging for financial aid review and verification; thereby reducing complaints that previously submitted paperwork was lost or misplaced.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

During the 2016-2017 academic year, there were 703 students processed for verification, which is a Department of Education requirement to verify income, assets and household information for students and parents. Due to consolidation of data for the 2017-2018 academic year, the number of students processed increased to 2,198. Once the university receives the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR)/Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the student is notified by the system that there are outstanding requirements. The system provides step by step instructions to the student regarding how to access the document submission website and create an account. Once all documentation is uploaded into the portal and submitted electronically, the file goes into a virtual workflow that can be retrieved and reviewed by the institution's financial aid counselors.

MEASURE OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS:

Adoption of the portal has resulted in a 100% paperless environment for verification of files and created ease and efficiency for students submitting documentation. In 2018, there has been a 250% increase in the number of students completing the application process by the deadline of July 1.

An additional consequence has been more successful audit and compliance results because the paperless system streamlines documentation requested, creates notices to prevent conflicting information and stores documentation for easy retrieval. The

university has also received a successful audit this year by the state's Department of Audit and Accounts, with no verification-related findings.

LESSONS LEARNED:

This has proven to be very successful in streamlining the document submission process. We have learned that many students submitted documentation that was not requested because they did not fully understand the instructions. They also were not aware that doing so extended the normal processing time for verification, which is frustrating for both students and their parents. To address this issue, we will create how-to videos to walk students through the process of verification, submission of documents via this portal, and use of the help features on the site to ensure that they are submitting the appropriate documentation.

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HIGH IMPACT STRATEGY 4: LAUNCH OF A UNIVERSITY CALL CENTER TO PROVIDE DIRECT CUSTOMER SERVICE TO STUDENTS

Albany State University initially launched a Call Center for the Office of Admissions and Recruitment in response to feedback from students that call wait times were too long in critical offices at the institution. The Call Center's primary function is to provide intrusive customer service to prospective and current students as well persons in need of general and detailed information related to admissions and recruitment procedures.

COMPLETION GOAL:

This strategy aligns with the ASU and USG strategic goal of improving access for underserved and/or priority communities.

DEMONSTRATION OF PRIORITY OR IMPACT:

The Call Center has a direct impact on recruitment and retention of students by providing high-touch guidance, technical assistance and support to callers/students. Center staff are liaisons and first responders to prospective students and others who are attempting to communicate with the institution.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

In the 2017-2018 academic year, the university expanded the scope of work for the Call Center and engaged a company called, EdFinancial, Inc., to assist in processing of thousands of calls each month related to admissions, student accounts, and financial aid. Center staff immediately began to respond to callers by either directly addressing the caller's inquiry/concern or routing the call to the proper department within the university to address the inquiry/concern.

MEASURE OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS:

The Call Center measures throughput based on metrics generated by EdFinancial, Inc. Notes from each call are entered into each student's record in the Student Information System (SIS) to ensure consistency and accuracy in communication across departments. During the reporting period, Call Center team members successfully responded to 53,420 calls.

With assistance from the Call Center, the Office of Admissions and Recruitment was able to enroll over 1,600 first-time freshmen, as well as over 400 new transfer and other students in Fall 2018. This is the second consecutive year in which the university has successfully enrolled more than 1,600 new freshmen.

LESSONS LEARNED:

The Call Center has proven to be successful in providing direct guidance to thousands of prospective and newly admitted students. As a crucial function of recruitment and admissions processes, the lesson learned is that effective communication with "live" operators, in parallel with efficient online systems, is vital to a successful enrollment strategy as well as overall student success.

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SECTION 3: REFLECTIONS, OBSERVATIONS & PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

As the consolidated institution continues to enhance systems and processes that promote successful student recruitment, retention, progression and completion of a credential, adjustments will be made to goals, strategies and associated measures for optimal alignment with locally identified needs and resources. The university has placed significant time and resources into the development and implementation of a comprehensive Student Success Model to streamline student support services, such as academic advising/coaching, provision of learning support in math and English, and delivery of on-site and online tutoring as well as professional supplemental instruction in writing and math.

Other strategies identified in Fall 2017 were successfully implemented. All students advised by professional staff now receive program maps. The new Student Success Model includes a reorganization of the services of the professional advisors, who are now referred to as academic coaches. All students taking online classes are now required to complete an online orientation. The Student Success Collaborative platform has been implemented for the 2018-2019 academic year. With these and other initiatives to be launched with the new Student Success Model, we will have a new set of baseline data from which we will be able to establish a new Complete College Georgia Plan and continue annual reporting of highest impact practices.

Strategies will continue to be evaluated on a periodic basis to determine level of impact and/or to remove any barriers that may arise that impede progress toward achievement of completion goals. Those strategies that lead to greatest progression and completion by students will be scaled up and possibly included in future reports.