INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REPORT
2007-08

Prepared by
Office of Institutional Planning, Research & Assessment

October 2008

Control Number: 1610-0980

ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY MISSION AND GOALS

Athens State University, offering coursework at the junior and senior level, is the baccalaureate degree granting institution of the Alabama College System. Governed under the authority of the Alabama State Board of Education, and in conjunction with the other institutions of the Alabama College System, Athens State University provides affordable education in an environment which recognizes diversity and nurtures the discovery and application of knowledge. Located in northern Alabama, Athens State University acknowledges a commitment to primarily serve transfer students of the Alabama College System as well as students from other accredited institutions of higher education. The University prepares students for professional careers, graduate school, lifelong learning, and enrichment. The University, through quality teaching, individual attention, and a varied course delivery system, assists students in the timely achievement of their professional and career goals. In addition, Athens State University offers programs of continuing education and community services that provide a variety of cultural and professional opportunities.

1. To provide educational opportunity to postsecondary students through carefully planned programs of study that impart a body of knowledge, stimulate critical thinking, develop communication and technological skills, foster ethical behavior, and encourage life-long learning in a diverse and changing world.

2. To serve the student effectively and efficiently by providing flexible scheduling, varied modes of delivery and cooperative arrangements with other institutions.

3. To recruit, retain, and promote professional development of qualified faculty and staff.

4. To provide and maintain appropriate learning resources which are supportive of student learning, quality teaching, scholarly research, diversity, and technological proficiency.

5. To develop and maintain periodic internal evaluation to ensure that all programs are operating within a manner consistent with the mission statement of the University.

6. To provide opportunities for students to expand their intellectual, social, and cultural horizons.

7. To provide and maintain student services which furnish necessary information, financial assistance, guidance counseling to assist progress toward personal, academic, and career goals.

8. To promote and maintain effective student recruitment and retention.

9. To promote the use of appropriate University and community resources to facilitate educational and training programs for the diversified needs of business, industry, education, and government in addition to providing cultural and intellectual enrichment.

10. To acquire and administer efficiently and effectively all fiscal resources.

11. To provide, develop, and maintain a physical plant appropriate for the support of the University programs.

12. To effectively communicate the University's vision and goals as a baccalaureate degree granting institution to internal and external constituencies.

2007-2008 ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY PROFILE

- Athens State University's impact on the local economy is over $63 million annually
- Athens State University employs 343 people from the community
- 209 full-time, 134 part-time employees (IPEDS)

Student Characteristics

- 4,432 students enrolled in 2007-2008
- 67% of students are female
- 18% of students are minority
- 44% are enrolled full time
- 95% are Alabama residents
- 61% of students receive financial aid (Federal)
- Average age is 32
- 82% of students take at least 1 Distance Learning class
- 44% of students take all Distance Learning classes

Program Descriptions

- *Academic*
  - Education
  - Business
  - Humanities and Fine Arts
  - Natural Sciences and Mathematics
  - History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences
  - General Studies

Student/Community Services

- Financial Aid, Academic Advising, Career Guidance, and Counseling
- Learning Resource Center
- Testing (CAAP, BST, MAT, CLEP)
- Extracurricular Activities

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Athens State University's continued efforts to improve the institutional outcomes assessment process that began in 2006, achieved major progress during 2007-08. The *Institutional Outcomes Assessment System* was completed and implemented. All academic programs and administrative/support organizations identified performance indicators which are reflected in the *Institutional Effectiveness Matrix,* tying functional performance indicators to University goals. The technology-based infrastructure supporting assessment, the *Assessment Management Online System (AMOS)* and its companion the *Assessment Management Evaluator Entry (AMEE)* became fully operational. A baseline for the institutional effectiveness climate was also established.

Eighty-eight (87.7%) percent of academic programs (n=28) and administrative support functions (n=29) conducted assessment activities and submitted data results and action plans, effectively completing the first assessment cycle under a systematic system pursuant to ASU Institutional Outcomes Assessment Policy 1600-0900. Academic programs and administrative and support units documented uses of assessment findings for future planning and improvement based on their respective organizational function. A balance between some central oversight and organizational units' control of their assessment activities proved successful in advancing the process.

Assessment of student learning via evidenced-based methods among all 28 academic programs indicates that students are achieving most of the goals assessed. Student self-assessment of entering and exiting level competencies also shows gains after going through the curriculum. Action plans feature the actions that each program will be implementing in response to identified student weaknesses.

Administrative and support organizations made improvements in both services and administrative processes. Better documentation to track effectiveness and efficiency in day-to-day operations were developed by many programs.

Completion of the first assessment cycle under a systematic approach initiated in 2006-07 offered a series of "lessons learned" and a better understanding of the challenges ahead. Most important is the awareness that instilling a "culture of assessment" takes time and continuous effort until assessment becomes a customary part of university day-to-day operations in both academic and administrative organizations. Accordingly, senior-level institutional support is critical for commitment to and compliance with the outcomes assessment process.

This report presents detailed information on assessment activities conducted during 2007-08, the findings regarding the extent to which target outcomes were met, and the planned and/or implemented actions to address weaknesses as identified through the evaluation process.

II. OUTCOMES OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A. Status Report: Outcomes Assessment System Development and Implementation (2007-08)

The development of the Institutional Outcomes Assessment System was completed during 2007-08. Documentation, processes, timelines, and technology-based tools have been developed and disseminated to the appropriate academic programs and administrative/support units.

- The Institutional Effectiveness Matrix was completed. Based on their respective organizational function, all academic programs and administrative support units identified performance indicators and integrated those in their annual assessment plans.

- Assessment instruments were identified and inventoried and schedules implemented throughout 2007-08.

- The Assessment Management Online System (AMOS) and its companion the Assessment Management Entry Evaluator (AMEE) were developed and fully implemented in 2007-08. AMOS is the document control and process management tool and AMEE is the data collection and analysis tool. System documentation was completed and displayed in the AMOS administration capability tool for reference.

- Assessment Methodology Development and Review:
- All university-wide and organization-specific surveys (Graduating Senior Exit Survey; Faculty Course Evaluation; Graduate Follow-Up Survey, and Point of Service (POS) surveys) were revised to accommodate the new standards of the outcomes assessment process. Major issues guiding such revision included data capture capabilities, measurement scales and consistency of data collection processes throughout.
- Service delivery attributes applicable to all student support and administrative units were standardized for consistency of measurement.
- Mean scores have been added to frequency distributions for better perspective and simplicity in the interpretation of results for decision-making. Five-point measurement scales have been standardized across the board (w/ some exceptions) for enhanced data comparability and perspective.
- All instruments are currently on file in AMOS and are available in paper and online version through AMEE.

- AAP, AAR, and AP guidelines and instructions were developed and distributed to faculty and staff members of Internal Review Committees in each academic program and administrative/support unit. Individual and group meetings were conducted to answer questions and provide technical assistance and support.

- Institutional Effectiveness Climate[1]: A data baseline for the institutional effectiveness climate was established in 2007-08. Assessment of the institutional planning and evaluation functions by faculty and staff, measured by 16 components of effectiveness, resulted in a mean score of 2.92 (out of a possible 4.0). Results indicate the need for better communication with faculty and staff regarding enhanced processes, procedures, and quality control mechanisms implemented in institutional planning, research and assessment. Enhanced communications and training for faculty and staff regarding these institutional functions is being planned for 2008-09.

Table 1. Institutional Effectiveness Climate Baseline (2007-08)

Question Item	MEAN
Expressed leadership and support from the chief executive officer is evident.	3.00
Appropriate staff expertise is available in planning and evaluation.	3.04
Appropriate fiscal support is provided for planning, evaluation, and institutional research.	2.85
Plans identify major issues and priorities for the institution.	2.96
Plans are based upon an ongoing assessment of external environment, internal factors, and institutional capabilities.	3.12
Well-defined written procedures and schedules have been developed.	2.76
Integration of major institutional processes is emphasized (e.g., results of assessment, personnel evaluation, program review, etc., provide input for planning).	2.96
Planning/evaluation processes are coordinated with external entities/demands (e.g., state level, planning and budgeting, federal reports, accreditation processes, etc.).	3.13
Procedures are established for monitoring progress and implementing appropriate modifications within the planning/evaluation cycle.	2.72
Procedures are established for annual update of plans, incorporating assessment results into plans for institutional improvements.	3.04
Clear linkages are established between institutional goals, plans, and allocation of resources.	2.79
Planning and evaluation procedures take into account the accreditation criteria which specifically apply to each functional area of the institution.	2.95
Outcomes assessment findings are "fed back" to decision makers.	2.80
Clear and explicit goals are formulated for each functional unit of the institution.	2.75
Emphasis is placed on the identification of specific educational outcomes.	2.83
Provisions are made for the broad-based involvement of faculty members and administrators in development and implementation of planning and evaluation processes.	2.95

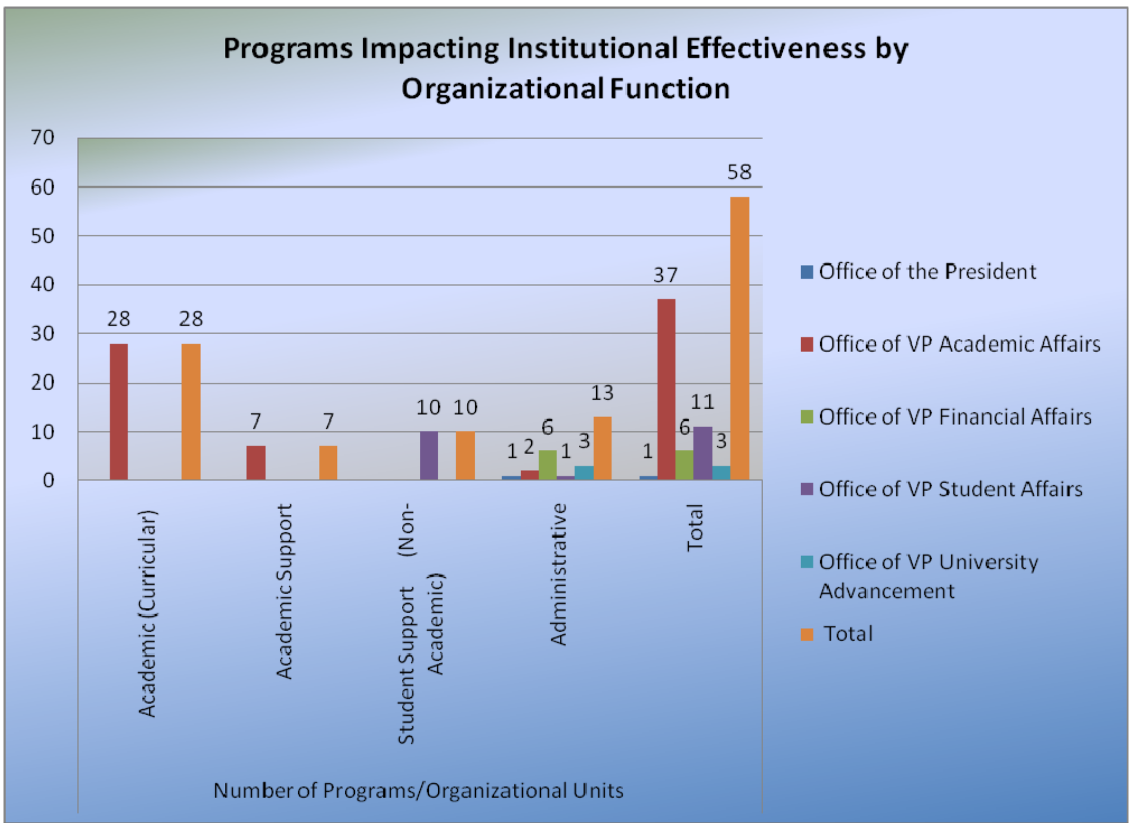
[1] This evaluation was conducted in Spring 2008, just a few months away from the President's retirement and the appointment of a new executive effective August 2008.

B. Summary of 2007-08 Assessment Activities

B.1 Organizational Functions Impacting Institutional Effectiveness[2]

The assessment model is based on the identification of programs and office units with impact on institutional effectiveness. Accordingly, the Institutional Outcomes Assessment Policy *(1600-0900)* mandates all programs and organizational functions to conduct formal assessment activities.

Figure 1. Programs Impacting Institutional Effectiveness



Appendix A presents a detailed list of all organizations identified with impact on institutional effectiveness and their compliance status with the assessment cycle during 2007-08.

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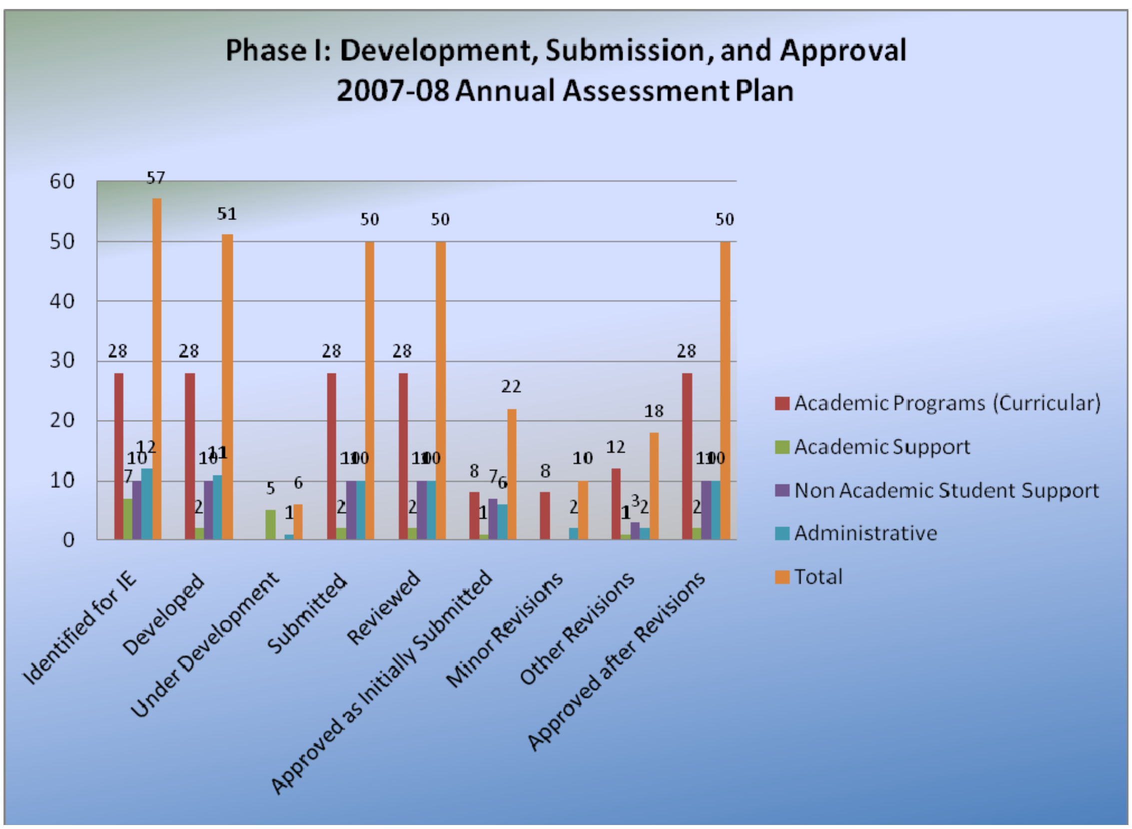
[2] All percentages related to the assessment process reported in this document are based on a total of 57 programs, identified for their impact on institutional effectiveness. The percentages exclude the Office of the President, although critical to institutional success, it does not submit standard assessment documentation (AAP, AAR, and AP). Faculty and staff assessment of the President as it relates to his impact on institutional effectiveness is captured via the Institutional Effectiveness Climate Survey and the Administrative Evaluation.

B.2 Programs' Participation in the Assessment Cycle

Prior to the implementation of the institutional outcomes system (Phase I), OIPRA worked closely with all academic and administrative units providing technical support in the development of assessment plans and data collection activities. In addition to the dissemination of written guidelines and instructions, OIPRA met with individual groups to assist with the development of all documentation.

- **Phase I (Planning Year: 2006-07)**: Initially, 43 AAPs[3] (86%) were developed and submitted for review and approval. Twenty-seven AAPs (63%) met basic quality standards to obtain approval as submitted by the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC). Sixteen AAPs were conditionally approved, of which 6 (14%) required minor revisions and 10 (23%) required major revisions. All 43 AAPs were approved following resubmission. Control Numbers identifying assessment-related documentation for each program and organization have been assigned and are officially on file in AMOS. Of the AAPs under development, only one program submitted its plan before August 2007. This plan was reviewed and approved by the IAC and was fully implemented in early Fall.

Figure 2. Assessment Cycle-Phase I



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[3] The Colleges of Business and Education submit a single assessment plan covering all majors, respectively, while the College of Arts and Sciences submit individual assessment plans for each on its major programs. Combined all 28 academic programs within the University are assessed annually.

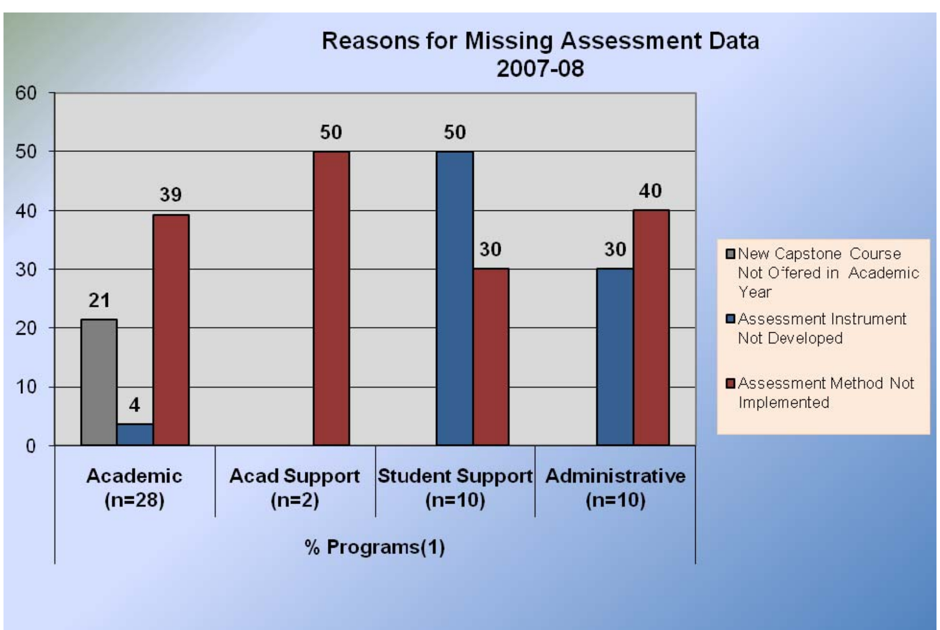
Table 2. Phase I: Annual Assessment Plan Approvals by the IAC

Program Function	Approved as Initially Submitted[a]		Approved w/ Conditions[b]: Minor Revisions		Approved w/ Conditions[b]: Revisions		Approved after Revisions	
Academic Programs (Curricular)	8	28.6%	8	28.6%	12	42.9%	28	100.0%
Academic Support	1	50.0%			1	3.6%	2	100.0%
Non Academic Student Support	7	70.0%			3	10.7%	10	100.0%
Administrative	6	60.0%	2	7.1%	2	7.1%	10	100.0%
Total (As % of Total Submissions)	22	44.0%	10	35.7%	18	64.3%	50	100.0%

- **Phase II**: All programs and organizations implemented at least part of their data collection activities as stated in their respective AAPs. However, review of the Annual Assessment Report (AAR) indicated that some programs did not implement all the measurement elements included in the assessment methodology as planned. Consequently, certain data was not available at the end of the assessment cycle.

  An analysis of the assessment process during 2007-08 indicated that the major reasons for missing data were related to the development and implementation of assessment instruments and the capstone course offering. Data collections coordinated by OIPRA (university-wide instruments and unit-specific Point of Service surveys) were implemented for the most part and data was collected, although some organizational units missed data collection opportunities via their POS surveys. Available data was analyzed and results reported back to each organizational unit.

Figure 3. Phase II – Data Collection Process- Missing Assessment Data

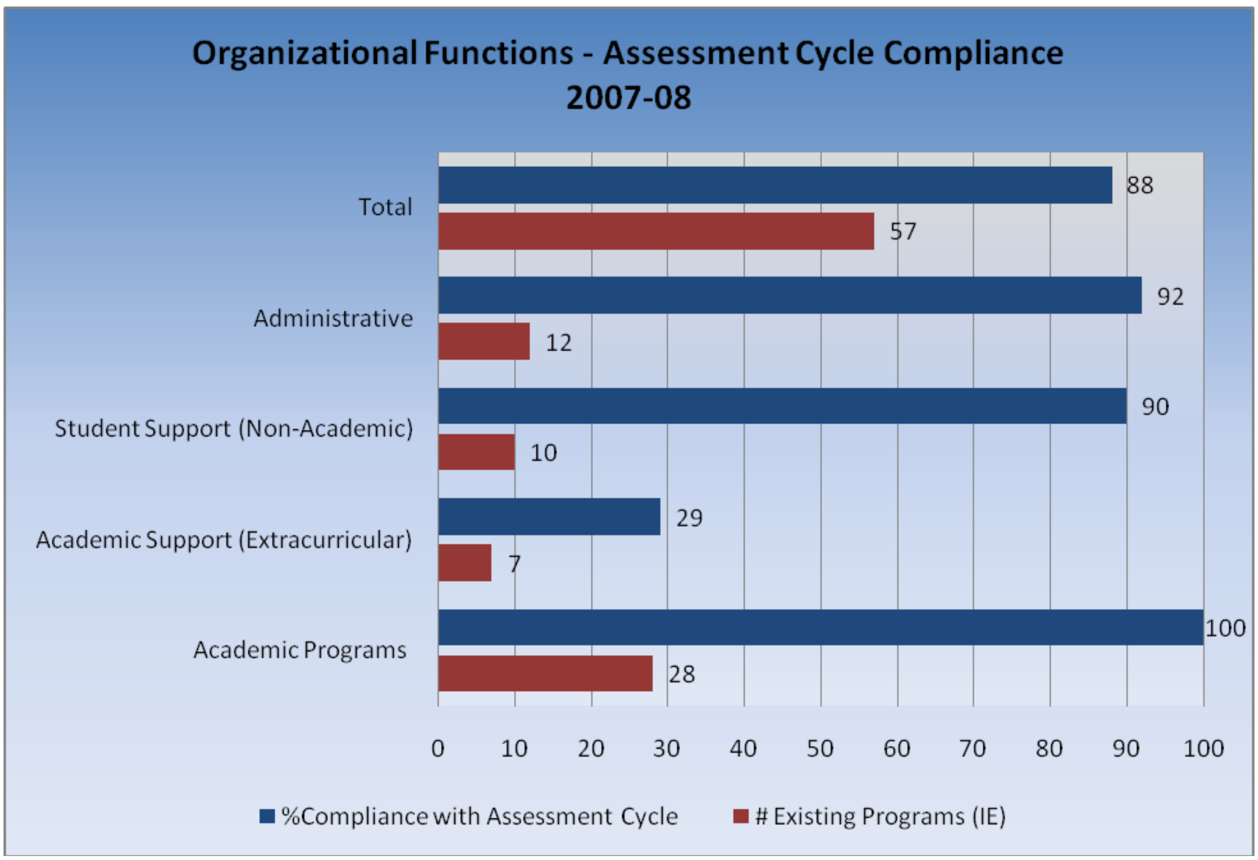


(1) Based on programs that conducted assessment activities and are on record in AMOS.

Note: During the planning year (2006-07) as programs began developing their 2007-08 AAP, many chose to either add or designate a capstone course as part of the outcomes assessment process. Following guidelines and timeframes of the curriculum review process, some programs were not able to offer the newly approved capstone course during the academic year. In other instances, even when the course was offered, there were no students enrolled for that academic year, and consequently data is not available.

- Phase III: Eighty-eight (87.7%) percent of academic programs and organizational units submitted their Annual Assessment Report (AAR) and Action Plan (AP) as required and were certified for compliance pursuant to University Policy 1600-0900 (Outcomes Assessment). Annual Assessment Plans, Annual Assessment Reports, and Action Plans were consolidated into one document and are officially on record in OIPRA and stored in AMOS.

Figure 4. Organizational Functions' Compliance with Assessment Cycle

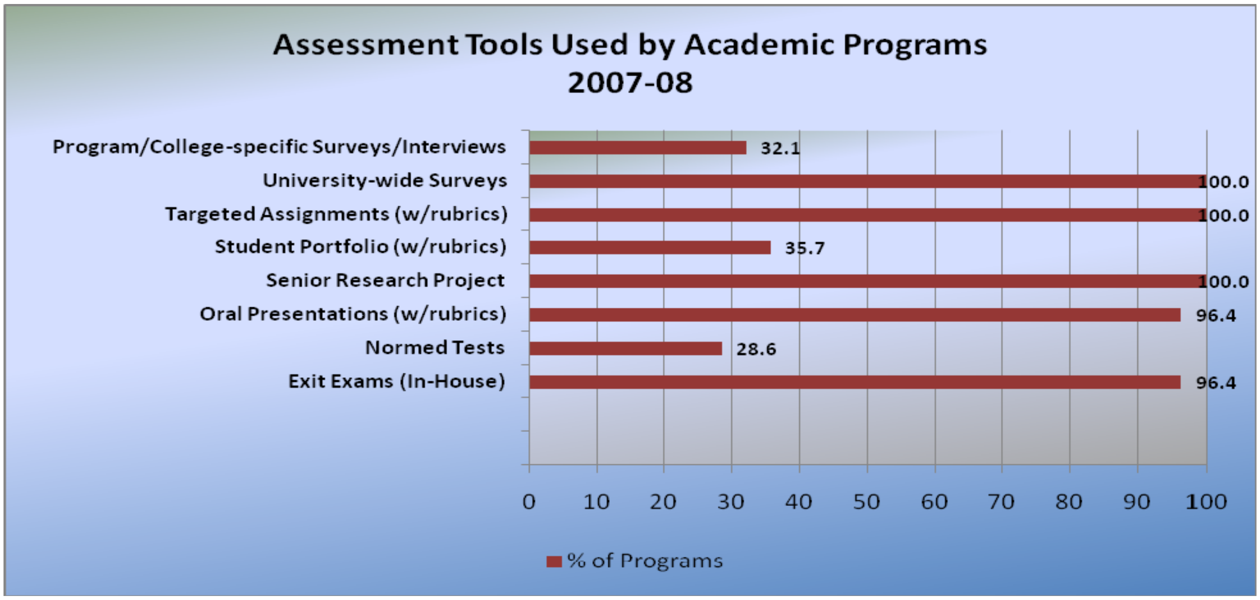


B.3 Assessment Methodology (Tools Used)

Consistent with the standards of the assessment model, all academic programs and administrative support units employed both direct and indirect methods to measure target outcomes.

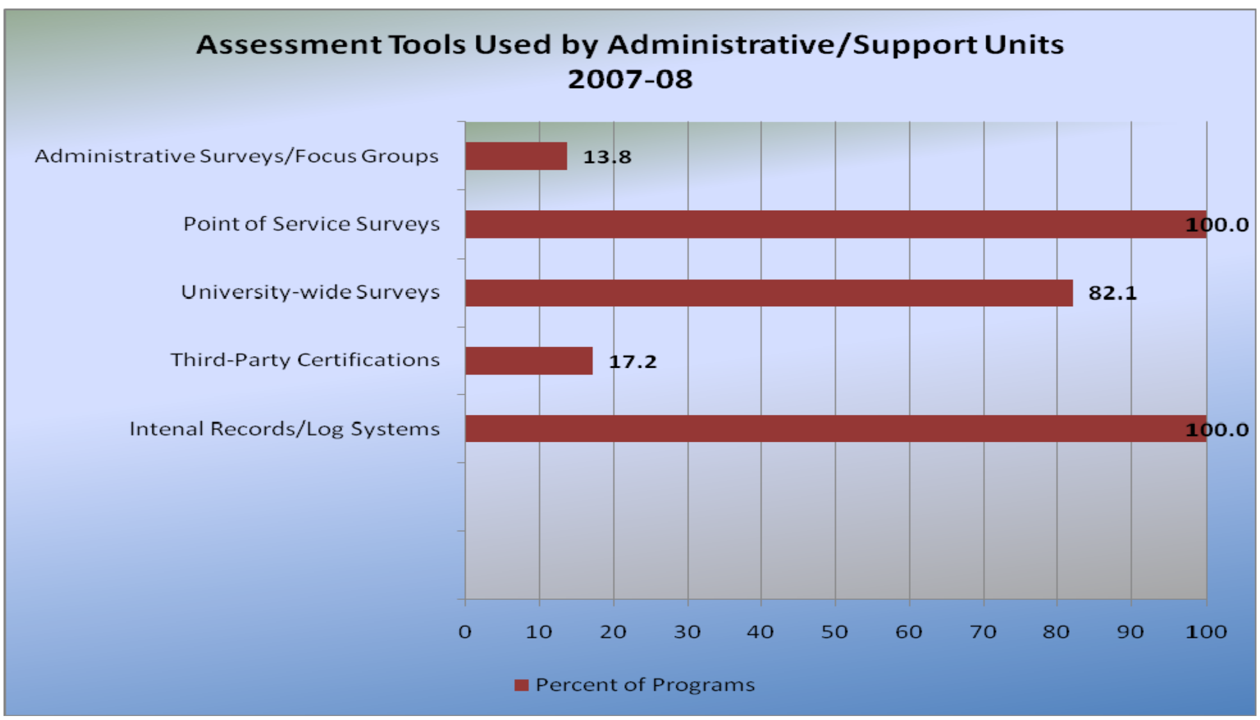
B.3.1 Academic Programs[4]

Figure 5. Assessment Tools Used by Academic Programs



B.3.2 Administrative/Support Organizational Units

Figure 6. Assessment Tools Used by Administrative/Support Units



[4] In spite of guidelines alerting against the practice, 61% (n=17) of programs used course grades in some way in their assessment. Reliance on grades for assessment varied by program, ranging from full reliance (21%; n=6) to minimal use (39%; n=11).

C. Use of Assessment Findings for Continuous Improvement

At the end of the 2007-08 assessment cycle OIPRA conducted an assessment audit[5] to verify that all academic programs and administrative/support organizations executed their respective assessment activities as stated in their AAPs, and to identify the extent to which assessment data was used in continuous improvement efforts. In addition, the audit identified those academic programs that were using course grades as a mean for assessing learning outcomes, a practice that is strongly discouraged.

Programs' planned and/or taken actions as a result of the assessment findings were categorized according to organizational function. Tables 3 and 4 below show the percent of programs by organizational function that planned or executed changes based on the findings of the assessment process.

C.1 Academic Programs

Table 3. Actions Planned/Implemented –Academic Programs (n=28)

Program Change Category	% of Academic Programs (n=28)
Curricular Change[(1)]	32%
Course Revision	54%
Pedagogy	21%
Assessment Methodology Revision	68%
Target Outcome Modification	0%
Program Operations Revision	18%
Budget Request	0%
Faculty Training/Professional Development	18%
Other	25%

(1) Most of the curricular changes at this time refer to programs' designation and/or development of a capstone course to facilitate the assessment process.

Overall, **course revisions** involved content reviews of specific topic areas to address identified student weaknesses. Specific program's actions include adding new material (assignments, simulations, or projects) to emphasize a particular topic or expected skill, adding or deleting course requirements, and increased emphasis of learning indicators in related courses.

Examples of program's **pedagogical changes** include the introduction of study guides to assist student performance, faculty deliberations on how to better integrate analytical work in online course formats, and expanding the use of available online tools in course delivery,

[5] The Assessment Audit is adapted from the approach developed by the University of Mississippi and is used with written permission from Ms. Mary Harrington, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment.

Most of the programs' **revisions of assessment methodology** involve the development/substitution of assessment instruments to enhance the validity of outcome measurements, expanded use of item analysis in exams, assignments, and projects, and establishing procedures for better tracking of pre and post exams data.

Examples of **operational changes** involve the integration of faculty plans for improvement based on students and deans' evaluations and faculty course re-assignments.

Changes or modifications to **faculty professional development** and/or training include assessment training for adjunct faculty and improvement of faculty skills in the use of instructional technology.

C.2 Administrative Support Organizational Units

Table 4. Actions Planned/Implemented – Administrative Support

Program Change Category	% of Academic Support Programs	% of Student Support Programs (Non-academic)	% of Administrative Units
Revised Service	0%	22%	18%
Revised Administrative Process	13%	67%	9%
Implemented New Process	0%	78%	27%
Changed Assessment Methodology	25%	56%	64%
Changed Target Outcome	0%	0%	18%
Implemented New Policy	0%	0%	0%
Requested Additional Budget	0%	11%	9%
Developed Training	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%

Programs' modifications of **administrative processes** involve reassigning personnel for selected duties, developing and implementing new forms to improve internal program records, updating program's policies and procedures, and expanding use of Banner.

Examples of **implemented new process** include moving processes' timelines, expanding promotional efforts aimed at students and strategic partners, enhances to communication among functions to better serve students, increased use on technology-based tools for electronic approvals for selective transactions and student payment capabilities, and operational enhancement via technology-based infrastructure.

Changes to **assessment methodology** and **target outcomes** include development and/or elimination of assessment instruments and the review of target outcomes to ensure realistic expectations.

Programs' **requested additional budget** to add staff to improve efficiency in service delivery and to purchase equipment to improve campus security.

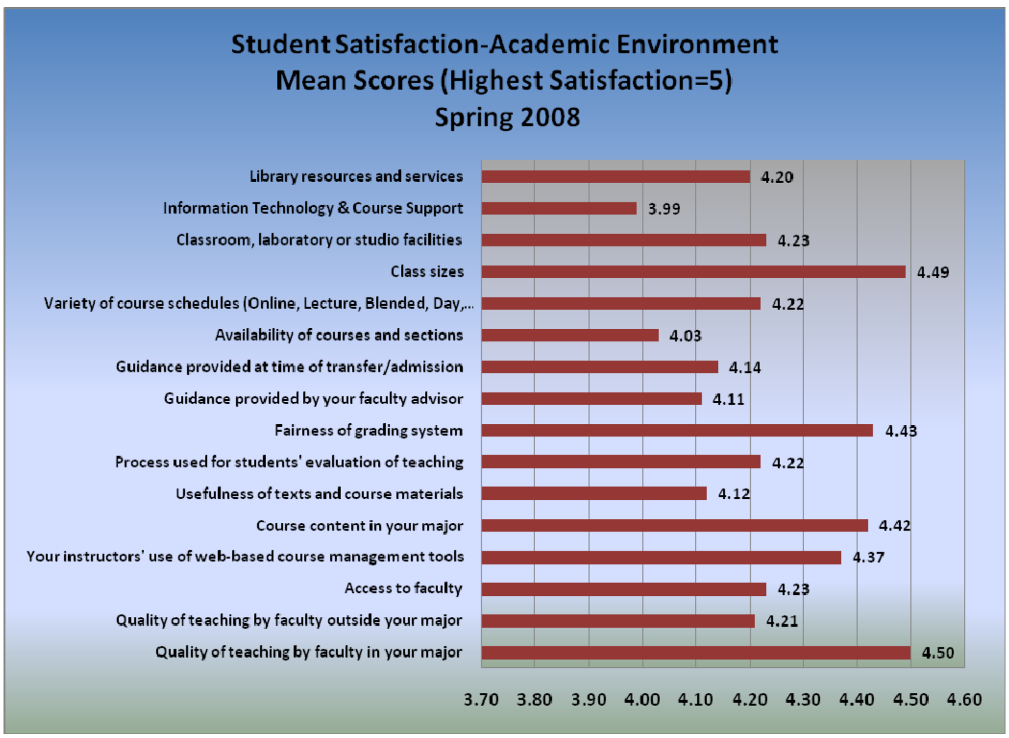
III. ENHANCEMENTS TO INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (2007-08)

A. Academic Environment

A.1 Academic Environment and Student Satisfaction

The academic environment measures a series of elements that include course content and materials, learning resources, academic support services, student and faculty evaluation procedures, physical facilities, faculty accessibility and teaching quality. Data is collected via the Graduating Senior Exit Survey (GSES), revised in 2007-08.

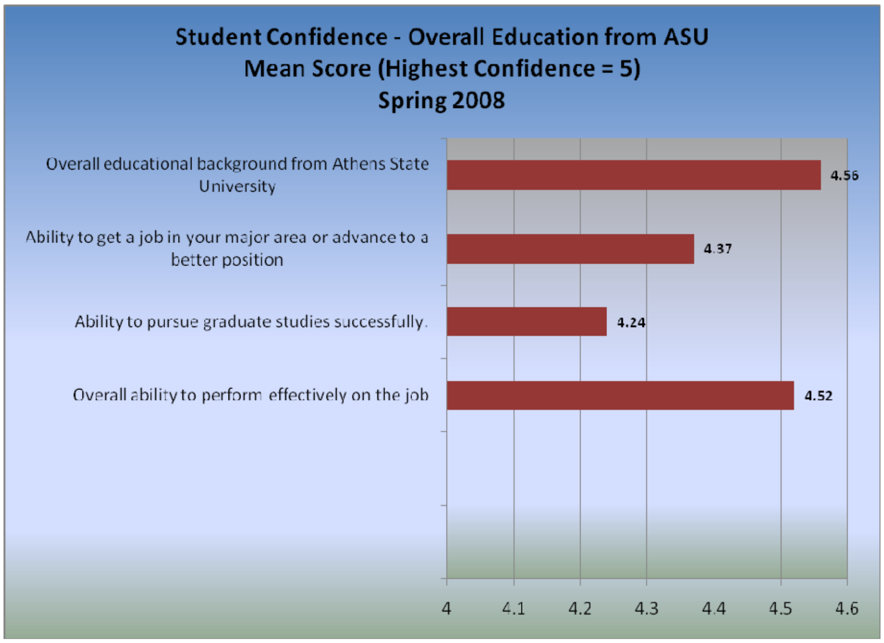
Figure 7. Student Satisfaction with the Academic Environment (GSES, n=117)



A.2 Student Confidence in their Education (GSES, n=117)

Student confidence in their education from Athens State University to further pursue academic and/or professional goals is considered an indicator (indirect) of the extent to which the institutional has fulfilled its mission.

Figure 8. Student Confidence in Educational Background



B. Academic Programs

B.1 Program-Operational Outcomes: Productivity Measures

B.1.1 Enrollment, Credit Hour Production, and Full Time Equivalency (FTE)

Table 5. Comparative Enrollment Fall 2007 and 2008

College	Fall 2007			Fall 2006	
	Enrollment (#)	% Total Enrollment	% Change from Last Period	Enrollment (#)	% Total Enrollment
College of Arts & Science	944	30.6	12.0	842	30.3
College of Business	1013	33.0	9.9	922	33.2
College of Education	902	29.4	7.3	841	30.3
Undeclared (Other)	214	7.0	24.4	172	6.2
Total	**3073**	**100.0**	**10.7**	**2777**	**100.0**

Table 6. Comparative FTE Fall 2007 and 2008

College	2007-08			2006-07	
	FTE(#)	% Total FTE	% Change from Last Period	FTE (#)	% Total FTE
College of Arts & Science	613	31.6	10.8	553	31.3
College of Business	635	32.6	9.3	581	32.9
College of Education	631	32.4	9.4	577	32.7
Undeclared (Other)	66	3.4	22.2	54	3.1
Total	**1945**	**100**	**10.2**	**1765**	**100**

Table 7. Comparative Credit Hour Production - Fall 2007 and 2008

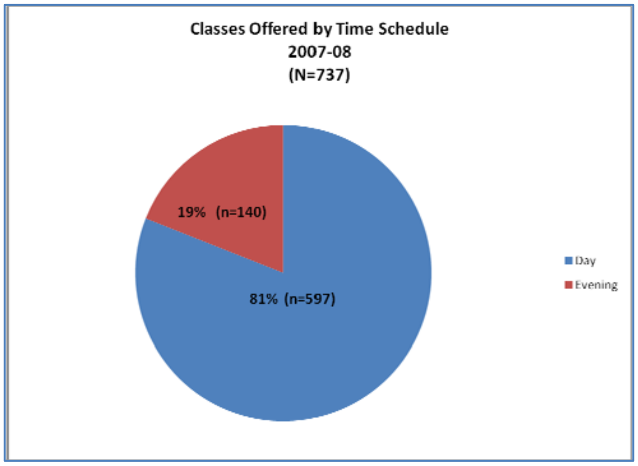
College	2007-08			2006-07	
	Cr Hrs (#)	% Total Cr Hrs	% Change from Last Period	Cr Hrs (#)	% Total Cr Hrs
College of Arts & Science	9190	31.5	10.8	8291	31.3
College of Business	9523	32.6	9.3	8713	32.9
College of Education	9468	32.5	9.4	8652	32.7
Undeclared (Other)	991	3.4	20.9	820	3.1
Total	**29172**	**100**	**10.1**	**26476**	**100**

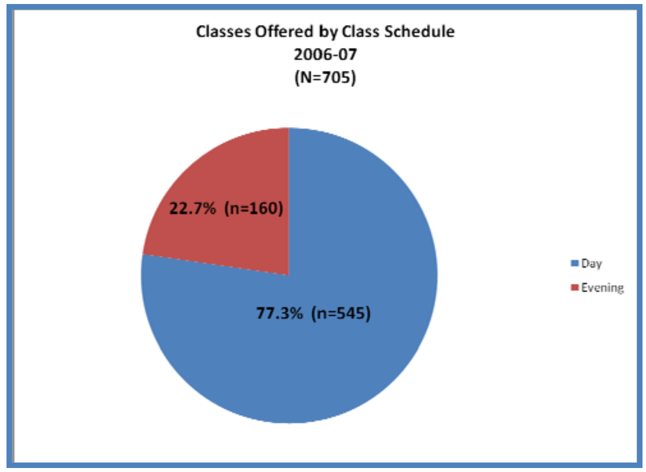
B.1.2 Course and Class Offering by Schedule

Table 8. Inventory of Courses and Classes (Distance Learning and Campus-Based)

Term	Courses			Classes		
	Total # of Courses (All Formats)	% of Campus-Based Courses	% of DL Courses	Total # of Classes (DL & Campus-Based)	% of Campus-Based Classes	% of DL Classes
Fall 2002	398	93.0%	7.0%	592	95.1%	4.9%
Fall 2003	401	90.3%	9.7%	622	92.6%	7.4%
Fall 2004	411	83.7%	16.3%	703	86.8%	13.2%
Fall 2005	396	73.2%	26.8%	676	78.8%	21.2%
Fall 2006	400	56.0%	44.0%	707	64.8%	35.2%
Fall 2007	**413**	**48.4%**	**51.6%**	**737**	**56.9%**	**43.1%**

Figure 9. Schedule of Classes Offered by Time Period (Fall 2007 and Fall 2006)





The offering of evening courses decreased by 12.5% from 2006-07. Preliminary data suggests that the increase in distance learning courses may be the result of decreasing demand for evening courses. However, further data is needed to determine whether this decline will be sustained.

B.1.3 Faculty Resources

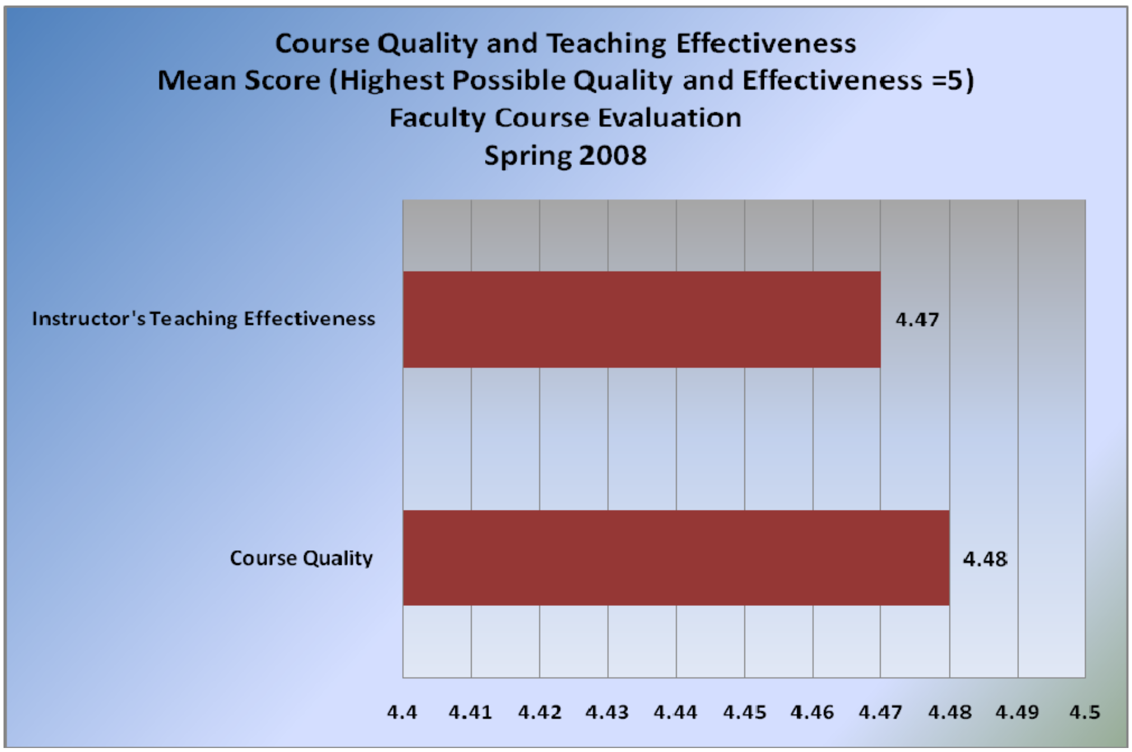
Table 9. Number of Faculty–Campus-Based and Distance Learning (DL)

Fall Term	Faculty					
	# FT Faculty	# PT Faculty	# FT Faculty Teaching DL Courses	# PT Faculty Teaching DL Courses	# FT Faculty Teaching Campus-Based Courses ONLY	# PT Faculty Teaching Campus-Based Courses ONLY
2002	66	97	21	6	44	39
2003	65	92	23	15	40	75
2004	67	86	32	11	32	20
2005	75	102	55	25	14	16
2006	85	114	58	40	11	39+
2007	85	113	75	50	10	9

B.2 Course Quality and Teaching Effectiveness

The Faculty Course Evaluation (FCE) survey was revised and implemented during 2007-08. In addition to student academic and demographic characteristics, the survey measured 18 elements related to course quality and instructor's teaching effectiveness. Mean scores were calculated for individual instructors and measured against the mean scores of all instructors (university-wide). Results were submitted to each college dean who made them available to their respective faculty. Based on the evaluation results, faculty developed improvements plans for the next academic year.

Figure 10. Course Quality and Teaching Effectiveness[6] - All Courses



Additional course and instructor elements (selective list below) measured via the Faculty Course Evaluation obtained the following quality mean scores (All courses/instructors combined):

- Clarity of Course Objectives and Expectations 4.51
- Organization of Course Content 4.52
- Relevance of Assignments to Course Content 4.55
- Instructor's Timely Feedback to Students 4.45
- Instructor's Use of Technology to Assist Learning 4.53
- Instructor's Willingness to Allow Student Questions 4.67

[6] Data from the FCE was re-analyzed after it was discovered that the system was pulling the raw data based on one response per student as opposed to all the responses obtained for all courses evaluated. Although the mean scores were not greatly affected, there is some discrepancy between the initial and revised results. Response rate was upgraded accordingly. The results reported above reflect the revised numbers.

B.3 Program Reviews: Political Science, CIPC 451001

The Political Science program at Athens State produces an adequate number of credit hours (5,535 over a five year period) and generates an estimated tuition revenue of approximately $119,000 per year. The program operates with two, full-time faculty and four support faculty for a total of 6. Eighty-three percent (5/6) of the faculty teaching in the program hold earned doctorates. Currently, the two full-time faculty in the program have a combined 67 years of teaching experience in the discipline! This limited number of full-time faculty, when assisted by faculty from other academic units, is able to offer a substantial array of undergraduate offerings in the discipline.

Academic Year	Credit Hour Production	Tuition Revenue
2003-2004	1176	$123,480
2004-2005	1114	$116,970
2005-2006	1213	$127,365
2006-2007	1046	$116,106
2007-2008	986	$109,446

Note: Data for this table include only credit hours based on enrollments with a course prefix of PO (Political Science). Additional credit hours were generated by full-time faculty in Political Science, because students enrolled for courses being taught by Political Science faculty, but registered under the prefix of another academic discipline. For example, the course, Constitutional Law, is taught by faculty in Political Science, but students are permitted to enroll for the course under the course prefixes for History (HY) or Justice Studies (JS).

The number of enrollees in the program's upper-division (junior/senior) course offerings is comparable to and perhaps greater than enrollments in similar courses at much larger universities. This added enrollment is not a result of a substantial number of Political Science majors and minors, but the presence of many students taking Political Science courses as part of other academic programs. The three programs that contribute substantially to enrollments in Political Science offerings are: (1) the teacher education program in the Social Sciences, (2) the major in Justice Studies (Criminal Justice), and (3) the major in Public Safety and Health Administration.

The Political Science program has been evolving in two ways. (1) The curriculum is being gradually adjusted to accommodate more of the in-service, government workers who desire opportunities for career mobility by having an undergraduate degree related to their work environment. (2) A larger share of the curriculum, but not the entire major, is being delivered via some format to accommodate the distant learner who needs instructional services outside the parameters of the traditional class meeting.

Quality of Degree and Student Achievement

Of the thirty (30) graduates during the past five years who were awarded the B.S. in Political Science at Athens State, a large majority is or has been engaged in one of the following post-graduation activities: (1) attending law school, (2) practicing law, (3) attending graduate school, (4) employment in the public sector, or (5) employment at a non-profit organization. This conclusion is based on survey data administered to graduating seniors immediately prior to the graduation ceremony or from anecdotal feedback to professors after graduation.

Commencing with the Fall term 2007, graduating seniors in Political Science are administered an exit exam as part of a capstone course (PO465). This exam is designed to assess the student's baseline knowledge in major sub-fields of Political Science. During academic year 07-08, there were five students who completed this exam. On a scale of 100 points, their scores ranged from 70 to 91.

B.4 Student Achievement: Learning Outcomes

All 28 academic programs in the University conducted course/program-based assessment of student learning. Expected outcomes were formulated for each academic program and degree based on the core competencies[7] identified by the faculty and consistent with the University's Goal 1. In addition to the core competencies, individual academic programs measured outcomes specific to their disciplines. Both direct and indirect methods of assessment were used.

B.4.1 Student Achievement – Evidence-based Assessment Methods (Direct)[8]

As illustrated in Figure 5 (pg 15) academic programs used a wide range of assessment tools to measure core learning objectives including those specific to the respective discipline. This makes it difficult to describe any but the broadest common patterns in their data.

Based on programs' assessment reports of student performance, all units find that their students are achieving at least some of the goals assessed. Details of assessment methodology and results of student performance are presented in each program's annual assessment report on record. The following examples illustrate findings from programs' 2007-08 Annual Assessment Reports.

- The College of Education reports that 100% of candidates recommended for certification passed all three sections of the Alabama Prospective Teachers Test (APTT; 100% of candidates seeking certification in Alabama earned a passing score on the appropriate Praxis II Content Knowledge Test for their major; and 93% of first year teachers in all education majors received "excellent" ratings from school principals.

- The College of Arts & Sciences reports that over half of their Psychology majors scored at or above the 50th percentile in the Psychology Area Concentration Test (PACAT); and over two-thirds of the History majors scored within acceptable levels as determined by the Area Concentration Achievement Tests (ACAT).

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7 University core learning outcomes: Knowledge of Core Concepts-Major Area of Study; Communication (Written and Oral); Proficiency in the Use of Technology; Appreciation of Ethical Standards; Critical Thinking and Analysis; Understanding of a Changing/Diverse World; and Life-Long Learning Skills.

8 Data reported individually by academic programs to OIPRA.

- The College of Business reports that 91% of the business majors met the performance standards for business graduates as determined by the faculty, evidenced by the scores obtained in the Exit Exam.

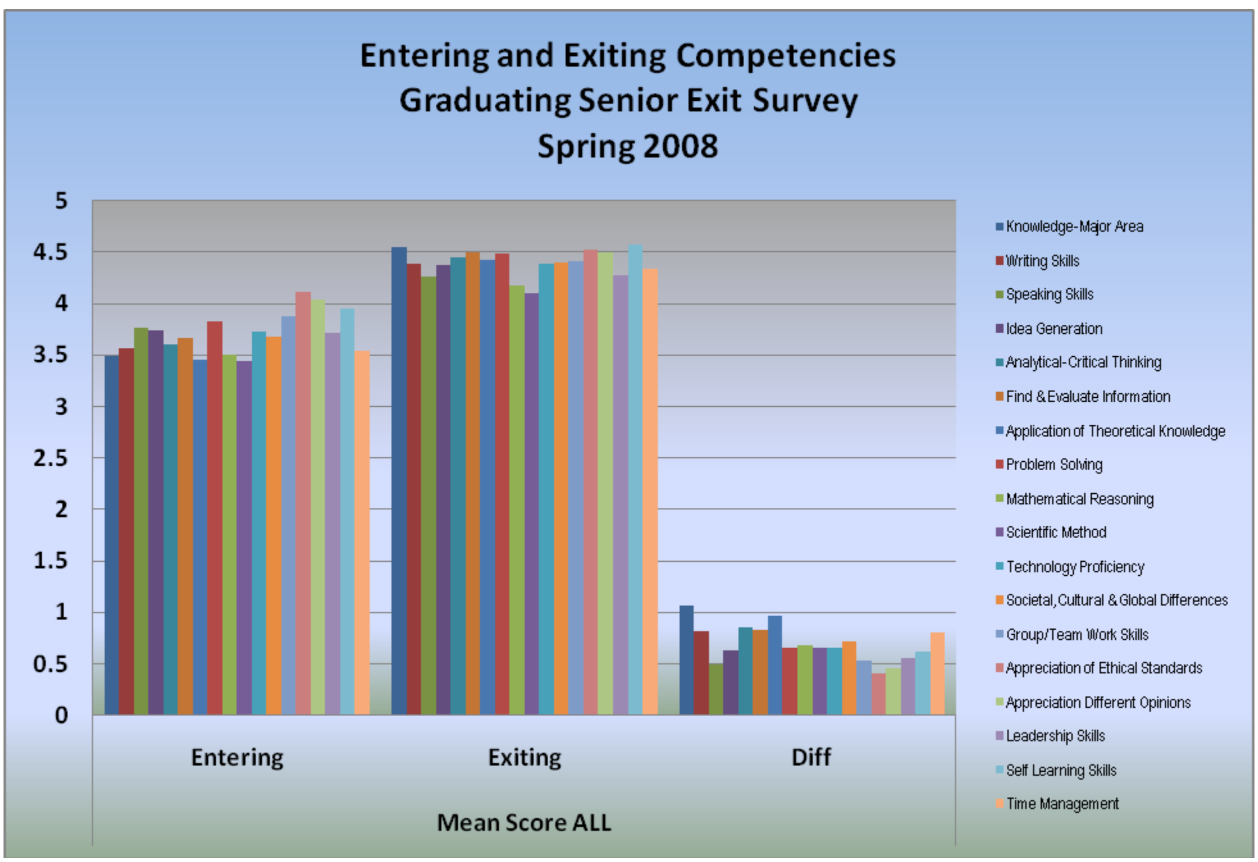
B.4.2 Student Achievement - Changes in Entering and Exiting Competencies (KSAs)

In addition to the direct methods of student learning assessment employed by faculty at the course/program level, an indirect method was added via the Graduating Senior Exit Survey (GSES, Section III), administered at the time of graduation. The GSES was revised in 2006-07 to capture among other things, students' self assessment of their exiting competencies compared with their entering competencies.

Figure 12 shows the gains in competency for 18 Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) as identified through target learning outcomes as stated in the Annual Assessment Plan from all academic programs.

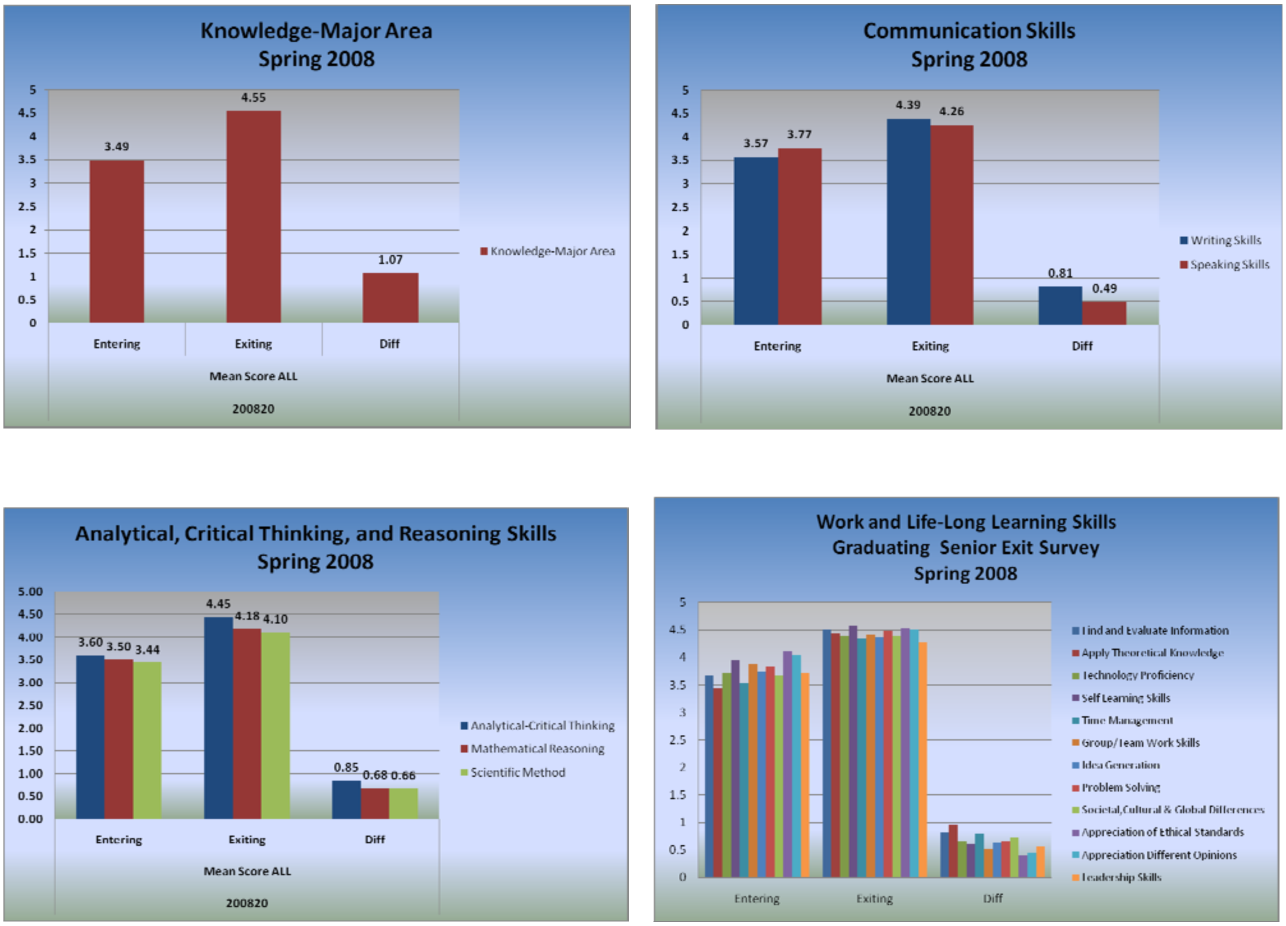
Appendix B shows the percentage of students with specific levels entering and exiting competency for each one of the KSAs.

Figure 11. Changes Between Entering and Exiting Competencies (18 KSAs)



The following figures demonstrate gains in competencies for individual and/or combined KSAs into categories of skills.

Figure 12. Change in KSA Entering and Exiting Competency by Selective Categories (GSES/n =117)



C. Academic Extracurricular Support Functions

C.1. Athens State University Library[9]

Spring 2008 Survey

In academic year 2007-08, the Library returned to Year One of the cycle. The Learning Resource Committee reviewed the previous iteration of the survey and recommended a few changes in phrasing, added two questions to the survey, and recommended disseminating the online survey through Blackboard. In March 2008, printed surveys were distributed to classes and to walk-in patrons on the main campus, to students in classes on the Hanceville campus, and posted online in Blackboard.

One hundred and ninety-four people participated in the Athens campus survey, 54 students participated in the Hanceville survey, and 241 students responded to the online instrument. Librarian Dr. Susan Herring tabulated, analyzed, and presented the results to the Learning Resource Committee. She also created tables comparing results for key questions among the Athens campus, Hanceville campus, and online responses. Although all participants were encouraged to add comments, the online respondents provided much more detail in the "Comments" section of the instrument.

Actions Taken in Response to Survey

Comments especially made it clear that an increased focus should be placed on library instruction. As a consequence of analysis of the results by librarians and members of the Learning Resource Committee, the Library made a commitment to enhancing the instructional component of the Library web site. Librarians made an effort to promote the embedded librarian service more proactively. A Library tab was added to the Blackboard course management system to identify the Library more clearly in that key online learning resource. Librarians made a commitment to loading electronic journal holdings into the catalog when migration would be completed in Fall 2008.

Evaluation of Library Web Page

In May 2008, Dr. Lisa Rich shared results of the usability analysis of the Library web page performed by her software evaluation students in the Spring semester. This was the second year that Dr. Rich included this assignment in her course requirements. Results were discussed among the Library staff, and several recommendations were made.

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[9] The Library is on a three-year schedule for assessment: **Year One:** Printed surveys, developed in-house and subject to regular revision by the Learning Resource Committee, are distributed to selected classes and to walk-in Library patrons. A slightly different instrument is posted online to survey Distance Learning students. **Year Two**: Focus groups are conducted on-campus and at University Centers to elicit in-depth reaction from students and faculty, based upon responses from the previous year's survey. **Year Three**: The Library participates in the nationwide online LibQUAL+ survey, which allows benchmarking with other institutions and the establishment of norms.

Actions Taken in Response to Web Page Evaluation by Students

- In the migration to the new Library catalog, the Library focused on designing a clear, simple, easy-to-use interface.
- The Library made a commitment to strengthening the instructional component of the Library web page in the next academic year. Various other University library web pages were examined, and many suggestions and approaches were discussed.
- The Library staff made a commitment to creating a visible FAQ section on the web page, to be implemented in the subsequent year.

C.2. Math Lab

Ninety percent of students who visited the Math Lab for assistance in MA 311 passed the course in which they were enrolled. Ten percent withdrew from the course. Analysis of the data revealed that 60% of attendees improved their math scores in MA 311 after their visit(s). No data was reported for MA 308. Student requests for tutoring were fulfilled for math lab attendees. Partial student profiles were documented. Results of the GSES reflect 80% of respondents reported a high/somewhat high level of satisfaction with Math Lab services.

D. Distance Learning

D.1 Program Operational Outcomes: Productivity Measures

D.1.1 Enrollment and Credit Hour Production

Table 10. Distance Learning Enrollment and Credit Hour Production

Fall Term	Enrollment					Credit Hours		
	Total Enrollment (Headcount)	Enrollment in DL (Headcount-Taking at least one DL Course)	DL Enrollment as % of Total Enrollment	# of Students Enrolled in DL Courses Only	% of Students Enrolled in DL Courses Only	Total Credit Hours	DL Credit Hours	DL Credit Hours as % of Total Credit Hours
2003	2628	583	22.20%	-	-	24372	2337	9.60%
2004	2575	793	30.80%	-	-	24818	3692	14.90%
2005	2642	1430	54.10%	419	15.90%	25092	7673	30.60%
2006	2777	2005	72.20%	935	33.70%	26423	13633	51.60%
2007	**3073**	**2511**	**81.70%**	**1386**	**45.10%**	**29166**	**17934**	**61.50%**

Enrollment in distance learning courses grew 25.2%, representing 81.7% of total enrollment. While enrollment in distance learning as percentage of total enrollment shows an upward trend, the rate of growth indicates a diminishing trend, suggesting that demand for distance learning courses may be stabilizing. The same pattern applies to credit hour production.

Figure 13. Distance Learning Enrollment Trend (Fall 2003-2007)

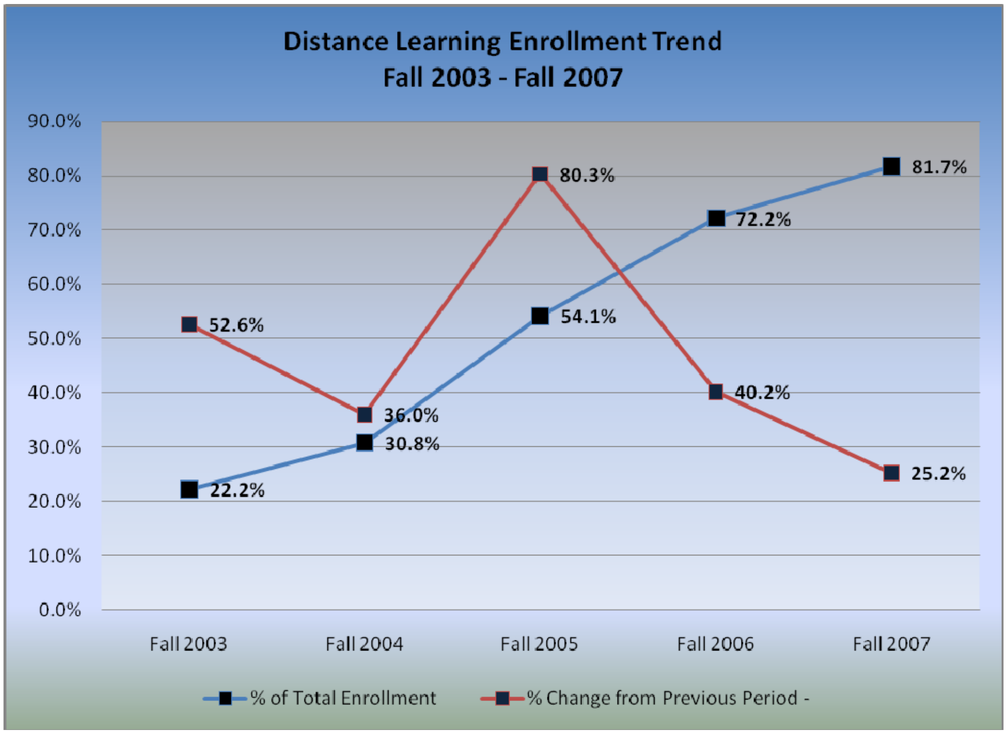
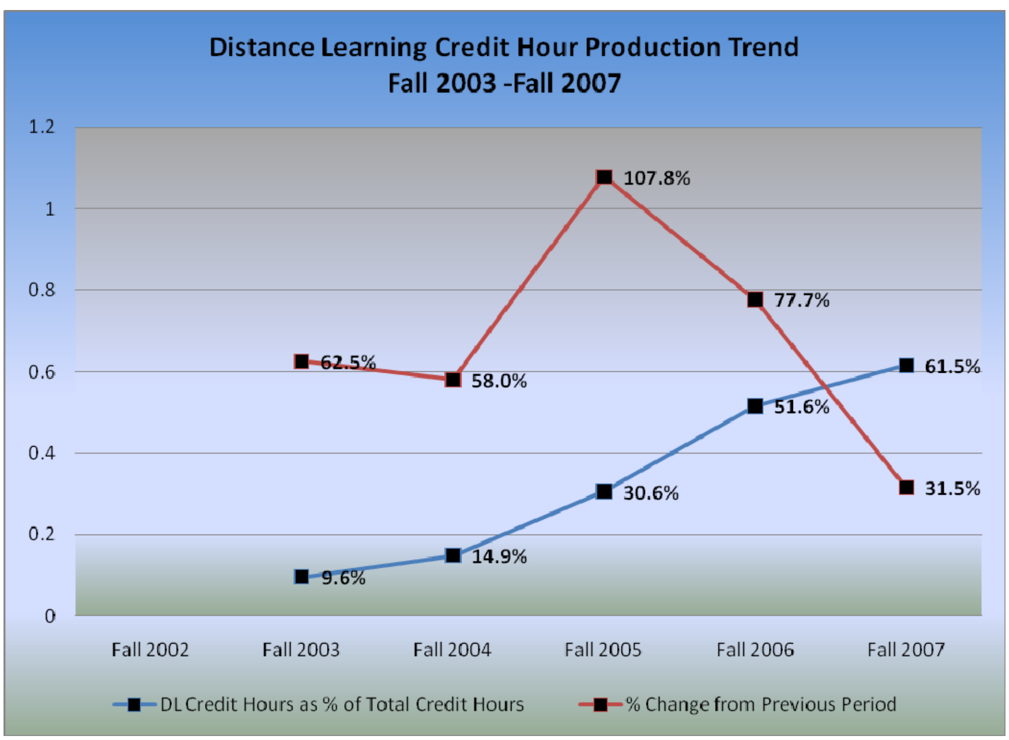


Figure 14. Distance Learning Credit Hour Production Trend (Fall 2003-2007)



D.1.2 Course and Class Offering

Table 11. Inventory of Distance Learning Courses and Classes

Term	Courses			Classes		
	Total # of Courses (DL & Trad)	# of DL Courses	% of DL Courses	Total # of Classes (DL & Campus-Based)	# of DL Classes	% of DL Classes
Fall 2003	401	39	9.7%	622	46	7.4%
Fall 2004	411	67	16.3%	703	93	13.2%
Fall 2005	396	106	26.8%	676	143	21.2%
Fall 2006	400	176	44.0%	707	249	35.2%
Fall 2007	**413**	**213**	**51.6%**	**737**	**318**	**43.1%**

D.2 Improvements to Instruction-related Infrastructure (Technology Resources)

D.2.1 Improvements to IT Infrastructure and Capabilities (operations)

Completed:

- Upgraded Internet connectivity to 20Mbps
- Implemented wireless Internet service in the library, classroom building, student center, Chasteen Hall, McCain Hall, and Founders Hall
- Implemented Identity Manager to manage LDAP authentication for access to wireless Internet
- Implemented Internet filtering to reduce external threats and prevent peer-to-peer sharing of copyrighted material
- Upgraded Internet payment service to an ASP hosted service for better compliancy with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS)
- Upgraded emergency generator

Initiated:

- Upgrade for document imaging system
- Upgrade to faculty/staff email and network
- Upgrade to 1GB infrastructure
- Upgrade to data center servers/equipment

D.2.2 Improvements to Instruction-related Infrastructure (Technology Resources)

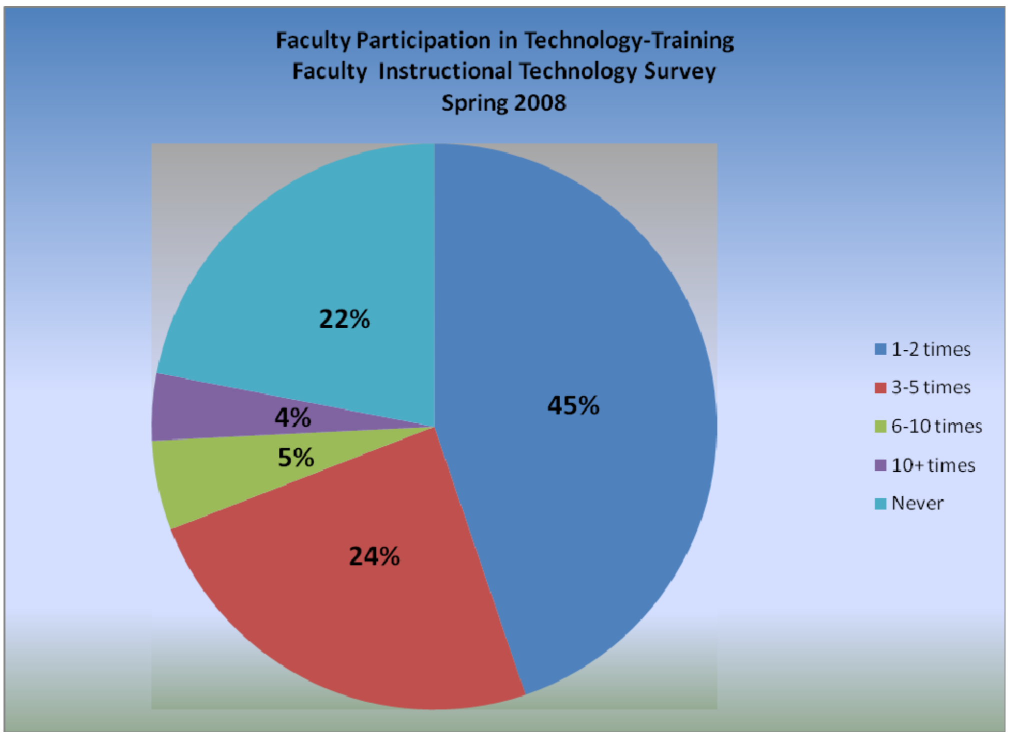
- Moved all adjunct instructors and students to a more stable and protected email system
- Upgraded the testing center's computers
- Implemented Content system for Blackboard – allows the instructors to load their content one time and reference the content from within the course shells
- Implemented proxy authentication service for off-campus library data source access

D.3 Faculty Professional Development (Technology-related)

The *Faculty Instructional Technology Survey (FITS)*, conducted annually by the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT), captures faculty members' usage of technology, training, and support services available to facilitate teaching and learning. Faculty training outputs captured through the CIT's internal records document faculty participation in training activities.

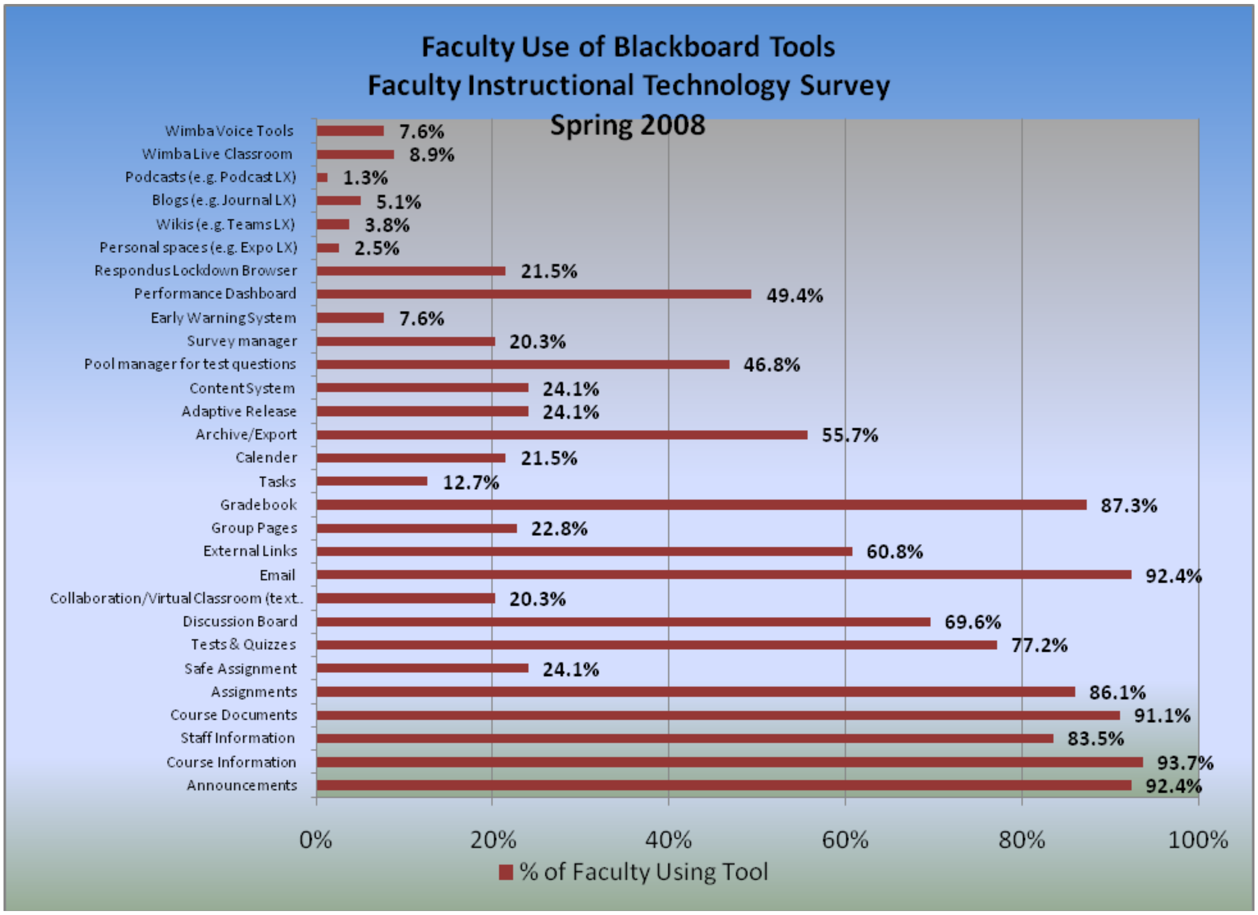
Data from the Spring 2008 FITS (n=78) indicated a 78% faculty participation in at least one technology-related training or webinar session. Seventy-one percent "agree/strongly agree" that faculty instructional technology training is available upon request.

Figure 15. Faculty Participation in Technology-related Training



The same survey identified faculty's most commonly used technology tools in their courses. Increased use of more advanced tools available in Blackboard™ is expected in the future, as the Center for Instructional Technology continues to expand faculty training regarding instructional delivery.

Figure 16. Faculty Use of Blackboard Tools in Instructional Delivery



D.4 Assessment and Student Achievement

D.4.1 Assessment

Since standards and expected learning outcomes for all academic programs are the same for distance learning (DL) and traditional instruction, on and off-campus, assessment data for DL is captured through the institutional outcomes assessment process. However, faculty deliberations regarding additional assessment of distance learning continued across campus during 2007-08.

The following assessments will be added to the analytical framework and comparative data will be available starting in 2008-09:

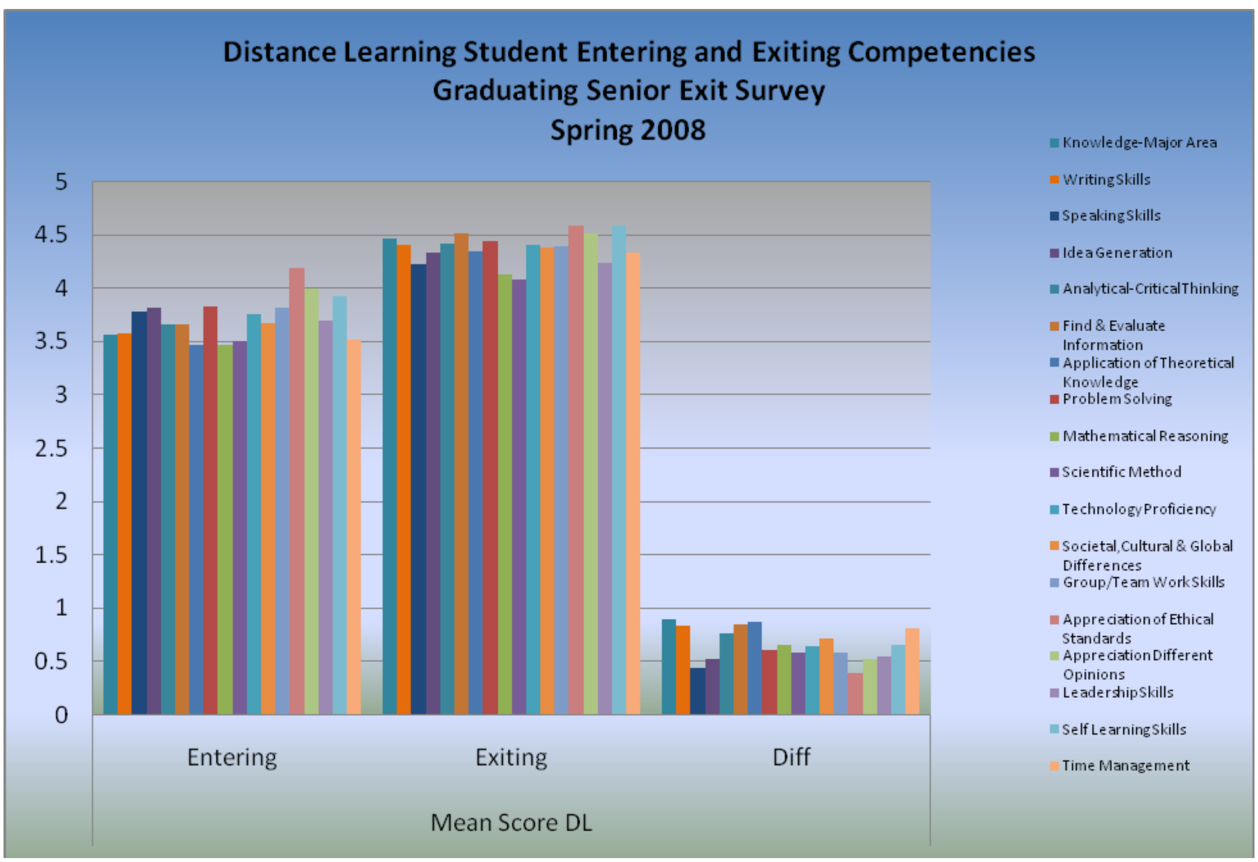
- Modality Assessment-Student Academic Profile (Grade comparisons)
- Course Content and Teaching Effectiveness
- DL Faculty Professional Development
- Student and Faculty Technology Support (Quality Ratings and Satisfaction Level)

During 2007-08 OIPRA, in coordination with the IT department, provided data collection and storage capability via *AMEE* for the ***Student Readiness for Distance Learning Survey.*** Previously, the survey was available to students to answer on their own with no ability to capture their scores. This voluntary self-assessment instrument, administered online prior to the student's first time enrollment in a distance learning course, captures a set of skills and life-styles associated with the likelihood of success in a distance education environment. Response rate from 2007-08 were low, but preliminary data into 2008-09 indicates a strong student response rate. Results will be reported in the 2008-09 Institutional Effectiveness: Continuous Improvement Report.

As previously stated, in addition to the evidenced-based assessment used by faculty at the course/program level, the Graduating Senior Exit Survey, was revised to include a new section that captured students' self assessment of 18 entering and exiting competencies (KSA) competencies. Data comparisons between DL and campus-based students will be conducted every term starting in Fall 2008.

More detailed and sophisticated assessment methods may be available in the future as the faculty continues deliberations regarding assessment methodology of distance learning.

Figure 17. Distance Learning Entering and Exiting Competencies

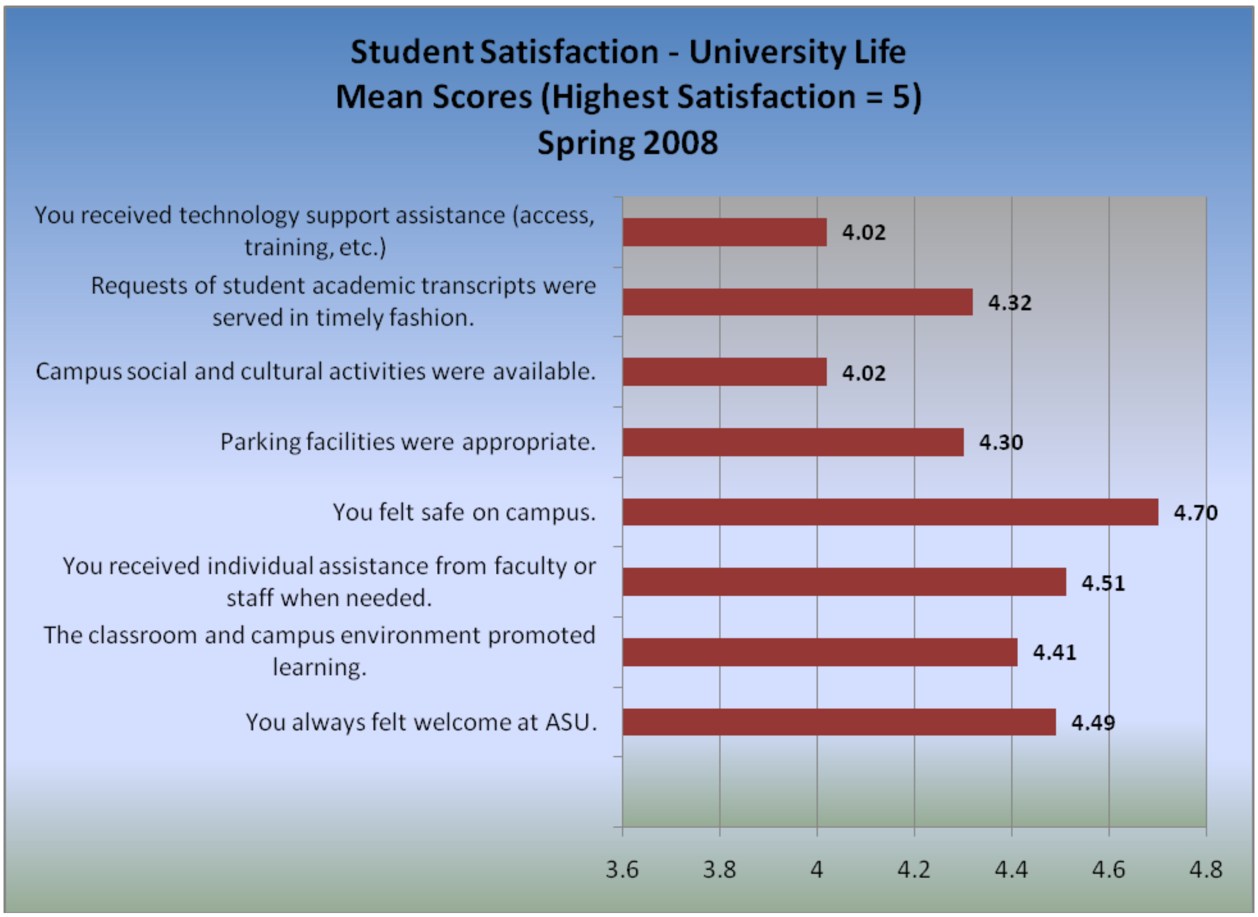


E. Student Support Services

E.1 Overall Student Satisfaction: University Life and Student Services

E.1.1 University Life

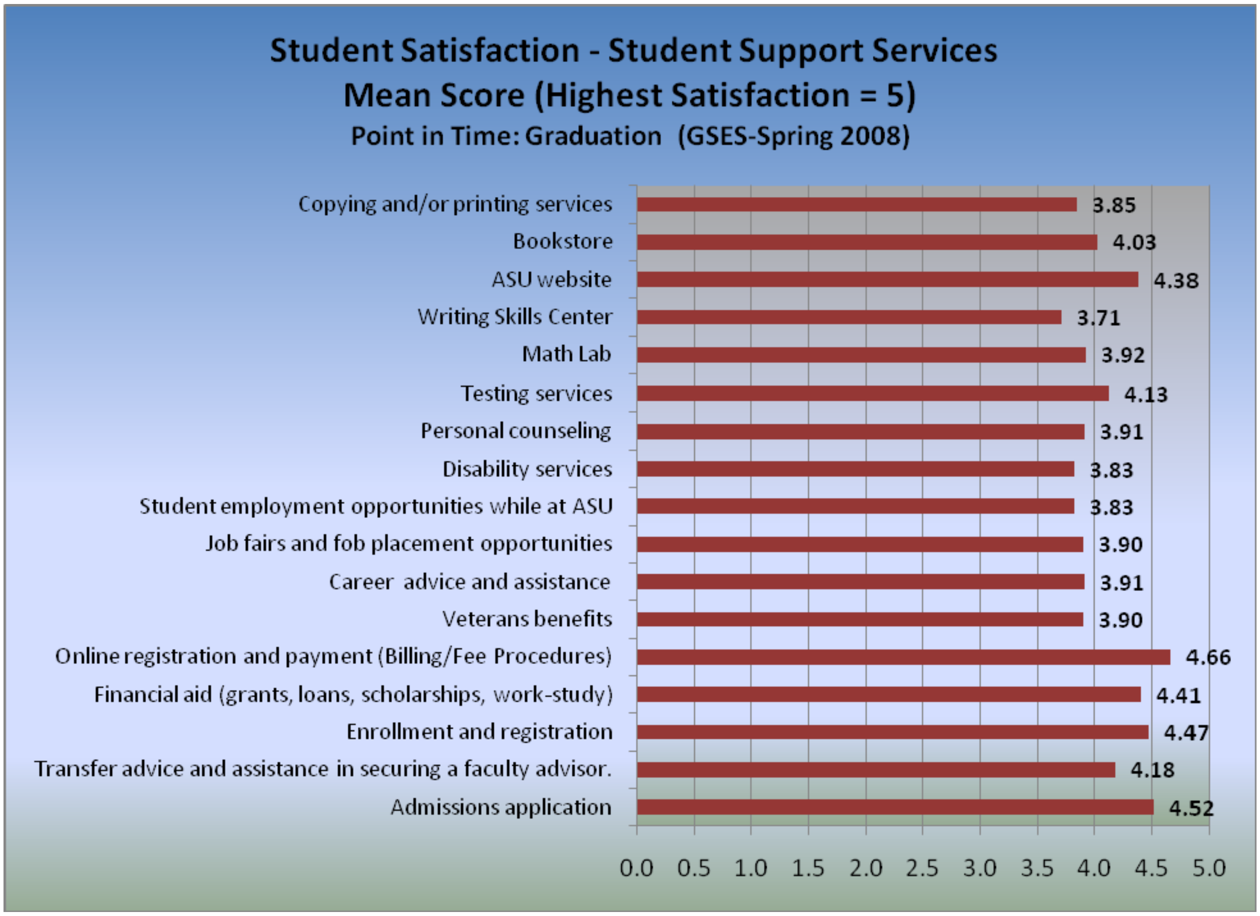
Figure 18. Student Satisfaction with University Life (GSES/n=117)



E.1.2 Student Services

Based on the assessment model, service delivery outcomes are measured at two-points in time: 1) at point-of-service, measured through the organizational unit's Point of Service (POS) Survey and, 2) at the time of graduation, measured through the Graduating Senior Exit Survey.

Figure 19. Student Satisfaction with Student Support Services (GSES/n=117)



Four service delivery elements common to all support services and measured via the POS surveys obtained quality mean scores as shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Point of Service Quality Ratings – Student Support Services
(POS Surveys, Spring/Summer 2008)

Common Service Attributes	Quality Ratings (Mean Scores)								
	AR	CS	CLS	DS	R	SA	FS	TAC	VA
Accessibility of Services	4.67	4.76	4.00	5.00	4.63	2.50	4.80	4.80	4.75
Clarity and Helpfulness of Information	4.79	4.76	4.20	4.50	4.83	2.50	4.80	4.80	5.00
Staff Courtesy and Responsiveness	4.87	4.86	4.20	4.50	4.88	3.00	4.80	4.84	5.00
Timeliness in Providing the Service	4.81	4.75	4.00	4.50	4.88	2.50	4.80	4.84	4.75
Overall Satisfaction	4.76	4.80	3.80	n/a	4.84	1.50	4.80	4.82	5.00

Legend: Admissions & Records (AR); Career Services (CS); Counseling Services (CLS); Disability Services (DS); Recruitment (R); Student Activities (SA); Student Financial Services (FS); Transfer Advising Center (TAC); Veterans Affairs (VA)

E.2 Improvements in Student Services

E.2.1 Admissions and Records

Admissions

A total of 2093 new applications for admissions were received for the 2008 academic year and 32% of the new applicants were registered online.

The average processing time for a new applicant for admissions was 2 to 3 days due to having to wait on the signature page from the new student. Plans are being implemented to eliminate the signature page from the process of applying online as a new student. Once the signature page is no longer required, the processing time will be reduced to one day.

Inventory of available resources accessible to students include the capability to: (1) apply and register online; (2) view and print their student transcripts online; (3) download the necessary forms needed to complete transactions (such as Change of Major, Change of Address, etc.); (4) view the institution's policies via the online or hard copy catalog. There are a total number of eight employees in the Admissions and Records.

The capacity of students who have utilized the available resources for online registration compared to those who used the resource of registering in-house was (Spring Semester 2008) Online 7,361, In-house 1,534, (Summer Semester 2008) Online 5,780, in-house 666 and (Fall Semester 2008) Online 8,937, In-house 1,337.

Records

One-hundred percent statistical data accuracy has been achieved by requiring the students to apply for graduation online and verify their information before the graduation application is submitted. The ZGAMOVE program has been used to correct errors on 10 student records since July 2007. Also an ARGOS report has been generated everyday by receipt of an email with errors on Bad IDs, Names & Addresses. A total of 131 student records had errors and were corrected since July 2007. Steps are being taken to make sure that the employees who made the mistakes are aware of their mistakes and to be more careful in the future.

Graduation clearance processing time has been reduced from 3 days to 2 days by using three employees in the Admissions and Records Office.

There have been 210 students who have used the Transcript Ordering Service from the National Student Clearinghouse and the processing time is listed as 2 to 3 days. Processing time has been reduced to 2 days. A total of 4.309 total transcripts have been processed since January 2007 and the processing time took 2 to 3 days from initial request to delivery/mailing the transcript. Currently, except for end of term processing, processing time has been reduced to 2 days from initial request to delivery/mailing the transcript.

The Admissions and Records Services Point of Service Survey was implemented for the Summer 2008 Semester. Three of the six categories scored an 80% or higher. Results for the following service quality ratings were as follows: (1) Accessibility of services (Hours, Location, Phone, Electronic, Online) - 76.9% ; (2) Clarity of helpfulness of information provided to you ' 81.1%; (3) Staff courtesy and responsiveness ' 86.6%; (4) Timeliness in providing the services ' 81.1%; (5) Admissions webpage ' 47.4%; and (5) Records web page ' 50.0%.

The Clearinghouse Student Tracking Program's implementation stage has been changed to the 2010-11 academic year due to budgetary constraints

Planned/Implemented Actions

- An Admissions and Records Service Log was implemented in April 2008. The Admissions and Records Office provides services to the students and faculty at Athens State by telephone, email, fax and provides various services to students that walk-in to both offices. Since April 2008, the following numbers have been tallied in the service areas: (1) total telephone calls 2991; (2) total emails 686; (3) total fax requests (was not started until July 2008) 102; and (4) walk-in requests 776.

- Budget request was made to hire an additional person in the Admissions Office. This additional employee will help to ensure that the Admissions processes run efficiently.

- In coordination with the Business Office, steps are being taken to implement the graduation fee payment at the time the student applies for graduation. Currently, students are not making their graduation payments in a timely manner.

E.2.2 Career Services and Cooperative Education

Student participation in career-related services indicated:
- 1,355 students (47% of total enrollment) requested some type of career services.
- 662 students requested help with career planning, resumes, job availability, etc. and 693 students attended the job fairs
- 126 students and/or alumni received interviews with employers, representing 19% of all students seeking career services. (Note: This number is an estimate because all students/alumni do not let us know about interviews. The 126 number is based on two times the placement number of 63.)
- Academic profile is 30% & College of Arts & Sciences, 62% College of Business, and 14% College of Education with a GPA of 3.20.
- 63 students received job offers and 19 received coop placement

Employer participation in career-related events indicated:

- 235 employers were involved with career services.
- jobs posted were related to majors in: business, 95 (52%); education, 34 (18%); other, 56 (30%).
- job types were full-time 157 (85%) and 28 (15%) were part time.

Two major career services-related events were surveyed individually: ASU Career Connection Job Fair and the Education/Community Service Job Fair. The overall rating of both job fairs, was 3.73 and 3.81 (out of a possible high of 5.0) representing 63.9% and 57.6% of students indicating high/somewhat high satisfaction with the event, respectively. Based on the surveys' data, two problem areas were identified: 1) students' opportunities to interact with participating employers", and 2) "number of job opportunities in specific majors" represented by participating employers. Data from the Education/Community Service Job Fair event also identified the event's promotion as an area in need of improvement.

Although the format of both fairs provides for employer-student interaction, it appears that students need better training in job fair strategies and participation. The lower number of jobs available for certain majors, mostly liberal arts degrees, presents major challenges, given the high-tech nature of the North Alabama job market.

<u>Planned/Implemented Actions</u>:

- Implement teaching sessions available in the Career Services office to better educate students regarding job-seeking skills and strategies and participations in job fairs. These sessions will also include information to students regarding alternative job opportunities for difficult-to-place majors.

- Expand promotional efforts for job fairs.

E.2.3 Disability Services

The number of students claiming disability status during 2007-08 was: Fall 2007 65 students (35.4% College of Arts & Sciences, 32.3% College of Education, 32.3% College of Business), Spring 2008 55 students (30.9% College of Arts & Sciences, 38.2% College of Education, 30.9% College of Business), and Summer semester 2008 37 students (27% College of Arts & Sciences, 32.4% College of Education, 40.5% College of Business). Disability claims included a wide range of conditions from learning to physical disabilities. Approximately 39% of all claims involved students with multiple disabilities.

One hundred percent of all students claiming disability received services and/or were provided with specific tools available to handle particular needs. Per student's official request, Letters of Accommodation to faculty were issued as follows: 61 letters for 22 students Fall semester 2007, 70 letters for 23 students Spring semester 2008, and 24 letters for 12 students Summer semester.

The program did not receive any student complaint regarding unidentified barriers. Known barriers are being removed and/or plans are in place for removal in the near future.

Using ADAAG guidelines, the Disability Services staff, physical plant staff, and the ADA/504 Committee initiated the review of campus physical accessibility of the outside and inside of existing facilities. The campus assessment is approximately 50% complete. Preliminary assessment findings show changes to be performed in various areas for compliance. Most major changes for compliance will be addressed with future renovation of several building. Completion of the campus assessment is expected at the end of Fall 2008.

Assessment findings indicated a 99% overall satisfaction for Assistance and Services provided by Disability Services and 96.67% overall satisfaction approval for Service Delivery Quality by the Disability Service staff. These percentages exceed the 80% target outcome.

In addition, the End of Term Disability Services Student Survey demonstrated the highest possible quality ratings (mean =5.0) for overall accessibility throughout campus. The survey also demonstrated students' high quality marks (mean=5.0) in the areas of accessibility to services and professor's help in implementing accommodations for students with disabilities. Clarity of information, staff courtesy and responsiveness, timeliness, and availability of resources, also showed high quality ratings, although slightly lower (mean scores of 4.50 and 4.75). The same survey demonstrated that specific assistance/aids tools and services were very helpful to students. Of a total of 31 different services/aids available to students with disabilities, 87% received the highest possible quality rating (mean=5.0).

The End of Term Disability Services Faculty Survey indicated that 85.7% of respondents had very low difficulty in providing accommodations to their students with disabilities. In addition, 85.8% of respondents rated Disability Services' accommodations as effective or highly effective in providing the student with equal access to the learning environment.

Internal documents show some of the tools/services provided during 2007-08 included: note takers, interpreter, test reader, test scribe, extended time on exams and in-class projects, enlarged print materials, alternate test site with a proctor, oral testing, preferential seating, audio recorded books, audio record class, use of electronic speller or four-function calculator, wheelchair accessible building/classroom, adjustable desk or table in the classroom, and portable amplification system.

<u>Academic Profile:</u> Nine students with disability status completed their degrees in Fall 2007, 9 students in Spring 2008, and 2 students Summer 2008. A baseline has been established in 2007-2008 using Banner. Future graduation and retention rates of students registered with Disability Services will be compared against this baseline.

E.2.4 Recruitment

The number of potential students reached through recruitment events increased by 3% totaling 3,096 students contacted throughout 2007-08. Enrollment of new students in that same year totaled 1,795, up from 1,451 in the previous year, an increase of 23.1% for a net total of 344 new students. Total number of recruitment sessions (includes events and/or routine contacts) totaled 231, of which 14 were targeted recruitment efforts. Specific data as to the number of students contacted through recruitment that actually applied and were admitted to the University is not available. Follow-up efforts were not documented in detail, although the program is developing internal forms to better track these metrics.

Strategic alliances with Calhoun Community College, Wallace State Community College, Northeast AL Community College and Redstone Arsenal were maintained during 2007-08. Available resources to support recruitment activities consisted of promotional material, mostly brochures, two full-time recruiters, and additional office space at Calhoun/Research Park. An analysis of the Recruitment POS Survey indicated that 100% of respondents were satisfied or highly satisfied, 16% and 84%, respectively.

E.2.5 Student Activities

Student participation in campus activities and new membership in student organizations increased by 3% and 1%, respectively. Student Activities implemented four new events during 2007-08: *Lock-In, Pool Tournament, Face 2 Face Improv, and the Outdoor Movie Night*. All events had relatively good student participation. Two other events, the Fall and Spring Leadership retreats obtained good student ratings[10]. Student Activities will continue monitoring student participation trends to determine if the current target increase of 10% is realistic given the change in the student profile (increasing student enrollment in distance learning courses) and therefore, low student presence on campus.

Overall satisfaction with the availability of social and cultural activities on campus was lower than expected. Data gathered from the Graduating Senior Exit Survey for Spring and Summer 2008 indicated an average satisfaction rate of 57%. Lacking data from the Student Activities Preferences and Awareness Survey, data from the GSES is not clear as to whether this low satisfaction level is due to student preferences or lack of awareness of available activities. Since new events were offered with relatively good student participation, the survey data does not provide clear answers at this time, so further data collection and analysis is required. Student Activities will continue monitoring student satisfaction to better understand the factors affecting it and establish or modify strategies to achieve improvement.

[10] Student satisfaction and quality ratings of specific events are measured individually via the Student Activities Event Survey.

As stated earlier, Student Activities continues to confront two major challenges: increasing enrollment in distance learning and budget constraints. A continuous effort to recruit students on-line to participate in events sponsored by the Clubs and Organizations will continue to be a major priority. The data also indicates weakness in the promotion activities of student events (mean=3.83)

Planned/Implemented Actions:

- Increase awareness among administrators of the increasing costs involved in the conduct of student activities and related events.
- Find alternative ways to increase resources for student activities.
- Increase promotional efforts using online capabilities.

E.2.6 Student Financial Services

The Office of Student Financial Services is currently under audit for the 2007-08 year. Expect audit report in early 2009. The audit report for 2006-07 is on file in the Office of the Vice President of Financial Affairs and contains no audit findings or compliance issues with regard to the Office of Student Financial Services. The Cohort default rate for the 2005-06 academic year is on file in the Office of Student Financial Services. The rate is 2.5% and is the latest rate available from the US Department of Education.

All campus based funding for the 2007-08 academic year was expended to eligible students. The FISAP reports these items to the US Department of Education. A copy of the FISAP is available in the Office of Student Financial Services and online with the US Department of Education. Grant funds expended to students in 2006-07 totaled $2,383,921 and increased to $2,778,607 in 2007-08. Scholarship expenditures totaled $449,170 in 2006-07 and increased to $665,811 in 2007-08. Federal work study expenditures were $95,797 in 2006-07 and increased to $98,974 in 2007-08.

Of the respondents to the POS survey for Summer 2008, 100% were very satisfied or Extremely satisfied with the Accessibility of services (Hours, Location, Phone, Electronic, Online; Clarity and helpfulness of information provided; Staff courtesy and responsiveness and timeliness in providing the services. In addition, the POS survey for Summer, 2008 indicates that 80% of the respondents were Extremely Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the Financial Aid Web Page

E.2.7 Testing Services

At least 2% increase in requests for testing services was experienced in this assessment period compared to the last. All testing requests were accommodated and provided as agreed upon by the testing center staff person and clients.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest mark of satisfaction, more than 80% indicated a high degree of satisfaction (9.5+) with the testing services elements: ease of getting a testing appointment, clarity of directions for getting to the testing center, simplicity of the testing sign-in process, convenience of testing payment method (where applicable), clarity of computer sign-in instructions (where applicable), comfort of testing center (temperature of the room, quiet surroundings, etc), and availability of administrator during testing.

All Testing Services information in university publications, whether hard copy or on-line, were edited for clarification and consistency during this assessment cycle and updated as necessary.

E.2.8 Transfer Advising Center (TAC)

The TAC Counselors helped approximately 90% of all new transfer students by assigning faculty advisors to all degree seeking students even if the student had not contacted the TAC. Processing time of transfer credit evaluations was reduced by 2% by using the on-line program guides for all three colleges.

Further analysis of internal records indicate that cross training and frequent staff meetings produce consistency in counseling of new students regarding general education requirements.

The target outcome was met with 86.3% students highly satisfied with the overall services the TAC provides. The point of service survey showed the highest rating for the TAC was 95.9% highly satisfied with staff courtesy and responsiveness. 90.4% were highly satisfied with clarity and helpfulness of information provided to the student.

The TAC will try to communicate better to new students about the difference between the TAC and faculty advising.

E. 2.9 Veterans Affairs

The State Approving Agency (SAA) found no discrepancies in the annual review. Accordingly, the Veterans Affairs Office (VAO) is in compliance with all record-keeping of academic progress, verification of eligibility, dissemination of information regarding veterans' educational benefits. Based on this review SAA recommend continued approval and a follow-up visit is not necessary.

Out of approximately 140 VA students, the files of 10 VA students were reviewed for the Compliance Survey from the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). There were no discrepancies or irregularities noted on the survey. The DVA commended the Coordinator for the excellent manner in which the VA files are maintained. The DVA recommended no action necessary at this time.

Overall satisfaction with Veterans Affairs was lower than expected at 60%. The VAO will try to improve this percentage with more information on the web site and communicating with veterans more by group emails. Careful monitoring of assessment data will continue.

During academic year 2007-2008 the Office of Veterans Affairs started emailing all veterans receiving federal education benefits as a group. The emails are to remind the veterans what to do each semester to keep their benefits from being interrupted, give them updates from Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) if necessary and reminders of what the DVA will and will not pay for the veteran to receive a degree.

F. Administrative Support Functions

F.1 Auxiliary Services

The University's Auxiliary Services remain self-supporting. During the 2007-2008 year, the University's General Fund did not have to transfer any funds to Auxiliary Services. The Auxiliary Services did transfer $106,111 to the ASU Plant Fund to assist with the costs associated with new construction and renovations,

The University increased bookstore commission revenue by 14%. This exceeded the target increase of 5%. Additionally, the number of online book purchases increased by 50%, exceeding the 20% increase target and the dollar amount of revenue generated increased by 65%.

The University's food service commission revenue did not increase over the previous year. Due to the increase in online classes and the increase in gas prices, fewer students were on campus. This scenario is expected to continue and as a result, the University's guaranteed commission revenue is not likely to increase.

The University's paper cost also fell below the targeted outcome. The University has anticipated a 50% reduction in paper cost; however, the actual decrease as measured by total paper purchases was only 9.02%.

The Graduating Exit Survey for the Spring Semester (200820) and the Summer Semester (200830) indicated that over 80% of students who responded were generally satisfied with the Bookstore and Copying/Printing auxiliary services.

The University bookstore is contracted out to Follett Higher Education. Follett conducted its own survey for bookstore services. The survey consisted of 48 questions which addressed both customer satisfaction and customer recommendations. The questions relating to customer satisfaction documented an 83.74% customer satisfaction rate which was within the target outcome of at least 80% satisfaction.

Planned/Implemented Actions

- The goal of having a 5% increase in food service commissions will be reevaluated. Due to the increase in online courses and the rising price of gasoline, there are fewer students on campus. This demographical change prevents any realistic increase in food service revenues. The goal of the University will be to maintain current levels for food service revenues and commissions.

- The target outcome of 50% reduction in paper costs will also be reevaluated. The method in which paper cost is distributed is not easily measurable. The University is looking at managing its overall printing costs rather than the cost of paper specifically.

F.2 Business and Financial Affairs

The audit report was issued on June 27, 2008, and the University was given an "Unqualified Opinion." There were no findings in the audit for the year ended 9/30/2007.

Electronic approval of purchase orders was not implemented during the 2007-2008 year. As a result, the processing time for purchase order requests was not measurable. The University turned over no accounts for collection during the 2007-2008 year. Bank reconciliations were timely completed; however, not all reconciliations were completed by the 10th day of the following month.

The agreement for third party hosting of our tuition and fee payment server and the addition of Discover, American Express and e Checks to student payment options was successfully put in place and continues to work as projected. The goal of 90% reduction in the after-hour monitoring of the payment server and payment processing was reduced. Although the exact percentage was unable to be determined, it is estimated that the monitoring time was reduced by 95% to 97% and the down time for payment processing was less than 5%. Unscheduled down time for payment processing was estimated to be less than 1%.

The postage cost for the Business Office was reduced by 5.5%. This reduction fell short of our target outcome of a 20% reduction. Presently, there is no way to measure the reduction in processing time for student transactions.

The Graduating Exit Survey for the Spring Semester 200820 and the Summer Semester 200830 indicated that an average of 90.7% of respondents were generally satisfied with the business office, specifically the online payments and billing fee procedures.

Planned/Implemented Actions:

- The University will continue to work on implementing electronic approvals for purchase orders. By having the approval process online, the University will be able to reduce processing time and monitor the flow of purchase orders through the system.

- In order to document the bank reconciliation completions dates, the business office will implement the use of a stamp to record the actual date completed. This will assist Business Office personnel in assuring that bank reconciliations are completed by the 10th of the month.

- The target outcome of a 5% reduction in the processing time of student transactions will be reevaluated. The University will continue to look at ways to use technology to assist with the processing of student transactions. The University is looking at the addition of Commerce Manager to allow students to make graduation and application fee payments and also allow for donations and other forms of payments to be made online.

- The University will continue to send electronic bills for current student receivable balances. Paper bills will only be mailed for delinquent accounts (those over one semester old). This will assist the University in controlling postage costs

F.3 Campus Security and Safety

There was an increase in reported crimes on campus which involved one burglary in 2007. There was no burglary reported in 2006. The University maintains records of reportable crimes in the Security Office.

The e2Campus Service, (e2Campus Text Unlimited Use 3000 User) was initiated November 2007. This system gives the University the ability to increase the level of safety on or off campus by communicating with students, faculty and staff during emergency situations. By implementing the e2Campus System, the University is able to communicate urgent information.

The Health and Safety Committee is committed to ensuring that campus safety issues are identified and addressed. The ASU Health and Safety Manual is revised on an annual basis, updating all safety policies and procedures as deemed necessary.

Results from the Graduating Senior Exit Survey conducted in Spring and Summer 2008 indicate that 84.6% and 80.7% of respondents were satisfied with campus safety (i.e. “felt safe on campus”).

<u>Planned/Implemented Actions:</u>

- ASU plans to purchase and install additional security systems for the campus.

F.4 Human Resources

The State of Alabama Examiners of Public Accounts audited the University's annual financial statements for the year ended September 30, 2007. The audit report was issued on June 27, 2008, and the University was given an "Unqualified Opinion."

The reduction in processing time of job applications measure was not put into place in 2007-2008. The HR website is its second year of existence as a link to the ASU webpage. Although no direct measure of its use by employees was implemented during 2007-08, anecdotal evidence suggests an increase in the number of employees directly accessing the Human Resources Office via online capabilities.

Monthly ACH reports revealed no errors in payroll records and reporting on the part of the Human Resources Office for 2007-2008.

<u>Planned/Implemented Actions:</u>

- Will develop a plan to measure and monitor an expedient turnaround response time in job applications.

F.5 Information Technology: University Operations

F.5.1 Improvements to IT Infrastructure and Capabilities (Academic and Administrative)

<u>Academic Support</u>

Inventory database and interface for tracking availability designed and being developed. Database will be available for use December 2008 to start tracking availability of classroom technology.

Designed and started development of an event calendar for posting this type of information. Calendar will be available for use during the spring semester.

Students and adjunct instructors have indirectly reported the need for additional space on the email server. The department has implemented a move for the students and adjuncts to a more flexible service that will allow them 10 Gigabytes of storage in the mailbox (approximately 200% increase).

The satisfaction survey with the availability of technology measurement could not be implemented due to a redistribution of the workload caused by a shortage of personnel. This assessment will be implemented during the next academic year and results reported accordingly.

Results from the GSES indicated a high level of student satisfaction with the following: Classroom/lab facilities (96.5%), IT course support (95.8%). A moderate level of satisfaction was indicated with the technology support assistance ' 78.6%, 15.4% not applicable ' accounts for 94% surveyed.

Administrative Support
Wireless access implemented at the end of the spring semester 2008. It is too early to measure the outcomes. Measurement will start at towards the end of the fall term 2008.

The outcome for online payments indicated 100% of online tuition payments were successful and 93.1% of the application payments were successful (cumulative ' 96.6%). The Business Office and IT has already started implementation of a new online payment tool for the application payments. This service will be available for use before the end of the fall semester 2008.

The online book purchase link measurement could not be measured this year because the data was unknowingly cleared monthly. Precautions were put in place to preserve the data for reporting purposes. This assessment will be reported accordingly during the next academic year

Design and testing of a new network environment to achieve this objective has been completed. Funding has been requested for the new academic year to implement the network environment. The target date for the new network is spring semester 2009. Assessment data will be collected starting fall 2009.

Planned/Implemented Actions:
- Develop the inventory tracking database with availability capability
- Implement the Windows AD environment
- Implement over the network software inventory and distribution
- Expand the online tools.
- Implement a friendlier helpdesk interface for use by faculty, staff, and students.

F.6 Institutional Planning, Research and Assessment (OIPRA)

F.6.1 Support Activities

OIPRA continued to service the needs of academic and administrative programs for institutional data and assessment support, and the reporting requirements from external organizations through a variety of activities.

- **Reports and Studies**
  - IPEDS
  - PERS+
  - Fact Book
  - Credit Hour Production Report
  - DPE reports
  - Fall Reports
  - Tuition and Fee Schedule
  - Space Data Report
  - Annual Utilities Report
  - FICA Survey

- **External Surveys**
  - College Board
  - SESAC
  - College Profile
  - Title 3 and 5 Application for Waiver
  - SACS Profile Survey
  - Library Survey NCES
  - Peterson's
  - ACT Survey
  - ACME Survey
  - WIA
  - BMI
  - SACS Commission on Colleges Survey
  - Library Survey ACRL
  - US News Distance Learning
  - Market Data Retrieval Survey
  - US Dept of Education National Study of Students and Faculty

- **Internal Surveys** (Questionnaire Development/Statistical Analysis/Reporting)
  - Graduating Senior Exit Survey
  - Faculty Course Evaluation
  - Administrative surveys
  - Point of Service Surveys for all Administrative/Support Functions
  - Institutional Effectiveness Climate Survey

- **Ad hoc Requests for Institutional Data**
  - Forty nine internal requests for institutional data.

- **Administrative and Technical Assistance** (Strategic Planning & Assessment)
  - 2008-2012 Long Range Strategic Plan (University-wide)
  - 2008- 2009 Short Range Strategic Plan (University-wide)
  - Program Review-Department of Political Science
  - Outcomes Assessment System Methods, Documents & Procedures
  - Moderated focus groups for the Library (Learning Resources Committee)

- **Presentations and Training (Professional Development)**
  - ASU Outcomes Assessment System: Progress Report

F.6.2 Institutional Research

The scope of the institutional research function is currently under review to identify new opportunities to support strategic planning and decision-making. OIPRA is in the process of identifying specific areas of analysis and respective timeframes. Priority was given to development and design of the research protocol to calculate and track retention rates. The environmental scan (macro environment analysis) requested by the Planning Council was not completed since the Vision 2020 committee was tasked to complete such analysis as part of their assignment.

F.6.3 Planning

Student support and administrative units reviewed their 2008-09 Short Range Plans (SRP) to improve alignment between planning and assessment (evaluation) functions as reflected in the 2008-09 Annual Assessment Plan (AAP). SRP for all academic units remained the same at this time, given that as academic programs, their Annual Assessment Plans focus on the measurement of learning outcomes as opposed to elements of program(s) administration. Further review of this matter is expected during the next academic year.

As 2007-08 comes to a close, the University prepares for the start of a new President. Consequently, the planning function may face changes in procedures or direction as the President sets new priorities, directives and/or initiatives.

F.7 Physical Plant and Facilities

The University maintained certificates or approvals from State and Federal agencies regarding regulatory requirements. Examples are fire inspections, ADA reviews, boiler inspections, elevator inspections, fire extinguisher inspections, Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters certificates.

The University currently operates twenty-seven vehicles with an effective usage rate of 70% or above. Ninety-five percent of official vehicle solicitations are served upon request. .

Results from the Graduating Senior Exit Survey conducted in Spring and Summer of 2008 indicated that 74.3% and 80.7% of respondents, respectively, were satisfied with classrooms, laboratories, and/or studio facilities. In addition, 76.9% of respondents of both surveys were satisfied with the parking facilities. These results were slightly below target expectations of 80% (i.e. 2.5% and 2.1%, respectively).

F.7.1 New Construction/Renovation Projects

Several major renovation work throughout campus was started prior or during 2007-08. For the most part expected completion dates remain on target:

- Sanders Hall renovation still on target with expected move-in date by end of Summer 2009
- Waters Hall renovation completion date changed to 12/31/2009
- McCandless Hall and Browns Hall renovations are dependent upon personnel relocation
- McCain Hall HVAC replacement is dependent upon personnel relocation.

F.8 Printing & Publications

One-hundred percent of printing requests were accommodated and provided as agreed upon by the Printing and Publications staff. User satisfaction with the services exceeded the 95% expected outcome, indicating the office's commitment to meet the needs of its varied clientele in the most efficient and productive manner possible.

Two new administrative documents were developed in 2007-08: A Policy and Procedure Manual and a log system documenting the various jobs that are produced for the faculty, staff, administration and community. Printing & Publications inventory records, procedures, practices, policies, and the expenditures are maintained by the ASU Business Office.

F.9 University Advancement

F.9.1 Athens State University Alumni Association

The ASU Alumni Association exceeded its membership goals during 2007-08 with an increase of 19.4%. Alumni giving also exceeded expectations with an increase of 19.8% during the same reporting period. Data from the Graduating Senior Exit Survey indicate that 18.8% of recent graduates responding to the GSES plan to join the association. There is no previous data for comparison regarding recent graduates' likelihood of joining the Association, since the metric was measured for the first time in 2007-08.

F.9.2 Athens State University Foundation

The ASU Foundation exceeded its expected target outcomes regarding financial support for the University as follows:

- Established 8 new endowed scholarships
- Increased the number of total donors by 14%
- Increased the number of corporate donors by 12%
- Scholarship applications increased by 13%

The Athens State University Foundation maintained clean audit reports and policies and procedures in compliance with IRS guidelines for non-profit organizations and university policies for the 2007-08 academic year.

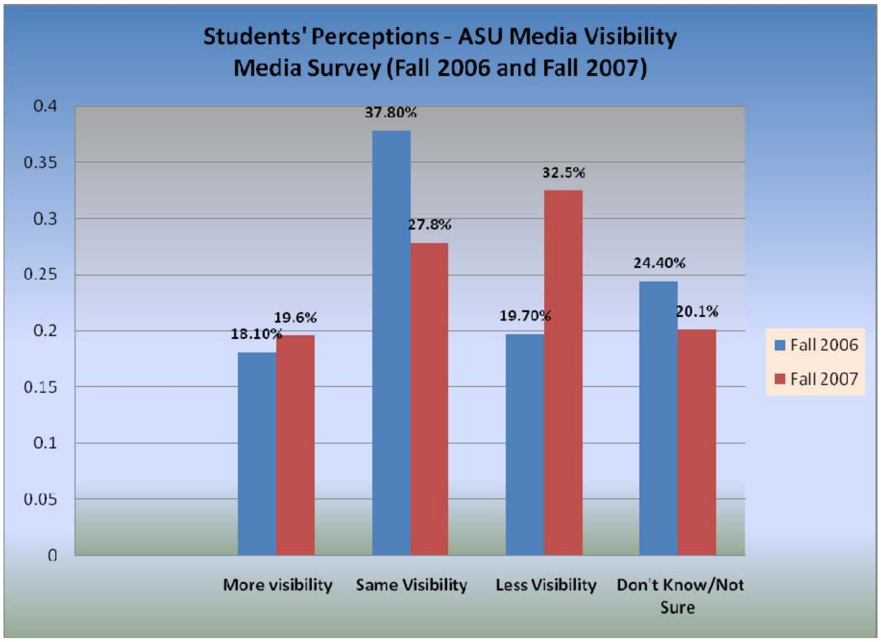
F.9.3 Marketing and Public Relations

Public Relations activities during 2007-2008 generated 113 press releases, resulting in 73 newspaper articles within the Athens, Decatur and Huntsville markets. Twenty-nine television news stories were aired from the three Huntsville affiliates during the same period. Both newspaper and television coverage reached well above the goal of 24 bylines each.

An analysis of marketing (advertising) performance from the 2006-2007 academic year as a baseline for comparison of the 2007-2008 Assessment indicated:

- ASU Media Aided Recall for Television Advertisement decreased by 6.0%.
- The respondents that perceived ASU's visibility as "more visible" compared to other institutions decreased slightly by 1.5%.

Figure 20. Athens State University Media Visibility



- The recall of the promoted campaign message increased by 9.7%.
- Initial knowledge of ASU through commercial media increased 3.2%.

Planned/Implemented Actions

- ASU has produced two new commercials to be played within regional and local markets
- Increase awareness through increased newspaper and television reporting of ASU event/activities

F.9.4 Athens State University Website

Comparative website traffic figures from the 2006-2007 academic year from which to calculate a percentage change were not available since the measurement started late 2007-08. The figures currently being tabulated will be used as a baseline to determine an increase or decrease for the 2008-2009 Assessment Report.

The cumulative positive satisfaction rating for the 2006-2007 academic year was rated as 88.1%. An analysis of the Graduating Senior Exit Survey, conducted in Spring and Summer 2008, indicated that 92.3% and 88.1% of the respondents were satisfied with the ASU website, respectively. The program will continue to monitor the performance of the website and make modifications as needed.

IV. LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

As academic programs and administrative/support organizational units concluded the first assessment cycle under the standards and timelines stipulated in the Outcomes Assessment Policy 1600-0900, their experiences provide a series of "lessons learned" and a better understanding of the challenges ahead.

- **Lessons Learned**
  - Organizational Behavior and Structure:
    - Instilling a "culture of assessment" throughout the institution will take time and continuous effort.
      - Acceptance of outcomes assessment as a normal part of university operations, academic and administrative, also will take time.
        - Even with an 88% compliance rate with assessment mandates, the extent to which outcomes assessment has "penetrated" internal processes and become a normal part of day-to-day operations varies considerably among academic programs and administrative organizations.
      - Institutional support is critical for commitment to and compliance with the outcomes assessment process. Senior-level officials must openly endorse, support, and enforce the process.
    - Differences among units are real, even within similar organizational functions.
    - A balance between some central oversight and organizational units control of their assessment activities proved successful in advancing the process.
  - Assessment Methodology
    - Formulating clearly defined objectives and identifying measurable performance indicators requires serious deliberation to ensure valid measurement and meaningful information. Further improvements are needed in this area.
    - Assessment plans should be focused and realistic. Measurements that were "too ambitious" proved to be irrelevant at the end given the difficulty and sometimes inability of managing the process. This is particularly important to academic programs that may have chosen to conduct assessment in too many courses. Methods that involve "all courses throughout the curriculum" should be reconsidered and/or avoided as much as possible.

- Academic programs' use of course grades as an assessment method is not an acceptable way of assessing learning outcomes since elements in grades are not always consistent among faculty or courses. Continuous discouragement of this practice remains a priority.

- Data analysis and reporting require disclaimers pertaining to data use limitations, validity and reliability. This must also include response rates, sample/universe size, etc. This is of particular relevance since the assessment process implemented under policy 1600-0900 in 2007 is a relatively new process. Accordingly, historical data that points to patterns and/or trends does not exist so baselines are being established in many cases.

- **Challenges**

  - Overcoming remaining levels of skepticism of the assessment process as a useful mechanism to effect continuous improvement.

  - Finding ways to better integrate assessment processes and data findings into day-to-day operations to enhance organizations' ability to make informed decisions.

  - Finding a way to extrapolate program and college level outcome aggregated data into institutional-level results in the absence of standardized measurements across the board.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Organizations identified with impact on institutional effectiveness and their assessment compliance status in 2007-08

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF ORGANIZATIONS IDENTIFIED FOR IE, CONDUCTING ASSESSMENT and COMPLIANCE W/ ASSESSMENT CYCLE

Organizational Function	CIPC	Academic Programs			Aademic Support			Student Support			Administrative			ACC					
		I'd IE	Cond Assm't		I'd IE	Cond Assm't		I'd IE	Cond Assm't		I'd IE	Cond Assm't		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
		#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	%	#	%		%
Behavioral Sciences	309999	1	1											1					
Psychology	420101	1	1											1					
Sociology	451101	1	1											1					
Health & Wellness Management	310504	1	1											1					
Health Science	519999	1	1											1					
Public Safety & Health Adminstration	430201	1	1											1					
Art	500701	1	1											1					
English	230101	1	1											1					
History	540101	1	1											1					
Justice Studies	430104	1	1											1					
Political Science	451001	1	1											1					
Religion	380201	1	1											1					
Social Science	450101	1	1											1					
Liberal Studies	240101	1	1											1					
Mathematics	270101	1	1											1					
Computer Science (Both options: CIS & CNT)	110101	1	1											1					
Biology	260101	1	1											1					
Chemistry	400501	1	1											1					
Natural Science (General Science)	301801	1	1											1					
Accounting	520301	1	1											1					
Management	520201	1	1											1					
Managemeny of Technology	529999	1	1											1					
Human Resources Management	521001	1	1											1					
Elementary Education	131202	1	1											1					
Career Tech (Secondary, Post-Second, Military)	131320	1	1											1					
Collaborative Teacher(K-6 & 6-12)	131001	1	1											1					
Physical Education	131314	1	1											1					
Early Childhood Education	131209	1	1											1					
Library					1	1								1					
Math Lab					1	1								1					
DL					1									0					
Acad Advising					1									0					
AMSTI					1									0					
Writing Center					1									0					
Accounting Lab					1									0					
Admissions & Records								1	1					1					
Career Services & Cooperative Education								1	1					1					
Counseling Services								1	1					0					
Disability Services								1	1					1					
Printing & Publications											1	1		1					
Recruitment								1	1					1					
Student Financial Services								1	1					1					
Student Activities								1	1					1					
Testing & Evening Services								1	1					1					
Transfer Advising Center								1	1					1					
Veterans Affairs								1	1					1					
Auxiliary Services											1	1		1					
Business Office											1	1		1					
Campus Security											1	1		1					
Human Resources											1	1		1					
Information Technology											1	1		1					
Physical Plant											1	1		1					
Institutional Planning, Research & Assessment											1	1		1					
Off-Campus Sites (University Centers)											1			0					
Alumni Affairs											1	1		1					
ASU Foundation											1	1		1					
Public Relations											1	1		1					
TOTAL	28	28	28	100%	7	2	29%	10	10	100%	12	11	92%	50	87.70%				