

Strategic Plan: 2016 – 2020

Athens State University has identified and compiled a four-year Strategic Plan based on Vision 2020 and input from all University stakeholders. This plan conceptualizes and sets a course for action for the University community to pursue and achieve through 2020. It is the intent of the Strategic Planning Committee that an annual report be given assessing the progress of these plans.

I. Athens State University will increase its recognition as the institution of choice for a culturally diverse traditional and non-traditional student population.

a. A variety of student activities and programs will be offered that will serve to enhance learning and increase the visibility of the University in the community and region.

1. Appropriate extra-curricular programs that engage students and support learning goals will be offered annually. When appropriate, online programs and activities will be designed and offered.
 - Overall higher student involvement in clubs and/or extracurricular activities was observed during AY 2016-17. High level of involvement increased to 12.2% (from 9.0% in AY 2015-16) while the no participation/involvement in extracurricular activities segment decreased from 49.4% in AY 2015-16 to 39.6% in AY 2016-17.
 - Renovated the University Testing Center to accommodate more testing spaces for students, specifically the growing number of COE students who need to complete PRAXIS testing requirements.
2. For any student activities program offered regardless of format, data on program participation, attendance, etc., will be collected so as to gauge the effectiveness of programs and whether they should be continued, revised, or discontinued.
 - Consistent with the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan (Short Term Plan), which calls, among other things, for the elimination of activities/events with low participation, six (6) fewer events (n=27) were conducted during AY 2016-17 resulting in overall decrease of 334 fewer participants (2,453 to 2,119 for AY 2016 and AY 2017, respectively). However, the average participation per individual events increased by 6.8% from 74 to 79 participants.
3. Student Activities and programs will be offered at each off-campus University Center every semester.
 - Fall 2016: Student-focused events were hosted at Wallace–Hanceville, Northeast Alabama Community College, Snead State, and Calhoun Community College
 - Spring 2017: Events were hosted at Centers located at Snead State, Northwest Shoals, Calhoun, and Wallace-Hanceville

b. Increase the diversity of student body.

1. Enrollment of Hispanic students will, at a minimum meet the State of Alabama percentage for public two-year institutions, and pursue an aspirational goal of 5% of the institution's total enrollment by 2020.
 - Enrollment of Hispanic students increased by 20% from 2015-2016 (59) to 2016-2017 (71) and is now 2.3% of the total enrollment of students.

II. Through a variety of innovative course delivery methods, Athens State will provide market-driven learning opportunities that offer a robust array of adult degree, liberal arts, education and business programs designed to meet the professional and personal needs of both students and employers.

a. Establish quality indicators to strengthen and monitor the instructional quality of all courses, regardless of delivery format.

1. Provide a variety of support mechanisms (technology, finances, personnel) to facilitate continuous improvement in the instructional quality.
 - BoT approved the Completion College Initiative designed to increase online offerings and adult-degree program capacity. This initiative included an

<p>investment in the Quality Matters quality assurance program in course design.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ During 2016-2017, 6 academic courses received Quality Matters certification through support mechanisms listed above. In addition, 3 more courses were ready for submission and 7 were in the final development stages. ➤ Dr. Sara Cline, Biology faculty member, integrated a Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) into the biology curricula spanning two semesters for all Biology graduates making Athens State the first school in Alabama to provide this exceptional lab-based learning opportunities for students. ➤ The ATS team began development of new a method for modifying and managing online content to meet accessibility requirements through DocSoft. The end goal is for faculty to use DocSoft to accurately transcribe both existing and future content for use as closed captions or printed transcripts. ➤ The ATS team also implemented Ally, a tool that works with Blackboard to help faculty more easily identify content accessibility issues. ➤ The Information Technology Services office completed a \$25,000 upgrade of the Computer Science network lab hardware. The upgraded lab provides Computer Science students with a more robust array of learning tools.
<p>b. Continue to add new programs of study that support the institution’s mission and are based on regional needs analysis.</p>
<p>1. Each College will examine the feasibility of adding Certificate and Badge options where appropriate to support the employment and professional development needs of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ COE developed a Certificate in Autism and Developmental Disabilities to allow Inservice teachers to receive credentials desired by their school districts ➤ COAS implemented a Bioinformatics Option for Biology majors, the first of its kind in the State. ➤ COB developed a Certificate in Accounting for students interested in finding entry-level jobs in accounting. This certificate program allows students to earn a credential as they work toward their degree. ➤ COAS developed a Health Care Administration option in the Health Sciences major that will allow students to develop an academic skill set to assist them in career advancement, while still serving as allied health practitioners. ➤ COB developed a B.S. in Health Care Management for business students seeking a career in management roles in the healthcare industry ➤ COB developed a Certificate in Human Resource Management as a new credentialing opportunity for students who are currently employed in the field to enable them to be more competitive for employment opportunities.
<p>2. Continue to strategically expand programs and activities located at the Alabama Center for the Arts buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ During the 2016-2017 year, the Center facilities hosted 27 business and industry activities, 51 meetings for internal and external entities, and 35 community events including art receptions and shows, lecture series, concerts, and performances. Increase of 88% from 2014-2015. (NOTE: 2015-2016 data not available)
<p>3. Strengthen data-driven strategies that closely monitor and respond to student needs and preferences for course scheduling (traditional, blended, distance learning).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Throughout the 2016-2017 year, a number of reports were created and analyzed regarding course offerings, enrollment monitoring reports, general education course enrollment, credit hour production, and courses by instructional delivery method. The results of these reports were reviewed by the Vice Presidents and the College Deans to inform ongoing schedule offerings. These are available upon request.
<p>c. Information literacy</p>
<p>1. Information literacy guidelines will be embedded in all Library instruction courses as well as in the EdTPA process.</p>

- Library faculty embedded assignments based on the national Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education to address students' information literacy skills. During 2016-2017, Library faculty were embedded into 177 courses affecting 3,142 students. This included a new course designed specifically for COE students preparing for the new EdTPA process (ED 313 Information Literacy for the Teacher Candidate)
 - Library faculty also developed a LibGuide for Information Literacy as a faculty and student resource.
2. Establish benchmarks for information literacy learning outcomes and monitor student achievement using a systematic assessment instrument.
- Library faculty developed information literacy benchmarks for each Library instruction course. This culminated in a new grading rubric for a specific assignment that allows for year-to-year comparison on student achievement. The first year for this data will be 2017-2018.

III. Athens State University will enhance its fiscal strength and effective planning process.

- a. Develop and execute strategies to improve **enrollment**, based on demographic projections, by 1% annually through 2020. This annual growth should also result in increases in credit hour production.
- Enrollment for 2015-2016 = 3,042. Enrollment for 2016-2017 = 3,065. Enrollment growth of .76%. Credit hour production was down 1.6% in 2016-2017. However, the graduate CHP was 474.
 - Launched the *Commitment to Learning Scholarship* program designed to assist students who have no academic reason for not continuing their students. Awarded 26 scholarships Fall 2016.
 - 2016-2017 Scholarship budget was increased to \$890,000. This amount included incentives for stop-outs, merit-based and need-based scholarships
- b. Develop, execute and assess **retention** strategies to maintain retention (Fall to Fall) within 2% of 76% (Fall 2016 data).
- Retention rate for 2016-2017 was 72.6%.
- c. Maintain **persistence** (Fall to Spring) rates within 2% of our 82% (4 year average) rate.
- Persistence rate for Fall 2016 – Spring 2017 was 81.19%.
- d. Utilize a comprehensive marketing and communications plan that encompasses outreach to prospective students, current students, alumni, current donors, and prospective donors.
- Marketing & Publications Office created a comprehensive media and communications plan for 2016-2017. The BECAUSE campaign used recent student photos and campaign materials representative of the diversity of our student population (gender, age, race, ethnicity).
 - Revised 4th quarter marketing plan to include more digital and social media in an effort to support ongoing radio and billboard efforts.
- e. Begin preparations for a 200th anniversary capital campaign that will begin in 2017 and conclude with a celebration event in 2022.
- "Athens Forever" marketing plan developed for the capital campaign and presented to BoT. The kick-off for this initiative started with the Homecoming event in August 2016. Capital Campaign committee developed with internal and external stakeholders. Identified current and future needs that correspond with Strategic and Facilities Master Plans. Updated and upgraded existing donor databases.
 - Office of University Advancement developed a charter for a BoT Development Committee to provide review, policy guidance and strategic oversight of the University's fundraising practices.
 - Developed collateral materials. Mailed over 3,000 letter to alumni celebrating 5, 10, 25 and 50th anniversaries of their commencement inviting them to attend Homecoming and sent more than 10,000 emails to alumni and friends of University.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Developed the “HOME IS WHERE THE COLUMNS ARE” theme for the 2016 Homecoming event.
<p>f. Amount of grants received will be \$100,000 annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dollar amount of grants received during 2016-2017 was \$11,800.
<p>g. Monitor institutional effectiveness procedures and policies to ensure a clear connection to and support of planning, budgeting, and assessment activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The University’s Institutional Effectiveness/Performance Management Policy is up to date, having been revised in May 2018, and is clearly connected to and supports University decision making. ➤ IE Matrix updated to reflect an alignment between 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and the annual assessment process for all 62 organizational functions of the institution (including both academic and administrative units)

IV. Athens State University will continue to strengthen its governance, partnerships and work with communities.

<p>a. Improve offerings targeted to provide support of Athens State programs and attendance at Concert/Lecture events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seven events were hosted by the Livingston Concert/Lecture Series and 27 different student-centered activities were hosted during the year with an estimated attendance of over 2,500. This represents a 25% increase in number of attendees from the previous year.
<p>b. Internal Collaboration</p> <p>1. Encourage and reward cross-disciplinary collaborations that maximize the collective talent of faculty from across all three colleges and the library.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Faculty from the COAS and COB worked together to research and design 2 new programs in the healthcare field. These programs are designed to serve a distinctly different student population but both focus on healthcare. ➤ University community collaborated on the development and adoption of a <i>Statement on Inclusion and Civility</i>. <p>2. Sponsor activities that focus on interdisciplinary opportunities for faculty through program development, research, and professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Writing Center and Library worked together to develop and host a Faculty Writing Retreat to support faculty in their research, writing and publishing process. Sponsored by the Provost’s Office, this 3-day event provided consultations and assistance, materials and encouragement to faculty.
<p>c. External Collaboration</p> <p>1. Strengthen and cultivate partnerships with the business and industry community for the purpose of listening and meeting their employment needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Career Development Center recognized for its collaborative work with the Disability Services Office to place 12 students at agencies on Redstone Arsenal through the national Workforce Recruitment Program. The WRP is a national referral and recruitment program for students with disabilities and serves as a pipeline for bringing new talent into the federal government. ➤ The Information Technology Services team joined forces with the FBI and the Huntsville chapter of InfraGard to provide a Cyber Forensics Camp for middle-school aged children. <p>2. Develop joint recruiting programs with community college partners that focus on the K-12 audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Grand Opening for the Alabama Center for the Arts Phase II focusing on 2+2 programs of study in drama/theatre and music. <p>3. Foster intentional relationships between university faculty and community college faculty.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In March 2017, the University partnered with Calhoun Community College to host a joint faculty professional development event featuring Dr. Ken Bain, a nationally renowned scholar and author of “What the Best College Teachers Do”. Over 220 faculty from both institutions attended and shared best practices and participated in large group activities.
<p>4. Continue to seek collaborative ventures with other institutions to increase access and services to students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ COE’s Early Childhood Dept. invited to join with Auburn, Jacksonville, and Univ of Mobile to form the Early Educator Innovate Network. ➤ Worked with our largest feeder institution (Calhoun Community College) to develop and submit a grant application for the national <i>Seamless Transfer Pathway Design Challenge</i> targeting the graduation rates of first-generation, high-needs, and at-risk students at both institutions. The design team included a large contingent from both institutions and while this effort was not selected for funding, it further strengthened several ongoing efforts between the two colleges. ➤ TEAM Grant funded by Appalachian Regional Commission to provide mentors and supplies to new K-12 teachers in Decatur City and Athens City Schools ➤ COE partnered with Athens City Schools to assist the school system in the development of online courses. ➤ As a follow-up to a July 2016 joint meeting hosted by Dr. Glenn and Dr. Kitts from UNA, Athens state hosted a Joint Dean’s Meeting on the Athens campus in October 2016. Agenda items included joint program opportunities in Cybersecurity, Logistics, Human Computer Interaction/User Experience, Innovation Engineering, and Forensic Accounting.
<p>5. Work with the City of Athens to increase visibility and promotion of the university.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ University’s Staff Senate partnered with Limestone County DHR to provide cash and toys for Christmas Drive.
<p>6. Develop a framework of activities to connect faculty and alumni.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The first annual Homecoming event (August 2016) brought together alumni and all employees, including faculty, in a social setting for dinner and music on Friday evening followed by the annual commencement ceremony on Founder’s Lawn the next day. Members of the Class of 1966 were featured. ➤ Alumni Affairs Office organized local, national and international travel opportunities for alumni and faculty.
<p>7. Continue to develop innovative Professional Development Schools (PDS) partnerships with P-12 schools to include year-long curriculum building as well as summer enrichment programs that provide robust hands-on experiences for teacher candidates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ongoing Academic Year PDS Programs (increased by 1 additional school for 2016-2017) Madison County: Includes all eight feeder schools which feed into Sparkman High. ➤ Summer PDS Programs: Athens City Schools: Athens Elementary (Reading & ELL) and Athens Middle School (ELL and Science) Hartselle City Schools: F.E. Burlson Elementary (Transient Child) and Crestline Elementary (Transient Child) Madison City Schools: Mill Creek Elementary School (Special Needs & ELL) James Clemons (Special Needs & ELL) Madison Elementary (Special Needs & ELL)