14.3

Comprehensive Institutional Reviews

The institution applies all appropriate standards and policies to its distance learning programs, branch campuses, and off-campus instructional sites.

Judgment

☑ Compliant   ☐ Non-Compliant   ☐ Not Applicable

Narrative

Report from the Off-Site Committee

The narrative and documentation for Standards 8.2.a and 10.4 were sufficient for those standards, however, that is insufficient for this standard. While the institution acknowledged in the Institutional Summary the presence of several off-site instructional locations, the institution did not fully demonstrate adequately how they ensure the implementation of the appropriate standards and policies to these distance learning programs, branches campuses, and off-campus instructional sites.

Focus Report Response

Albany State University (ASU) appreciates the Off-Site Committee acknowledgement that the University provided sufficient narrative and documentation for Standards 8.2 a and 10.4 in regards to its standards and policies to distance learner programs and off-campus instructional sites. Albany State University does not have branch campuses, but it does have off-campus instructional sites and online degree programs. Albany State University includes a review of distance education programs throughout its Compliance Certification. The University provides instruction and support for all its distance course and programs, no matter the location. Relevant standards outline how distance education students, including those at off-campus instructional sites, have access to the same education and services as traditional, face-to-face students. The information below notes content areas with appropriate standards and excerpts from these standards to document ASU's review of distance education and off-site instructional sites.

As described in Standard **2.1**, the expansive use of extended sites online and off-campus are reflected in the mission of Albany State University. Albany State University mission is appropriate in that it addresses learning opportunities for residents of its community, including the range of programs and services offered such as distance learning and off-site locations. The mission of Albany State University is consistent with the nature of off-campus locations and modalities of delivery. An excerpt of the mission is below:

> "Albany State University, a proud member institution of the University System of Georgia, elevates its community and region by offering a broad array of graduate, baccalaureate, associate, and certificate programs at its main campuses in Albany as well as at strategically-placed branch sites and online."

As illustrated in Standard **3.1a**, Albany State University (ASU) provides instruction for all course work required for associate, bachelor, master, and specialist degrees. Students have the opportunity to complete course work at ASU regardless of the degree they seek, or location or mode of delivery.

Standard 4.3, multi-level governance, is not applicable, Albany State University (ASU) has no branch campuses, separate boards or multi-level governance structure.

Faculty are typically hired to support ASU's overall programs rather than programs only offered on-line or off-campus and are members of the an appropriate department or college at ASU. Table 2 in the narrative for Standard **6.1**, demonstrates adequacy of the number of full-time faculty regardless of discipline taught, campus location, or mode of delivery. As described in Standard **6.2.a**, the University employment for academic faculty meet the SACSCOC standards for credentials regardless of teaching modality or location. Additionally, faculty teaching at all sites and via all modes of delivery are included in faculty rosters provided for Standard **6.2.a**. Narrative **6.3** illustrate faculty appointment and evaluation are the same regardless of campus, off-site campus, or mode of delivery. Albany State University faculty appointments align to the Board of Regents Policy and ASU Employee handbooks. The University regularly evaluates each faculty member in accordance with criteria in the ASU Faculty Handbook. The handbook is posted online and accessible to all faculty members. All full- and part-time faculty member are evaluated annually regardless of mode of instruction or location.

The narrative for Standard **6.5**, depicts how the University provides ongoing professional development opportunities to faculty consistent with the institutional mission through the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE). CFE provide face-to-face

workshops, online modules, travel mini-grants, redelivery workshops, consultant workshops, and faculty-staff workshops. The different platforms enable all faculty including off-campus and online to participate. For example, online training allows adjunct, part-time and off-campus faculty to attend trainings. The college subscribes to various content based professional journals and online databases, including JSTOR, Galileo, and books on teaching and learning. Additionally, the Online Distance Learning unit provides professional development activities to faculty using Quality Matters. This opportunity supports course design and development, providing faculty with strong pedagogical strategies for online course delivery. The program provides additional workshops in using GeorgiaVIEW and Quality Matters. The discussions for Standard 6 do not include faculty at branch campuses, ASU has no branch campuses.

For Standard 7.1, Albany State University does not have aspirations for broad goals and outcomes regarding growth and development of off-campus instructional sites and distance education. In Standard 7.2, all initiatives in the QEP include courses offered and students at the off-campus instructional support sites and online.

As described in the narrative for Standard 8.1, Albany State University identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to its mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The University also uses multiple measures to document student success. Albany State University establishes appropriate and measurable targets and outcomes for our students based on program type, our student demographic and the overall mission of the University. Students enrolled in online courses and off-site locations were counted in the broader institutional statistics and into outcomes assessment measures. Confirmed as present by the Off-Site Committee Institutions with multiple sites or with a broad array of distance learning programs may find it helpful to consider location or mode of delivery as a key variable in developing ways to use assessment results for program improvement. The narrative for Standard 8.2.a provides a table of student learning outcomes for ASU's educational programs. This table includes all delivery modes by which the respective educational programs are delivered, demonstrating that assessment data for student learning is collected for all of ASU's educational programs regardless of location or mode of delivery. All learning processes and compliance justifications have been incorporated into the appropriate narratives for the Core Requirements and Standards throughout ASU's Compliance Certification. These were satisfactorily evaluated by the Off-Site Committee.

As illustrated in the narratives for Standards 10.1 and 10.2, ASU's general academic policies that primarily pertain to students on matters such as grading policies, withdrawals, academic standing, degree completion requirements, and academic misconduct policies are published in the university's Undergraduate Catalog and Graduate Catalog and available to all students regardless of location or mode of instructional delivery. Policies that pertain to the faculty are published in the Faculty Handbook. The graduate and undergraduate catalogs as well as the faculty handbook are available online on ASU's website and accessible to all students and faculty. The Academic and Student Affairs Handbook and the BOR Policy Manual are available on the USG website. Albany State University (ASU) makes current academic calendars, grading policies, cost of attendance, and refund policies available to all students and the public on publicly accessible websites and through various publications. All information is online and available to all students regardless of location or mode of instructional location. The institution does not have branch campuses. These were satisfactorily evaluated by the Off-Site Committee.

In the narrative for Standard 10.9, Albany State University (ASU) faculty and administrative staff are committed to ensuring that transcripted coursework completed by students, regardless of location or format of delivery through eCore and eMajor collaboratives – which are SACSCOC accredited institutions within the University System of Georgia. The quality and integrity of the eCore courses recorded on the ASU transcripts as its own are ensured in a variety of ways. eCore courses are designed, developed, taught, and supported by faculty and staff from the University System of Georgia. This area was in compliance with the Off-Site Committee.

Narrative 10.4 was viewed by the Off-Site Committee as in compliance. As illustrated in the narratives for Albany State University educational programs are approved by the administration and faculty to ensure programs are appropriate for higher education and embody a coherent course of study for entrance into the workforce or transfer, no matter the location and mode of delivery. Development of distance education and off-campus courses taught follow the same procedure above. ASU utilizes a single course management system, GeorgiaView, to maximize consistency and minimize students' confusion.

As depicted in the narratives for Standards 11.1, 11.2, and 11.3, Albany State University ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and learning/information resources, no matter the instructional location or delivery mode this is illustrated in the "Student and Faculty Access to Library Services" section. In fulfilling ASU libraries' mission "to provide comprehensive information resources and services that support academic achievement and foster intellectual and stimulating educational activities to the diverse multi-campus community in southwest Georgia and beyond," the University provides all patrons throughout the institution the opportunity to access appropriate library collections and resources needed for their educational and research, no matter the location or mode of delivery. The ASU libraries provide patrons with an extensive collection of books, non-print materials, and online resources to support student learning and faculty teaching. All students have access to the ASU library's online resources, GALILEO (GeorgiA LIbrary LEarning Online) and GIL (GALILEO Interconnected Libraries) that include over 200 databases and thousands of periodicals, newspapers and scholarly journals.

The narrative for Standard 12.1 was viewed by the Off-Site Committee as compliant. As illustrated in the narratives for Standard 12.1, Albany State University offers a variety of student support programs, services, and activities that are consistent with the purpose and mission as a public four-year state university that promotes student learning and enhances the development of students regardless of location or mode of instruction. The narrative in Standard 12.1 provides a table

with student support services by on campus, online and off-site locations and the services match the needs of students by location and mode. The majority of student support services are offered to all students regardless of location and modality of instruction. Student health services, counseling and disability services, student activity advisory board, library, and tutoring are available to all students, online and off-site locations. ASU provides support services for distance learners through an orientation program with the learning management system and a support specialist.

As described in Standard **12.4**, procedures for addressing student complaints and grievances are the same for all Albany State University students regardless of location or mode of delivery of instruction.

The financial documents for branch campuses in Standard 12.2 is not applicable, Albany State University does not have branch campuses.

The narrative for Standard 13.7 was in compliance with the Off-Site Committee, all facilities including smaller off-site campuses were addressed in Requirement **13.7** under the "Campuses of Albany State University and Analysis of ASU's Facilities". ASU has adequate facilities which are depicted in the campus master building list, parking, and athletic facilities tables. There are no physical resources for branch campuses, Albany State University does not have branch campuses. All ASU campuses have access to library services that include over 200 online databases and thousands of periodicals, newspapers, and scholarly journals with more than 10,000 journals titles provided in full-text. This area was in compliance with the Off-Site Committee.

As described in **13.8**, Albany State University takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe and secure environment for all members of its campus community. The Albany State University Police department handles safety and security issues on the East and West Campuses. Off-Site campuses handle security and safety issues through the respective city (e.g., Cordele) or institution (e.g, Southern Regional Technical College or South Georgia Regional Technical College. Counseling and disability services are provided to all students regardless of campus and mode of instructional delivery. Additionally, procedures for addressing student complaints and grievances are the same for all Albany State University students regardless of location or mode of delivery of instruction.