



February 7, 2013

Associate of Arts in General Studies Undergraduate Academic Advising

Degree Program Assessment Progress Report for 2012

1. *What are your student learning goals for this degree program? Include which core competencies are addressed by these goals where applicable.*

The goal of the Associate of Arts in General Studies (AAGS) program is to provide students with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Core Curriculum as a base for continuing in school for a bachelor's degree. Beginning in the Fall of 2003, the Associate of Arts in General Studies requires the completion of the UALR 44 core and a total of 64 credit hours. All 10 core competencies are satisfied by students who complete the AAGS. This fulfills the purpose of the core curriculum, "to establish a foundation for the undergraduate academic experience and to ensure that the students develop fundamental skills and a lifelong commitment and ability to learn."

All AAGS degree seeking students are required to meet the degree requirements which include the UALR core.

2. *Students learning outcomes addressed each year.*
 - 2.1 Outcome one: To complete the UALR Core Curriculum and be prepared to continue studies for a bachelor's degree.
 - 2.2 Outcome two: To encourage students to consider this degree as progress toward a higher degree.
 - 2.3 Outcome three: To enable students to feel a sense of personal accomplishment upon receipt of the degree.
 - 2.4 Outcome four: To provide students with a means of personal advancement.
3. *Where will the outcomes be addressed in your program?*

All UALR courses are assessed in their respective departments.

The learning outcomes are assessed annually by the Office of Undergraduate Academic Advising and begin with a review of student responses on the Student Survey, Banner review of student status, and an analysis of worksheets and unofficial transcripts.

4. *How do you assess each objective?*
 - a. Methods: Outcome 1 and part of Outcome 2 are assessed by reviewing information in Banner. The "Degree Summary" form is reviewed to find the number of students who complete the

Associates of Arts in General Studies, and the “Registration Query” form is used to determine how many are still enrolled at UALR. The information that is missing is the number of students who go on to another school, such as the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), to pursue a higher education after completing the prerequisites of being accepted into professional programs. The Student Survey asks the students to report their intent to continue for a higher degree.

The two groups of students were the current cohort of students for 2012-2013 who filed AAGS degree plans and the previous year cohort of the students for 2011-2012 to access their status one year later.

Outcomes 3 and 4 are assessed by counting the respective responses from the Student Survey, indicating if they feel a sense of accomplishment and/or if the AAGS is a means of professional advancement. The information obtained from Banner is reliable and valid. The information obtained from the Student Survey is self-reported and is considered reliable

- b. Design: The AAGS applicant completes the Student Survey when signing the degree plan.
- c. Assessment Cycle: The review and assessment of each outcome is conducted annually for the AAGS.
- d. Stakeholder involvement: The annual Degree Program Assessment Plan and Progress Reports are posted on the Undergraduate Academic Advising and the Provost’s Assessment Central websites each year.

5. *What are the assessment findings? How were the findings analyzed?*

The first outcome is to provide students with the UALR Core Curriculum as a base for continuing in school for a bachelor’s degree. In 2012, all of the AAGS applicants have satisfied the 2012 program requirements and the UALR core. With the core complete, students are in a position to continue for a bachelor’s degree. The completion of the UALR core, completion of the AAGS, and a sense of accomplishment support UALR’s graduation and retention efforts.

A second outcome is that students will consider this degree as progress toward a higher degree. For the current 2012-2013 students, eighty-nine (87%) are still actively enrolled students at UALR in the spring semester of 2013. None of the students have completed a bachelor’s degree. Ninety-three (91%) students indicated on the student survey that they plan to continue in school to get a bachelor’s degree. Two of those students indicated they plan to transfer to UAMS to one of the health related professions degree programs. Nine students indicated that they did not plan to continue for a bachelor’s degree and did not state a reason.

Students seeking the AAGS in 2011-2012 (N) =145 were reviewed one year later to determine: 1) if the student is still enrolled at UALR in the Spring of 2011 and 2) if the student has completed the Associates of Arts or bachelor’s degree at UALR. The status of each student was checked in BANNER.

Still working or completed the AA (N) = 145

- Still working on AA -- 57
- Completed the AA - 88
- Completed the AA (not enrolled at UALR) – 38
- Completed the AA and working for bachelors - 42
- Completed the AA and a bachelor’s degree - 8

Not enrolled at UALR and did not complete the AA

- Did not complete the AAGS - 21
- Not currently enrolled at UALR one year later (Spring 2013) -67

The third outcome is to enable students to feel a sense of personal accomplishment upon receipt of the AAGS degree. On the student survey, students are asked to check the reason for applying for the degree. They may check any that apply.

The fourth outcome is to provide students with a means of professional advancement. 54 students checked *job opportunity/advancement* on the survey reflecting that they expect this degree to help them with increased employment and/or advancement opportunities.

The following results are from this year's survey.

- Job opportunity/advancement 54
- Personal satisfaction 64
- Intent to transfer 15
- Other (comments) 4
- Comments:

Comments from the survey:

Leaving for an 18 month mission. Good cutoff point
Scholarship/grants opportunities for bachelor's program

1. Will the receipt of the AA degree help you receive a promotion or move into a better job, or keep a job (degree now required by employer)? Briefly describe.

Look for better job

This will help me receive a promotion

Yes

Help me go on to further my education in radiology

Not exactly. I'm working to obtain my ASN in Nursing. Following that I would like to obtain my bachelors in nursing and so on.

Hopefully it will help me to get a better job out of state when I transfer.

I began college because I was on disability and now I am working again, I will not use my AA.

No

It will help me earn the highest possible pay for the job I currently have.

No

Seeking it related position

Promotion points for military

No

Receive Promotion

The AA degree is a stepping stone to a bachelor's degree and proves to my company and myself that I am determined to achieve my goals

Yes, a 2 year degree is needed for aviation in the army

No

I am currently trying to advance at my job or possibly transfer. This degree will help with that.

Yes I get a promotion at my job with a raise. Degree is required by employer

Will help me get into Baptist to finish schooling for my career

Yes

Plan to apply for different job

No

Possible increase in salary

Hopefully

It can definitely help a current job opportunity and can only strengthen my future opportunities. Appreciate the education and knowledge received thus far in my tenure here at UALR.

It will not assist in helping me with my current position I am acquiring it to help with future advancement.

No

Not at this time but it will enhance my resume and give me certain credentials needed to move up in the workplace.

That's possible

Internship to permanent employment, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. I like having at least a 2 year degree over no degree. I can take my time more earning my bachelor's

No

Yes, it is a career move to work into specific area of studies and excel. I have done well these 3 semesters due to incredible instructors. Thanks!

Not required for work study

No, I think it will better my chances for transfer. Also it motivational for myself

Move into a better job to better myself and life style

No

I am hoping that an AA will open more doors for me

No

Possibly help with my job. I work at Baptist Health part time in the ER

Yes, keep a job.

AA degree will put me on par with my peers educationally. It offers leverage that others do not possess it does offer better opportunity of employment job and personal satisfaction.

Eventually this will look good for interview purposes this might help me get a job in the future.

An additional 17 students commented "yes."

An additional 20 students commented "no."

Student Characteristics

Student characteristics are analyzed annually. One hundred forty-four students filed degree plans in 2012-2013, representing a decrease of .6% over the previous year.

Year	Total # Students	% Change
2012-2013	144	-.6%
2011-2012	145	+23%
2010-2011	118	+.02%
2009-2010	116	+20%
2008-2009	97	+8%
2007-2008	90	+3%
2006-2007	87	+26%
2005-2004	69	-9%
2004-2005	76	-6%

For 2012-2013, seventy-seven (77) were native UALR students and sixty-seven (67) were transfer students. Native UALR students are defined as those who began in college as a “first year freshman” or “freshman transfer” student, even if they transferred credits, such as for summer school, back to UALR. The following table illustrates the number of native UALR students and the number of transfer students.

Year	UALR#	UALR%	Transfer #	Transfer%
2012-2013	77	53%	67	47%
2011-2012	61	42%	84	58%
2010-2011	40	34%	78	66%
2009-2010	63	54%	53	46%
2008-2009	45	45%	52	54%
2007-2008	48	53%	42	47%
2006-2007	53	61%	34	39%
2005-2006	32	46%	37	54%
2004-2005	37	49%	38	51%

The next table identifies the number of student who actually earned the Associate of Arts (regardless of when the degree plan was filed).

Year	# Earned a Degree	# Filed a Degree Plan
2012-2013	48	144
2011-2012	42	145
2010-2011	69	118
2009-2010	82	116
2008-2009	73	97
2007-2008	56	90

The average age of students applying for the AAGS this year is 29 years of age, with an age range of 19-57, which is higher than last year’s average age of 20. It is lower than the average age of all 2012 undergraduate students, which was 20 for fall 2012, 75% of the AAGS applicants are female, and 25% are male. With the exception of age these characteristics remains the most stable from year to year as reported by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Educational Student Services assessment website -Student Body Defined – Fall 2012.

6. *What conclusions were drawn and decisions made as a result?*

Conclusions:

The number of students who earned the AAGS degree after requesting an official degree plan increased in this assessment cycle.

The number of students applying for the degree has decreased by .6% this year. The characteristics of the student applying for the Associate of Arts degree remain consistent with prior years, except for a lower average age in 2011.

“Personal Satisfaction” is the most frequently checked response on the survey as a reason for applying for the degree. Students apply for the AAGS after having been in and out of school for

several years, so that it represents a sense of accomplishment for many. Additionally, completing the associate degree can mean job advancement or job opportunity. This, in addition to the “Job Opportunity/Advancement” factor, appears to support the retention of students.

Legislative Impact and curriculum changes:

For 2010, the Associate of Arts in General Studies is the in-state associate degree designated for transfer under ACT 182 of 2009 effective Summer 2010. All students requesting AAGS degree plan are meeting the designated degree requirement.

In 2011-2012, the expanded Rodgers-Phillips Act 747 allowed for the Associates of Arts degree designated for transfer to be 60 credit hours which is halfway to the desired 120 credit hours for a bachelor’s degree. This change was submitted to the Undergraduate Council to decrease the number of credit hours currently required from 64 to 60. This was accomplished by reducing the number of elective courses from 20 credits to 16 credits.

The Undergraduate Council approved this change in September of 2012. Approval was also granted to apply the 60 hour rule retroactively to all students seeking the degree beginning in fall 2012. The approval to apply the new 60 credit hour degree requirements retroactively to students seeking the degree fall 2012 to date will most likely result in more degrees awarded in the next assessment cycle.

The UALR Faculty Senate is considering changes to the core curriculum. Any approved core curriculum changes will be incorporated into the Associate of Arts in General Studies degree requirements and degree plan.

The state of Arkansas Department of Higher Education has mandated productivity funding. This model of funding is driven by the state need to increase the number of graduates by 2025. The Associate of Arts in General Studies contributes to this critical priority. A concerted effort was made by the Office and Financial Manager to contact students with Associate of Arts in General Studies degree plans, who completed all degree requirements yet had not applied for graduation.

The degree requirement that the last 15 hours must be in residence is being reviewed and maybe eliminated if approved.

Assessment results are posted on the following websites: the Provost’s Assessment Central and Undergraduate Academic Advising