The University at Albany
2012 SUNY Student Opinion Survey:
Report on Trends and Key Findings

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Executive Summary

Between March 21st and April 30th 2012, the University at Albany surveyed its undergraduate student population on a variety of areas related to student satisfaction and their educational experiences as part of the SUNY-wide administration of the Student Opinion Survey (SOS), a survey effort going back to the 1980s.

Summary of 2012 SOS Results:

- Overall, UAlbany’s mean ratings dropped slightly between 2009 and 2012, decreasing in 64 of 96 items that appeared on both surveys; at the same time, the average rating only decreased by 0.04 on the 5-point scales.
- Despite the decreases, UAlbany managed to hold onto nearly all the gains we had seen over prior survey administrations. Compared to 2006, 77 of 92 items were still higher, for an average increase of 0.16.
- Figure 1, below, shows a clear overall longer-term trend of steadily improving student satisfaction with academic programs, facilities and services, non-academic programs, facilities and services, and residential and dining facilities and services.
- Unlike the other categories, overall satisfaction dropped in 2012 below 2006 levels.

![Figure 1](image)

*Figures on the left are average scores across several items, using 5-point Likert-type scales.*
**UAlbany’s Progress as Compared with the Other Three SUNY University Centers.**

Some figures that stand out from the SOS analysis include:

- Across all survey items for which SUNY provided comparative scores with the other three SUNY University Centers, UAlbany’s average score dropped slightly from 3.55 in 2009 to 3.51 in 2012, but still well above 3.39 for 2006.
- From 2009 to 2012 the average for the other Centers dropped similarly from 3.62 to 3.60, only slightly higher than their average of 3.53 for 2006.
- UAlbany’s mean ranking score improved very slightly from 3.35 in 2006 to 3.23 in 2012 (“1” is the best ranking and “4” is the poorest).
- Despite the slight overall improvement in our rankings, UAlbany was ranked 4th on more items in 2012 than we were in 2006. (because Binghamton did not participate in 2009, we only compare 2012 rankings with 2006).
  - UAlbany ranked 1st on 6 of the 105 ranked items, or 6%, compared to 3 of 106 items, or 3% in 2006.
  - UAlbany ranked 2nd on 16 items, or 15%, compared to 7 and 7% in 2006.
  - UAlbany ranked 3rd on 31 items, or 30%, compared to 49 and 45% in 2006.
  - UAlbany ranked 4th on 52 items, or 50%, compared to 49 and 46% in 2006.
- In summary, while UAlbany has managed to hold onto our gains in our average rankings, we still remain below the comparative rankings with the other University Centers, even though in most cases the differences are very small.

**Summary and Conclusion:**

Taken as a whole, a number of important conclusions from the 2012 SUNY Student Opinion Survey results stand out:

- General student satisfaction with UAlbany dropped more than other areas, the only category where satisfaction dropped below levels observed in the 2006 survey;
- Satisfaction with particular facilities, programs, services, and aspects of campus life at UAlbany has decreased very slightly since 2009, but has still increased across-the-board since 2006, and still represents a continuing trend of improved satisfaction with UAlbany academics and campus life since the 2000 and 2003 survey administrations. In general:
  - Areas that already had high satisfaction have higher satisfaction;
  - Areas that in the past had modest or inconsistent satisfaction are now more firmly in the high-satisfaction category;
  - Some previously low-satisfaction items can now be categorized as moderate-satisfaction items, and even those few items that remain low-satisfaction areas have seen substantial and steady improvement since 2000.
- Despite closing the gaps numerically in most areas between our average rankings and those of the other three SUNY University Centers over the last few survey administrations, UAlbany remains in third or fourth place for most survey items, albeit with minimal differences in most instances.
The University at Albany 2012 SUNY Student Opinion Survey:

Report on Trends and Key Findings

This Report on the SUNY Student Opinion Survey Results focuses primarily on the most recent survey administration which occurred in Spring 2012. Selected results from previous survey administrations are included below to provide a longitudinal context, as appropriate. Those wishing additional information about this survey program or the results should contact Joel Bloom, Associate Director for Survey Research, at jbloom@albany.edu

Survey Administration and Methodology: Between March 21st and April 30th, 2012 the University at Albany surveyed its undergraduate student population on a variety of areas related to student satisfaction and their educational experiences as part of the SUNY-wide administration of the Student Opinion Survey, a survey effort going back to the 1980s. The surveys were conducted on UAlbany’s behalf by American College Testing (ACT). All matriculated undergraduates were sent up to three e-mail invitations requesting their participation. After ACT removed partial and invalidated surveys 1,552 students remained, representing 13 percent of the population, substantially lower than the 16 percent response rate obtained with the 2009 SOS administration. As shown in Appendix A, survey respondents are broadly representative of UAlbany undergraduates on a variety of demographic and academic variables, with the exception of gender, where males are under-represented, as is typically the case with student surveys. Given the number of respondents and the population size, the margin of error suggests that we can be 95% confident that our survey responses are within +/- 2.3% of the true population values.

Appendix B contains average responses on all survey items, along with results on the same or related items from previous surveys going back to 1991. The Appendix also shows the average of the other three SUNY University Centers for 2012, along with our comparative ranking among the four centers.

2012 was the second year that UAlbany administered the survey on the internet, bringing us in line with the other three SUNY University Centers. UAlbany conducted the 2003 and 2006 surveys in a randomly selected sample of classrooms; prior to that surveys were administered by mail.1

1 Because of the change in mode of administration, we cannot rule out entirely the possibility that changes from previous years to 2009 and 2012 are based on this mode change. However, we can feel fairly confident that our results are accurate for a number of reasons. First, we moved from one type of self-administered survey to another; while large differences are sometimes found between telephone or face-to-face surveys which have live interviewers and self-administered surveys in which respondents fill out the forms on their own, we shifted from one type of self-administered survey (paper) to another (web). Second, for several items regarding general satisfaction, the 2009 and 2012 results are essentially in line with 2006. Third, for the large majority of more specific items, the numbers for 2009 and 2012 are up from 2006, but represent continuations of upward trends from previous years rather than entirely new phenomena. Finally, based on analysis of previous surveys at UAlbany, we should not generally expect important differences between surveys utilizing in-class samples and those conducted online in which the entire population is invited to participate. If anything, the larger numbers made possible by web administration make the newer findings more reliable and they certainly make comparisons among the SUNY Centers more accurate, since all four Centers are using the same mode.
Changes in UAlbany’s Survey Responses between 2009 and 2012:

Summary of 2012 SOS Results:

- Of 96 items asked in both 2009 and 2012, UAlbany’s mean rating improved on 29, or 29% of items, while declining in 64, or 67% of items.
- UAlbany evaluations on all 95 survey questions asked in both years declined very slightly by an average of 0.04 on the scale of 1-5, equivalent to a 1% decrease; this is after an average increase of .16 between 2006 and 2009 and 0.17 between 2003 and 2006.
  - The 2012 average scores were higher than 2003 averages on 58 of the 63 items that were included in the same form in both surveys. Scores on these items improved an average of .32, the equivalent of an 8% increase.
- With a slight overall decline in UAlbany’s average satisfaction scores in 2012, not many areas saw substantial improvements from the 2009 numbers. However there were some exceptions – items which improved by at least .10 included:
  - Satisfaction with “Personal security/safety on campus” improved from 3.47 to 3.92, an increase of .45, or 11%, after being very stable from 2003-2009.
  - Satisfaction with “Parking facilities/services” improved from 2.56 to 2.89, an improvement of .33, or 8%. Since 2003, this item has improved .98, or 25%.
  - On frequency of experiencing “classroom behavior by other students that was disruptive to learning,” this item improved from 2.97 to 3.10 (reverse coded to reflect the negative nature of the item), an improvement of .13, or 3%.
- Taking another look at top five survey items that showed the greatest improvement between 2006 and 2009, we find that only one (billing and payment procedures) continued its improvement. The other items saw various levels of decline, although all remained above their 2006 levels. The top five areas of improvement between 2006 and 2009 were:
  - “Billing and payment procedures” was up from 3.26 in 2006 to 3.67 in 2009, and up again to 3.71 in 2012 for a total increase of .45 or 11%.
  - “Purposes for which student activity fees are used” was up from 2.78 in 2006 to 3.22 in 2009, but is now at 2.85.
  - “Student government” was up from 2.96 in 2006 to 3.39 in 2009, but is now at 3.17.
  - “Your sense of belonging on this campus” was up from 3.26 in 2006 to 3.64 in 2009, but is now at 3.44.
  - “Student voice in college policies/plans” was up from 2.94 in 2006 to 3.29 in 2009, but is now at 3.01.

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2 Percent changes are calculated based on the possible responses to the survey questions between 1 and 5, or an actual range of four points. Thus in this case the calculation is (0.23/4) = 0.0575, or 6%.

3 To assist with interpretation, ACT defines differences of 0-0.10 as "none," 0.10-0.29 as "small," 0.30-0.49 as medium, and 0.50 and larger as "large." These designations are informal rules of thumb designed to assist in interpretation; they are not intended to be statistically meaningful.
Revisiting the five items that showed the largest increases between 2003 and 2006, we again find some very slight backsliding in 2012 although satisfaction levels remain well above 2003 and 2006 for all items. These items were all areas of particular administration focus during that time period, although the increase in satisfaction does not by itself provide proof of cause and effect.

- “Recreation/Intramural Programs” improved from 3.16 in 2003 to 3.68 in 2006 and 3.90 in 2009 before declining to 3.78 in 2012. This represents a net improvement of 0.62 or 16%.
- “Parking Services,” as already discussed, was one of the largest areas of improvement in 2012. It increased from 1.91 in 2003 to 2.56, up from 2.35 in 2006 and 1.91 in 2003 to 2.35 in 2006, 2.56 in 2009 and finally 2.89 in 2012, a total increase of 0.98 or 25%.
- “Classroom Facilities” improved from 3.31 in 2003 to 3.73 in 2006 and 3.77 in 2009 before dropping slightly to 3.75 in 2012, a net increase of 0.44 or 11%.
- “Residence Hall Services and Programs” increased from 2.76 in 2003 to 3.14 in 2006 and 3.47 in 2009 before dropping slightly to 3.39 in 2012, a net increase of 0.63 or 16%.
- “College Bookstore” improved from 3.14 in 2003 to 3.48 in 2006 and 3.55 in both 2009 and 2012, a total increase of 0.41 or 10%.

In survey items that measure general student satisfaction the 2012 scores show some of UAlbany’s largest decreases in satisfaction since 2009, in fact falling to below 2006 satisfaction levels:

- “How satisfied are you with this college in general?” dropped to 3.62, a substantial drop from 3.80 in 2009 and 3.82 in 2006, and only slightly above 3.59 in 2003.
- “If you could start over, would you choose to attend this college again?” dropped to 3.60 from 3.80 in 2009 and 3.75 in 2006, but still a bit higher than 3.46 in 2003.

Figure 1, below, shows a clear overall trend of steadily improving SOS evaluations as measured by scales that show average item ratings on academic programs and services, non-academic programs, services and campus climate, residential and dining services, and overall satisfaction. As the chart shows:

- While overall satisfaction averages are the highest of all categories, they are also the only area to drop below their 2006 levels this year.
- Both the academic and non-academic categories have seen steady improvement over the period, with only slight drop-off from 2009 to 2012.
- The areas of residence halls and dining services are highlighted here because in the early part of this period they were among UAlbany’s areas of lowest satisfaction. As the chart shows, student satisfaction in these areas has improved steadily and substantially over the course of the last 12 years.

In summary, while UAlbany’s average levels of student satisfaction have dropped slightly between 2009 and 2012, overall we have maintained consistent and considerable improvement in the past three SOS administrations.

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4 Because question wording and content changed from one survey to the next, these averages are broadly but not precisely comparable.
Overall College Impressions:5

- When comparing academic expectations to their experience, more than three quarters (78%) of respondents indicated that Albany met or exceeded their academic expectations. Only 22% responded that UAlbany had not met their academic expectations.

- A solid majority (60%) indicated that they would definitely or probably choose Albany again if starting over, down slightly from 2006 and 2009 but up from 57% in the 2003 survey. Another 19% were uncertain, while only 21% definitely or probably would not choose Albany again, up from 15% and 16% in 2009 and 2006, but down from 23% in 2003.

- Only 8% of respondents gauged Albany’s overall quality of education as low or very low, while 48% (down from 54% in 2006 and 2009 but up from 46% in 2003) rated the overall quality of education very high or high, and the remaining 44% rated it as average (up from 43% and 44% in 2009 and 2006 but down from 48% in 2003).

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5 In this section of the report we shift from reporting averages on the five-point scales to reporting combined percentages of the top two most positive response categories. Both are legitimate ways of looking at the results, and each method shows the results in a slightly different light. One quirk of the response patterns in 2012 is that while the percentage satisfied did not change much, and in many cases increased, the levels of actual dissatisfaction (compared to neutral responses) did increase slightly but consistently. Thus, when looking at this section of the report, the reader will note that substantially more survey items increased or remained the same in their levels of satisfaction compared to 2009 when viewed from this perspective.
As in the past, UAlbany was the first college choice of nearly half of respondents, or 47%. Another 30% indicated that UAlbany was their second choice, for a total of 76% of UAlbany students who arrived here as either their first or second choice school. Only 24% of students surveyed initially ranked UAlbany as their third choice or lower.

Student Satisfaction with Academic Services, Facilities, and Environment:

- **Academic facilities:** As in 2009, majorities of respondents continue to be satisfied or very satisfied with all academic facilities at the University at Albany. The top-ranked facilities include library resources (86% satisfied or very satisfied), library facilities (84%), study areas (76%), classroom facilities and fine and performing arts studios (73% each). The university computer network also garnered over two thirds satisfaction (69%) and 65% of students were satisfied with course-related laboratories.

- **Instruction:** Students similarly indicate high levels of satisfaction with various components of instruction at the University, with majorities of respondents reporting satisfaction with regard to all items, including availability of general education courses, an item which did not achieve majority satisfaction in 2006, but did reach it in 2009 and 2012. The latter is of particular interest because improving access to general education courses was a top priority at UAlbany over the 2006-2009 period. 78% of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the out-of-class availability of instructors and 73% are satisfied with faculty respect for students. Nearly two thirds of respondents were satisfied with quality of instruction (62%) and class size (65%). Finally, 60% were satisfied with course availability within their major and 57% were satisfied with general education course availability.

- **Academic Services:** As with library facilities and resources, 83% of students who participated in the survey reported being satisfied or very satisfied with library services. More than 60% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with three other areas: computer support services (66%), centralized academic advisement services (63%), and academic advisement within their major (59%), both areas that had enjoyed lower than 50% satisfaction prior to 2009. Finally, 56% of students were satisfied with tutoring services and only 45% were satisfied with availability of internships (both of the latter areas are higher than the 2009 numbers).

Frequency of Academic Experiences:

- In this section of the survey, students were asked how frequently they have had a variety of academic experiences, using the following range: never, rarely, sometimes, frequently or very frequently. Perhaps not surprisingly, the highest frequency rating was in response to a question on frequency of going to class with course readings and assignments completed (83% frequently or very frequently, up from 81% in 2009). 75% report that they are frequently required to think critically in completing assignments (up from 74% in 2009 and 65% in 2006). 60% report having been frequently or very frequently having been intellectually stimulated by the material covered in class (down from 63% in 2009 but up from 55% in 2006). Majorities of UAlbany students also reported having frequently or very frequently been given out-of-class assignments that required a written response (56%) or received feedback from instructors on assignments (53%).
Three of the five items receiving the lowest percentages reporting frequent or very frequent experiences are those that describe negative experiences – having experienced disruptive behavior in the classroom (28%, down from 31% in 2009), having had a faculty member communicate ineffectively in class (24%, down from 27%), and having observed student dishonesty (21%, up from 18% in 2009).

Several new pedagogically-related questions were added beginning with the 2003 and 2006 surveys, and in some cases these items show areas of academic challenge for UAlbany (and other SUNY schools). Low frequency items along these lines include: having discussions with instructors outside of class (29%), having a faculty member use innovative instructional technology (36%), collaborating with other students on assignments (38%) and having a faculty member require you to make “judgments in class about the value of information, arguments, or methods” (38%). Only 21% reported having frequently or very frequently having “been involved in community service through a program at this college,” but this contrasts with the 75% who expressed satisfaction with “opportunities for community service” (see below).

Satisfaction with Non-Academic College Services and Facilities:

- **Non-Academic Facilities**: Students who participated in the survey reported strong levels of satisfaction with regard to three types of non-academic facilities: campus center/student union (77%, up from 76% in 2009 and 64% in 2006 satisfied or very satisfied), intracampus transportation (71% – this was a new question in 2012), athletic and recreational facilities (69%, up from 67% in 2009 and 61% in 2006) and the college bookstore (60%), and the condition of buildings and grounds (64%, up from 63% and 49%). Satisfaction was lower with the condition of residence halls (45%, down from 48% in 2009 but up from 33% in 2006). Satisfaction with “parking services” improved from 26% in 2009 to 38% in 2012.

- **Non-Academic Services**: As with most other areas covered in the survey, non-academic services at UAlbany saw very substantial improvements in student satisfaction between the 2006 and 2009 surveys. In the 2012 survey seventeen of nineteen items reached the 50% level in satisfaction, compared only five of eighteen items in 2006 and fourteen out of seventeen items in 2009. Highest satisfaction items were “freedom from harassment on campus” (83% satisfied or very satisfied), “campus acceptance of individual differences” (81%), “opportunities for involvement in campus clubs/activities” (78%), “campus openness to opinions of others” (76%), and “racial harmony on this campus” (74%). The only items with below-50% satisfaction in 2012 were “student government” (40%) and “student input in college policies/plans” (38%), but even those items are net positive in their average scores (3.17 and 3.10 respectively).

**Health & Wellness Services and Programs**: Satisfaction in all six survey items that comprise this area was at or near two thirds in 2012, topped by 69% of respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied with recreation and intramural programs, down from 75% in 2009 but still up from 62% in 2006. Other areas of strong satisfaction included personal counseling services (68%, up from 67% in 2009 and 51% in 2006), sexual assault prevention programs (67%, down from 70% in 2009 but up from 42% in 2006), health and wellness programs (67%, unchanged from 2009 but up from 42% in 2006), student health services (67%, up from 61% in 2009 and 49% in 2006), and educational programs
Regarding alcohol and substance abuse (64%, unchanged from 2009 and up from 41% in 2006).

Residential and Food Services: This has been an area of challenge over the years at UAlbany, and the 2012 report showed both improvement from past years and continued room for additional improvement. The highest item in this area was “clarity of residence hall rules and procedures (69%, up from 67% in 2009 and 58% in 2006). Satisfaction with residence hall services and programs stood at 52%, down from 56% in 2009 but up from 38% in 2006. Satisfaction with college food services remains low at 30%, down from 31% in 2009 but up substantially from 19% in 2006.

Job and Career Placement Services: Satisfaction was strongest regarding career planning services (59%, down from 63% in 2009 but up from 45% in 2006). Nearly half – 48% – were satisfied with “job search assistance,” down from 51% in 2009 but up substantially from 29% satisfaction with “job placement services” in 2006 (a different question wording). Finally, satisfaction with “college help finding part-time jobs” was only 28%, down from 31% in 2009, but up from 21% in 2006 (we should note that UAlbany does not offer any centralized service of this nature).

Other Non-Academic Services: Looking at several other non-academic services, satisfaction was highest with billing and payment processes (66%, unchanged from 2009 but up from 43% in 2006). That was followed by new student orientation (67%, up from 64% in 2009 and 55% in 2006), the course registration process (57%, down from 61% in 2009 but up from 45%), financial aid services (57%, down from 58% in 2009 but up from 40% in 2006), and “purposes for which student activity fees are used” (29%, down substantially from 44% in 2009 but still up from 25% in 2006).
Low-Satisfaction Items – Steady Improvement Over Time: Historically, five of the lowest-satisfaction areas at UAlbany have been parking, food services, the purposes for which student activity fees are used, the general condition of residence hall facilities, and residence hall services and programs. As shown in Figure 2a, below, the items related to residence halls have moved steadily from dissatisfaction to satisfaction since 2000, reflecting very systematic and substantial improvement during that time period. As shown by their mean scores for 2009, both areas are now net-positive despite small declines in the 2012 survey. Prior to the 2012 survey, the item on satisfaction with the “purposes for with student activity fees are used” had been on a similar positive trajectory, achieving 44% satisfaction and a net positive rating in 2009, but dropping back down to 29% satisfaction and a slightly net negative rating in 2012.
Figure 2b shows similar movement with regard to the two lowest-satisfaction items – food services and parking. In both of these areas satisfaction has increased steadily, while the level of dissatisfaction has decreased. Both areas remain in the net-negative category even as the clear shift serves as an indication that current policies are moving things in the right direction. Satisfaction with parking was one of UAlbany’s largest increases from 2009 to 2012, and the item is now approaching net positive satisfaction.

![Graph showing trend in satisfaction and dissatisfaction for food services and parking services from 2000 to 2012](image-url)
Satisfaction with Campus Environment:

- Majorities of students reported being satisfied with sixteen of the eighteen areas related to the campus environment; satisfaction levels surpassed 60% on thirteen of those items and came very close in three others. The highest levels of satisfaction were reported with regard to freedom from harassment (83%, up from 80% in 2009 and 75% in 2006), campus acceptance of individual differences (81%, down from 82% in 2009 but up from 69% in 2006), opportunities for involvement in campus clubs/activities (78%, down from 79% in 2009 but up from 65% in 2006), campus openness to opinions of others (76%, down from 79% in 2009 but up from 62% in 2006), opportunities for community service (75%, up from 72% in 2009 and 61% in 2006), racial harmony (74%, up from 72% in 2009 and 60% in 2006), and personal safety/security on campus (74%, up from 58% in 2009 and 54% in 2006). The steady increase in satisfaction regarding opportunities for community service is noteworthy because it corresponds to UAlbany’s being awarded a place on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll in both 2010 and 2011, and the increased attention to community service that those efforts have drawn.

- Student government and student input in college policies/plans were the only two areas with below-majority levels of satisfaction, and both had come close to that status in the 2009 survey after being among the most improved items that year. Unfortunately, both items dropped back substantially in the 2012 survey. Satisfaction with student government in 2012 was 40%, down from 49% in 2009 but still up from 27% in 2006; satisfaction with student input in college policies/plans in 2012 was 38%, down from 47% in 2009, but up from 28% in 2006.

Agreement/Disagreement with Various College Aspects:

- This portion of the survey contains questions in which students were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with statements on a wide variety of topics. Large majorities of students agreed or strongly agreed that the rules governing student conduct were clear to them (75%, down from 77% in 2009 but up from 68% in 2006), that academic advising is available when they need it (72%, up from 71% in 2009 and 56% in 2006), that acts of racial prejudice seldom appear on campus (69%, up from 64% in 2009 and 52% in 2006), that acts of prejudice based on sexual orientation are rare (66%, new item), that acts of prejudice based on gender identity are rare (65%, new item), that UAlbany is a good value given the cost (63%, down from 68% in 2009 and 69% in 2006), and that UAlbany has helped them meet the goals they came here to achieve (52%, down from 56% in 2009 but up from 50% in 2006). Only 40% agreed that it has been difficult to finance their education, up from 38% in 2009 and 33% in 2006, not a positive finding, but not surprising given recent tuition increases and the recession. The fact that only 37% agreed that they had developed a mentoring relationship with a faculty/staff member (unchanged since 2009, but up from 21% in 2006) is interesting considering that our faculty receive high satisfaction ratings for their out-of-class availability. The importance of student faculty interaction outside of class is widely recognized in the higher education research community. As expected, juniors and seniors reported more agreement with the statement that they have formed mentoring relationships with faculty or staff than did freshmen or sophomores.
Albany Contribution to Educational Outcomes: In this series of questions, students were asked to characterize UAlbany’s contribution to their growth and development in a variety of areas. Because the format of the response options utilizes a uni-polar scale (none; small; moderate; large; very large) as opposed to all other survey items using bi-polar scales (in which the middle option is neutral with two negative options below it and two positive options above it), the percentages and means from these items should be interpreted differently than those for other survey items. In particular, large percentages of respondents choose the middle option – “moderate” – rather than “large” or “very large,” but it can be argued with some justification that a moderate impact is actually a positive rather than neutral response. Thus, numbers reported in this section are combined percentages for the “moderate,” “large” and “very large” contribution responses.

- **Intellectual Outcomes:** Large majorities of respondents reported that Albany contributed at least to a moderate degree to educational outcomes related to intellectual growth and development. These include: acquiring information, ideas and concepts (86%, down from 90% in 2009 and 92% in 2006); acquiring skills needed for further academic study (84%, down from 86% in both previous years); acquiring analytical skills (84%, down from 86% in 2009 and 85% in 2006); acquiring knowledge and skills for intellectual growth throughout life (82%, down from 85% in 2009 and 84% in 2006); and acquiring knowledge and skills needed for a career (79%, down from 81% in 2009 and 80% in 2006). All of these figures show very small decreases from the 2006 and 2009 surveys, but represent increases from the 2003 survey. As expected, juniors and seniors reported larger gains in the growth areas than did lower division students. Students also assessed highly Albany’s contribution to more concrete outcomes such as writing clearly and effectively (70%, down from 72% both years), speaking clearly and effectively (65%, down from 69% in 2009 but equal to 65% in 2006) – both of which figures also increased substantially since 2003 – and using computers and information technology (60%, down from 67% in 2009 and 64% in 2006).

- **Personal Outcomes:** Students were also asked to rate UAlbany’s contribution to their abilities in areas related to personal growth. These included: developing self-understanding (76%, down from 78% in 2009 but up from 74% in 2006); developing an openness to the opinions of others (74%, down from 78% in 2009 but not asked in that format previously); understanding and appreciating ethnic/cultural diversity and other individual differences (74%, down from 77% in 2009 but up from 70%); working with others (73%, down from 76% in 2009 but up from 69% in 2006); understanding political and social issues (63%, down from 70% in 2009 and 69% in 2006); developing leadership skills (58%, down from 64% in 2009 and 59% in 2006); or understanding environmental and sustainability issues (62%, new item 2012). Overall, the university’s contribution in these areas is seen by students as lower than that for the intellectual outcomes, and responses follow a similar pattern of increase in 2009 followed by slight decrease in 2012.
UAlbany’s Progress as Compared with the Other Three SUNY University Centers.

Because the Student Opinion Survey is administered every three years across the SUNY system, we receive not only timeline data (in which we compare our most recent results with those from previous survey administrations) but also benchmark data (in which we can compare our results with those of our combined peer groups within the SUNY system). In 2012, all four SUNY University Centers (UAlbany, University at Buffalo, Binghamton University and Stony Brook University) participated, as did 22 other state-operated SUNY campuses. For benchmarking purposes, UAlbany and SUNY generally compare ourselves with the other university centers. Because Binghamton did not participate in 2009, the ranking comparisons below are between 2012 and 2006.

Some figures that stand out from the SOS analysis include:

- Across all survey items for which SUNY provided comparative scores with the other three SUNY University Centers, UAlbany’s average score dropped slightly from 3.55 in 2009 to 3.51 in 2012, but still well above 3.39 for 2006.
- From 2009 to 2012 the average for the other Centers dropped similarly from 3.62 to 3.60, only slightly higher than their average of 3.53 for 2006.
- UAlbany’s mean ranking score improved very slightly from 3.35 in 2006 to 3.23 in 2012 (“1” is the best ranking and “4” is the poorest).
- Despite the slight overall improvement in our rankings, UAlbany was ranked 4th on more items in 2012 than we were in 2006.
  - UAlbany ranked 1st on 6 of the 105 ranked items, or 6%, compared to 3 of 106 items, or 3% in 2006.
  - UAlbany ranked 2nd on 16 items, or 15%, compared to 7 and 7% in 2006.
  - UAlbany ranked 3rd on 31 items, or 30%, compared to 49 and 45% in 2006.
  - UAlbany ranked 4th on 52 items, or 50%, compared to 49 and 46% in 2006.
- In summary, while UAlbany has managed to hold onto most of our gains in our average rankings, we still remain below the comparative rankings with the other University Centers, even though in most cases the differences are very small.

Summary and Conclusion:

Taken as a whole, a number of important conclusions from the 2012 SUNY Student Opinion Survey results stand out:

- General student satisfaction with UAlbany dropped more than other areas, the only category where satisfaction dropped below levels observed in the 2006 survey;
- Satisfaction with particular facilities, programs, services, and aspects of campus life at UAlbany has decreased very slightly since 2009, but has still increased across-the-board since 2006, and still represents a continuing trend of improved satisfaction with UAlbany academics and campus life since the 2000 and 2003 survey administrations. In general:
  - Areas that already had high satisfaction have higher satisfaction;
  - Areas that in the past had modest or inconsistent satisfaction are now more firmly in the high-satisfaction category;
- Some previously low-satisfaction items can now be categorized as moderate-satisfaction items, and even those few items that remain low-satisfaction areas have seen substantial and steady improvement since 2000.

- Despite closing the gaps numerically in most areas between our average rankings and those of the other three SUNY University Centers over the last few survey administrations, UAlbany remains in third or fourth place for most survey items, albeit with minimal differences in most instances.
# Appendix A: Comparative Demographic Reports

## Student Opinion Survey Sample* and Undergraduate Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity**</th>
<th>Sample Demographics</th>
<th>Population Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Native Alaskan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1406</td>
<td>115.3</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sample Demographics</th>
<th>Population Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Level</th>
<th>Sample Demographics</th>
<th>Population Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>22.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Demographics</th>
<th>Average or Percent</th>
<th>Average or Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAlbany GPA</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Student</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>93.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus Residence</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Sample Demographics</th>
<th>Population Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary or Undeclared</td>
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<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Pub Affairs</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing &amp; Info</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanoscale Science &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1219</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Because students could opt out of using their ID numbers in the survey, only 1219 students or 78.5% can be included in this comparison.

**The new race/ethnicity categories are “check all that apply” so numbers add up to more than 100%
Appendix B: Changes in UAlbany SOS Ratings, 1991-2012 (Insert from pdf.)