SUMMARY

- **Nearly three-fourths** of UAlbany students say they are **satisfied with the Campus Center overall**.
- **More than 9 out of 10 students** use the Campus Center at least once per semester.
- **Two-thirds** of students utilize the Campus Center on the **weekends**.
- **Nearly half** use the Campus Center to **study alone**, and **one-third** use it to **study with groups**.
- **Less than half** of UAlbany students agree that the Campus Center creates an atmosphere that is **conducive to studying**.
- **Three out of five** Campus Center student employees agree that their employment provided them with skills/experiences which they will **use after college**.
- **Four out of five** students agree that the Campus Center has a **welcoming and comfortable atmosphere**.
- **More than half** of students attend **programs, speakers, events, and/or performances** at the Campus Center.
- **Less than half** of students feel Campus Center programs are **effectively promoted**.

BIG PICTURE OBSERVATIONS

74% of students agree that they are **satisfied with the Campus Center overall**.

The responses for this prompt were significantly **below** the national average, and UAlbany ranked **last** for this prompt within a group of six large/public universities.

However, the **mean response** for this question rose .13 points above 2010’s average response of 2.91/5.00, showing a **significant improvement** in the past three years.

*Chart adapted from infogr.am*
of students said they never visited the Campus Center during Fall 2012 compared to the national average of 13%.

of students said they spend 2-3 hours per week in the Campus Center during the week (Monday-Thursday).

of students said they do not visit the Campus Center on the weekends (Friday-Sunday) compared to the national average of 45%.

of students said the Campus Center was important in their decision to attend UAlbany, significantly greater than the national average.

### CAMPUS CENTER USE

#### Food Consumption in the Campus Center
- 90% of students eat in the Campus Center.
- UAlbany students use the Campus Center to eat more often than the national average.
- Most students who eat at the Campus Center regularly use a meal plan or declining balance to pay for their food. Students who eat at the campus center only irregularly are more likely to use cash.

#### Academics in the Campus Center
- 46% of students use the Campus Center to study on their own.
- 30% study with a group.
- 18% of students have used the Campus Center to meet with a faculty member.
- 30% of students use Campus Center computer labs/work stations.
- In general, UAlbany students use the Campus Center for academic purposes less than the national average.

“Please have a vendor that sells Halal food for Muslim Students. It would make UAlbany... more culturally inclusive and welcoming”
This concern was brought up several times by UAlbany students. Other students were similarly concerned by other dietary restrictions, such as gluten allergies. Many students also commented on the lack of food variety and friendly service. With the new food servicer change, UAlbany may already be addressing these concerns, especially given its Halal and vegan offerings. The most frequently requested food service was a Subway. Students were especially concerned with the hours of operation for food services.

“Add more space for relaxation and studying, away from all the noise, and for people that would rather be there than at the library”
Many students commented that Campus Center areas were unsuitable for studying due to noise or similar factors. These students explained that other study spaces on campus such as the library were too quiet, but that the Campus Center was too loud, busy, and open to make it a happy medium.

Student Involvement at the Campus Center
The activities held in the Campus Center that students reported the most value in are typically multicultural or career-related events. In particular, the presence of the Graduate Student Association, New York Writers Institute, speaker series highlighting lesser-known job paths, and career-educational events were all mentioned multiple times. In multicultural programming, students frequently highlighted the African Studies Symposium and Gender & Sexuality Resource Center (“GSRC”) as key areas of transformation. One student commented that GSRC events had “helped me learn how to be an ally to friends or how to accept myself as I am, which is tremendously important.”
**Student Recreation at the Campus Center**

![Bar chart showing student activity at the Campus Center]

**In which types of on-campus activities do you actively participate? (Select all that apply)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity, program, or service</th>
<th>UAAlbany (UA) 2013 Total</th>
<th>UA 2013 Freshman</th>
<th>UA 2013 Seniors</th>
<th>UA 2010 Total</th>
<th>Total Difference from 2010</th>
<th>National AVG</th>
<th>Comparison to National AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community service/service-learning</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors Societies</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political activism</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>↔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek-letter organizations</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“**I would like a couch in the commuter lounge. I get very tired and do need to rest, as I have a disability. There are chairs, but they are uncomfortable for resting.**”

Although many students commented on the seating in the Campus Center, this student’s concerns highlight a need for more accessible rest points for students.

Other students also commented on how recreational activities such as games were sometimes difficult to access and often unknown to students.

“**Maybe if the equipment is replaced and/or new games are added, it can build community and create more opportunities for students to gather, informally.**”

General high areas of concern for students across all topical areas involved the cleanliness of tables and seating, the length of lines for food and recreation activities, as well as the way this crowds the Center, and desire for later hours of operation for food.
The bolded activities in the above table indicate the three primary student groups which hold offices in the Campus Center. From this table we can see that the most heavily participated student activities are \textit{campus events}, \textit{community service} (on the rise), and \textit{campus recreational activities}. Further presence in these areas could bring more students to the Campus Center.

\textbf{Bachelors of Arts} students are more likely to be involved than Bachelor of Science students. Approximately 15\% of those involved are \textit{freshmen}, compared to 23\% of each other undergraduate class.

\textbf{STUDENT SATISFACTION}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{What prevents you from visiting the Campus Center?} & \textbf{\% 2013} & \textbf{\% 2010} & \textbf{Response} \\
\hline
\textit{Nothing I need is there.} & 46\% & 33\% & \\
\textit{I don’t have time/too busy} & 40\% & 40\% & \\
\textit{Not in a convenient location} & 19\% & 33\% & \\
\textit{Other} & 28\% & 37\% & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Nearly one half of students say there is nothing they need at the Campus Center. Students appear to be very satisfied with the hours of the campus center.
---% of students are satisfied with the Campus Center’s...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>UAlbany 2013</th>
<th>UAlbany 2010</th>
<th>Nationwide 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of lounges and meeting room space</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>81%*</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming and comfortable atmosphere</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of entertainment options</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of learning opportunities</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of food options</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of retail/service options</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere that encourages informal interaction amongst students and staff</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere that encourages informal interaction amongst students and faculty</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere that is conducive to studying</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically significant* differences to the UAlbany 2013 percentage are bolded and yellow. Percentages based only on students who indicate that they use the service in question. Darker shading on the cell indicates a higher level of agreement.

According to UAlbany students, Campus Center opportunities and options have all together improved significantly since 2010. Even though UAlbany continues to lie below the national average for these areas of improvement, the UAlbany campus center is making great strides and will continue to in current renovating projects. In particular, the campus center has been very successful in encouraging informal interaction between students, staff, and faculty. There are two areas where UAlbany is not improving: expanding the variety of learning opportunities and creating an atmosphere conducive to studying. Improving these kinds of resources may change the type of experience UAlbany students have at college.

Note that this survey also requested that students describe how important to them each of these areas of improvement was. UAlbany students tend to generally place less importance on most of these attributes in comparison to the national average, but they rank the variety of food, retail and service options as well as interactions between students and faculty relatively very high. In further improving student satisfaction with the Campus Center, UAlbany could devote more resources to these areas as well as the academic areas mentioned above. Improvements to other attributes such as entertainment options and student/staff interactions are unlikely to create as large of an impact in student satisfaction since they tend to be valued less by UAlbany students.

Highly Student-Valued Aspects of the Campus Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>% who agree it is important</th>
<th>Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>Variety of food options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Welcoming and comfortable atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>Variety of retail/service options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>Availability of lounges and meeting room space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>Atmosphere that encourages informal interaction between students and faculty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of UAlbany’s decision to change food servicers, many of the top-rated student concerns for their student center are being addressed.
Student Campus Center employees agreed that as a result of their employment in the campus center, their skills had improved.

- 58% of Campus Center employees agree that their employment provided them with skills relevant to their future career.

___% of Student Campus Center employees agree that their skills have improved as a result of their employment.
63% of Campus Center employees agree that their employment provided them with skills/experiences which they will use after college. (Compared to 67% nationally)

39% of Campus Center employees agree that their employment provided them with skills/experiences which they will use after college. (Compared to 75% nationally)
provided them with skills/experiences relevant to their academic major.

(Compared to 53% nationally)

The above scatter plot shows how the average student responses to each “personal growth” related question compared to both the national average response to those questions and the 2010 UAlbany average. As the vast majority of response averages lie within the first quadrant, we can see that the UAlbany campus center has greatly improved in the past three years and is now tending to meet and exceed national averages for self-reported student growth.

**Highlights**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improved between 2010 &amp; 2013 &amp; met or exceeded the National Average</th>
<th>Did not improve between 2010 &amp; 2013 and did not meet the National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My communication skills have improved (+3.0%, +2.6%)</td>
<td>I feel part of the campus community (-2.2%, -2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am better able to articulate my goals in life (+3.2%, +1.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My academic achievement and grades have improved (+2.6%, +2.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learned to balance social activities with academic obligations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the six participating large/public universities, UAlbany was ranked last on students' level of agreement with the statement that activities and programs offered at the Campus Center are effectively promoted. Publicity and marketing are a clear area of improvement for the Campus Center.

UAlbany’s Campus Center is **excelling** at improving students’ **academic and communication skills**.

UAlbany’s Campus Center could **strongly improve** the sense of **campus community** in the space.

Key:

*All statements listed showed statistically significant differences*. The first number in the parentheses after each statement indicates the percentage difference from the 2010 UAlbany mean. The second number in the parentheses after each statement indicates the percentage difference from the 2013 National Average. The difference that was statistically significant is **bolded purple**.

(1) meet individuals with different interests  (2) meet individuals with similar interests  (3) connect with other students  (4) connect with faculty  (5) connect with staff  (6) feel part of the campus community  (7) make a difference on campus  (8) experience/skills relevant to my academic major  (9) experience/skills relevant to my future career  (10) become more involved  (11) appreciation for the fine & performing arts  (12) self-confidence  (13) stress management  (14) time management  (15) communication skills  (16) critical thinking skills  (17) leadership skills  (18) manage conflict  (19) study skills  (20) articulate values, attitudes, beliefs  (21) articulate goals  (22) teamwork  (23) academic achievement  (24) balance social and academic  (25) knowledgeable about the campus community  (26) understanding of diverse perspectives
What is the most common way you learn about activities, programs, and/or services at the Campus Center?

The top three ways students learn about activities, programs, and services at the Campus Center are:

- Campus e-mail
- Flyers/posters/banners/chalking on campus, and
- Word of mouth (from students, faculty, and/or administrators).

Social media & online communities (e.g., Facebook, Myspace, Friendster) have become more important in advertising the campus center, but still hold only a small share of marketing today (2% 2010, 6% 2013).

Students are proportionately relying on word of mouth more than they have previously (13% 2010, 17% 2013).

11% of students said that they never seem to hear about what is happening in the Campus Center.

46% of students agree that overall, activities and programs offered at the Campus Center are effectively promoted, up only slightly from 2010.
52% of respondents have never visited the Campus Center website, compared to 57% in 2010.

**Longitudinal Comparison**

**Campus Center Development**

Of students who took this survey in both 2010 and 2013...

- In 2010, **28%** agreed that programs/speakers/performances/events at the Campus Center provided them with **skills they will use after college**, which grew to **32%** in 2013.
- By their senior year, students found the **learning opportunities** the Campus Center offers significantly **less important to them** (56% said they were at least **moderately** important to them) than they had been in 2010 (87%).
- Instead, students were more concerned with the **variety of food choices** (100% said the variety was at least **moderately** important to them) than they had been previously (91%). UAlbany’s recent decision to change food servicers is responsive to this increasing desire.
- Overall they reported little change in areas of **personal growth** due to the campus center.

**METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS**

Findings are based on the 2013 Campus Center & Programming Student Student Survey completed by **838** University at Albany students between **February 13 and April 26, 2013**. The survey was developed in association with the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) and was administered electronically through StudentVoice by the Office of the Vice President for Student Success at UAlbany.

**Respondents were:**

- Mostly women (60% women, 40% men).
- Diverse (52% white, **13%** Asian/Pacific Islander, **9%** Hispanic/Latino, **12%** African American/Black).
- Representative of different class years (14% freshman, **20%** sophomore, **19%** juniors, **21%** seniors, 24% Graduate Students).
- Full-time students (88% full time students).
- Living both on and off campus (47% on-campus, 29% off-campus alone or with roommates, 15% off-campus with spouse/partner/children, 8% off-campus with family).
- Primarily Freshman Admits (50% Freshman Admit, 25% Transfer Admit, 24% Graduate Admit)

QUESTIONS

Please direct any questions concerning this assessment brief to:

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TEL: 518.956.8140 EMAIL: mchristakis@albany.edu

APPENDIX A: COMPARISON GROUP – OPERATIONAL BENCHMARKING STUDY (19 participating institutions)

1. Bemidji State University - Consortium: Student Unions and Programming Survey 2012-2013
2. College at Brockport - Consortium: Student Unions and Programming Survey 2012-2013
3. East Stroudsburg University - Consortium: Student Unions and Programming Survey 2012-2013
5. Emory University - Consortium: Student Unions and Programming Survey 2012-2013
7. Northeastern University - Consortium: Student Unions and Programming Survey 2012-2013
10. Towson University - Consortium: Student Unions and Programming Survey 2012-2013

APPENDIX B: COMPARISON GROUP – LARGE PUBLIC COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (6 participating institutions)

2. Towson University - Consortium: Student Unions and Programming Survey 2012-2013