

Program Review

**Associate in Arts (AA)
(CIP: 240101)**

Program Purpose

What is the published purpose/mission of the program?
The Associate in Arts program is designed for students planning to transfer to a senior institution to complete a program of study in a liberal arts area.
How does the program's purpose/mission fit into the overall mission of the college?
The purpose reflects consistency with the college's mission, specifically Mission Goal Two, to provide "available, accessible, and affordable courses that provide quality instruction in general education at the freshman and sophomore levels that lead to the attainment of specified learning outcomes, associate degrees, and transfer to senior institutions."
Do any changes need to be made to the program's purpose/mission? Explain.
There are no changes to be made to the program's purpose/mission.
Do any changes need to be made to how the program's purpose/mission fits into the overall college mission? Explain.
The program's purpose/mission fits into the overall college mission. No changes are necessary at this time.

Program Learning Outcomes

What are the program learning outcomes, and how are they assessed?

A.A. and A.S. Degree Programs

The A.A. and A.S. degree programs are designed for transfer and, as such, constitute a general/pre-liberal arts curriculum. The general education outcomes serve as the competencies identified by the College that students should attain as a result of completing the A.A. or A.S. Degree Programs. Those outcomes and the classes in which they are assessed are listed below:

- **Written Communication**—Students will demonstrate adequate writing skills by developing ideas and organizing content effectively. (ENG 100 and 101)
- **Oral Communication**—Students will articulate ideas, concepts, and theories in a clear fashion using language and elocution skills indicative of college-level preparation. (SPH 107)
- **Mathematical Computation**—Students will compute basic mathematical operations accurately, comprehend mathematical information, and utilize analytical thinking skills to solve problems. (MTH 100 and MTH 116)
- **Computer Literacy**—Students will use current technology and develop computer skills for informational, academic, personal, and professional needs. (CIS 146)
- **Information Literacy**—Students will locate, access, and analyze information that facilitates learning and critical inquiry. (Library Orientation in ENG 101 and SPH 107)

What can students do with the knowledge they have after completing the program?

Students completing the Associate in Arts degree use this knowledge to transfer to a senior institution to complete a program of study in a liberal arts area. By completing the two-year A.A. degree, the student will also have additional job opportunities unavailable to students with a high school education.

What are the plans for reviewing the program learning outcomes and revising them?

Direct responsibility for assessing program learning outcomes lies with the academic division director, who ensures that those courses within his or her division address the program learning outcomes designated for that course. Faculty annually review the extent to which the general education and program learning outcomes identified in a course syllabus are being attained by students who complete the course. Each syllabus identifies the assessment method that will be used to demonstrate student mastery of the desired general education and program learning outcomes. Before teaching a course, faculty review the syllabus to ensure an understanding of how the learning outcomes will be evaluated. The assessment is achieved through the completion of a form for each course each fall and spring semester. If the course is not taught during the fall or spring semester, the assessment will be made during the summer semester. Each faculty member teaching the course completes the form indicating the percentage of students successfully meeting the program learning outcome as well as suggested improvements to be made in the program. The division director annually compiles all sections of the course and completes a form which indicates student success in meeting the program learning outcome. After comparing that percentage with the goal set at the beginning of the school year, the division director meets with faculty and discusses improvements which need to be made within the course to better meet the program learning outcomes. These changes are then incorporated into the course syllabi.

Assessed Needs and Assumptions

What is the outlook for the continued need of the program within the mission of the college?

The General Associate in Arts (AA) program dates from the college's inception in 1965 and continues to be an important offering to individuals in the institution's service area. In Fall 2019, 7.5% of all students were enrolled in the General AA program. Enhanced course transferability through STARS agreements with Alabama public four-year colleges and universities, reasonable tuition rates well below those of four-year schools, the increasing popularity of dual-enrollment courses in area high schools, increased course offerings and availability, and the overall variety of specific fields encompassed in the general associate programs will continue to provide an avenue to offer the Associate in Arts program for the foreseeable future.

Structure

What credentials does the program offer?
The Associate in Arts program offers the Associate in Arts (AA) Degree.
What are the requirements for each credential?
General Requirements for the Associate in Arts (AA) Degree
Area I: Written Composition (6 hours total)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must complete ENG 101 and 102.
Area II: Humanities and Fine Arts (12 hours total)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must complete at least three semester hours in Literature. • Must complete at least three semester hours in the Arts. <p><i>The remaining semester hours are to be selected from Humanities and/or Fine Arts. Humanities and Arts disciplines include but are not limited to: Area/Ethnic Studies, Art and Art History, Foreign Languages, Music and Music History, Philosophy, Ethics, Religious Studies, Theater and Dance.</i></p>
Area III: Natural Science and Mathematics (11 hours total)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must complete at least three semester hours in Mathematics at the Pre-Calculus Algebra or Finite Math level or higher. <p><i>Must complete at least eight semester hours in the Natural Sciences which must include laboratory experiences. Disciplines in the Natural Sciences include: Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Geology, Physical Geography, Earth Science, Physics, and Physical Science.</i></p>
Area IV: History, Social, and Behavioral Sciences (12 hours total)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must complete at least three semester hours in History. • Must complete at least six semester hours in other disciplines in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. <p><i>Social and Behavioral Sciences include, but are not limited to: Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.</i></p>
Area I-IV: General Education Requirements (41 hours total)
Area V: Pre-Professional, Major, and Elective Courses (19-23 hours total)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses appropriate to the degree requirements and major of the individual student and electives. Students completing courses that have been approved for transfer by the AGSC and are appropriate to their major and/or degree program may transfer these courses with credit applicable to their degree program among two-year and four-year colleges and universities.
Total Hours Required for Degree: 60-64 hours
<p><i>Must complete a six-semester-hour sequence either in Literature or in History. The sequences in Area II and IV in Literature and History need to follow the sequence requirements according to the student's major and transfer plans.</i></p> <p><i>Respective programs of study for baccalaureate degrees at Alabama public and private universities range from 120 to 128 semester credit hours in length. Colleges are only authorized to provide 50 percent of that total (60-64, depending on the total hours allocated for the bachelor's degree.)</i></p>
How often are the requirements for the degree reviewed?
Requirements for the degree are reviewed every five years.
Are there any plans for revising the degree requirements?
There are no plans for revising the degree requirements.

Accreditation

What is the institutional accreditation for the program?
The Associate in Arts program is within the institutional accreditation granted by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and reaffirmed in 2015.
Does the program have any program-specific accreditations?
N/A

Instructors

How many instructors currently teach in the program, and what are their credentials?

A total of 27 full-time instructors are employed in offering courses in the AA Program and 74 more part-time instructors taught one or more classes in the program during the Fall 2019 semester. All instructors, whether full-time or adjunct, meet SACSCOC requirements for employment to teach in a two-year institution (i.e. a Master's Degree and competency in subject area with usually at least 18 semester hours in the teaching field).

How have the instructors in the program developed professionally over the past two years?

2018-2019

Professional development activities encompassing such topics as academic advisement, computer literacy, creation and evaluation of program learning outcomes, and improvement of course delivery are offered on campus during professional development/in-service days. These activities are required of all full-time faculty, with many adjunct instructors participating as well. Other professional developments activities during the 2018-2019 academic year included attendance at relevant meetings and conventions (e.g. the National Organization for Student Success annual conference, the Southeastern Theatre Conference, Southern Festival of Books), workshops and seminars (e.g. workshops designed to teach instructors the use of Canvas for the traditional and online classroom), and service as SACSCOC on-site QEP lead evaluator.

2019-2020

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What are any planned professional development activities for instructors in the program?

Faculty have access to numerous webinars and use of technologies available in Canvas through the college's Learning Technology Center.

Are any additional instructors anticipated within the next five years? If so, please explain.

No additional full-time instructors are anticipated within the next five years.

Instructional Quality and Enhancements/Curriculum Design

<p>How is the general education core incorporated into the course of study for this program?</p>
<p>The AA degree includes 41 credit hours of general education in the 60 plus credit-hour total: six hours of Written Composition; 12 hours of Humanities and Fine Arts; 11 hours of Math or Science; and 12 hours of History, Social and Behavioral Sciences.</p>
<p>Are all course syllabi current and posted on the NACC website? Explain.</p>
<p>Course syllabi are reviewed annually by faculty within the division and appropriate changes are made. The division director submits the revised syllabi to the Curriculum Committee for approval, and it is then published on the college website.</p>
<p>How is curriculum of each program option evaluated to ensure it is relevant and current? Examples include advisory committee suggestions, student learning outcome evaluations, student evaluations, etc.</p>
<p>The program's curriculum is evaluated through program learning outcome evaluations. The Evaluation of Instruction is held each fall semester to ensure that the program's curriculum is relevant and current. Suggestions made by students on these fall evaluations are examined and appropriate changes are considered and implements. Student comments are distributed to faculty members for self-evaluation of their instructional methods.</p>
<p>Describe changes that have been made in the delivery of the courses in each option of the program as a result of review of the program learning outcomes over the last five years.</p>
<p>Based on faculty evaluation of courses through the forms that evaluate Program Learning Outcomes, courses have been modified to improve student attainment of these outcomes. These modifications include such things as course delivery as well as means of evaluation of outcomes.</p>
<p>Are courses in the program scheduled to maintain availability and accessibility in accordance with the college's mission? Explain.</p>
<p>Improvements in course scheduling over recent semesters, including additional course offerings through distance learning and dual enrollment, have been accommodating students, enabling students to schedule full academic loads more easily (e.g., five or six classes two days per week). Semester schedules are subjected to intense analysis by the Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment, division directors, and the administration. More courses are being offered at a greater variety of times. Through the Student Evaluation of Campus Services and Facilities, student input regarding course scheduling is solicited.</p>

Program Resources

Describe the physical facilities and resources, including any laboratories, used in the program. Are the physical facilities and resources adequate? Explain.

The Art Department uses one classroom for art appreciation which is updated with modern technological equipment. The Sculpture and Design classroom is a renovated and remodeled studio with new, state-of-the-art equipment. A pottery class is now offered in a remodeled section of the HFA building with an area large enough to accommodate several pottery wheels and a kiln.

The Music Department uses one classroom for music appreciation which is updated with new technology. The Class Piano/Theory Lab is located in HFA 108 and is updated with new computers and software. The lab is also used as a practice room for private and class piano students and theory and basic musicianship classes. The Music Auditorium is renovated with additional length added to the existing stage. New seating and a state-of-the-art sound system is installed. Chorus, ENCORE!, Jazz Band, and Mustang Combo rehearse in various rooms in the HFA Building and a mirrored dance floor is available for choreography.

The Theater Department is located in the Tom Bevill Lyceum which includes a theatre that seats 700 people. Classrooms, various labs, and areas for construction and storage are located in the lyceum as well. The Tom Bevill Lyceum hosts three major theatre productions per year as well as numerous other cultural and community programs.

The construction of the Math, Science, and Engineering Technology Building, completed in May 2014, reflects a continued expansion of the college's physical facilities. In addition to the resources in this new building, across campus, classrooms with state-of-the-art technology is utilized by all academic divisions.

Are there any plans for major expansion or upgrade of facilities or major replacement/expansion of equipment? Explain the rationale and include projected costs.

The physical facilities and resources are adequate to accommodate the curriculum within the A.A. program.

Describe the technological resources used in the program. Are the technological resources adequate? Explain.

Smart classrooms are available for all classes. Many classrooms now have Apple TV technology. Additionally, the computers within the Writing Center are regularly upgraded, and the Center now is a Smart classroom, making it possible for Writing Center staff and faculty to teach classes within the Center.

Are there any plans for major expansion or upgrade of technological resources? Explain the rationale and include projected costs.

It is imperative to maintain updated technology and software to ensure that all Program Learning Outcomes are addressed. As needs become evident, these resources are purchased.

Describe the library resources that are available to the program.

Examples of library resources provided by the NACC Learning Resources Center include the following: books, eBooks (full-text electronic books), and full-text journal, magazine, and newspaper articles. Depending on format, these items may be accessed electronically or in print. Online tutorials, as well as program-specific LibGuides pages, provide instruction in the use of these resources. Library staff are available to assist students and faculty in person, online, and by phone.

Are the library resources adequate for the program? Explain.

The library resources are adequate as indicated by the library usage that has continued to increase over the last three academic years. Based on the annual survey of satisfaction completed in 2019, 98.9% of students indicated satisfaction with the library's collection. Book and eBook circulation has seen a slight decrease from 6,267 in 2017 to 6,204 in 2019. This decrease is in part due to the increase seen in student use of online databases. The number of database sessions increased from 266,461 in 2017 to 294,947 in 2019, and the number of full-text requests of database articles increased from 18,966 in 2017 to 27,465 in 2019. The library also added the resource, "Ask a Librarian," which can be accessed by text or chat. This resource increased from 195 in 2017 to 406 in 2019. 58% of the library's budget was spent on collections (books, eBooks, and subscriptions) in 2018-2019.

Are there any plans for expansion or upgrade of library resources for the program? Explain the rationale and include projected costs.

There are no plans for expansion or upgrade of library resources.

Enrollment and Completions

What are the enrollment trends in the program over the last five years?

Number of Students Enrolled in the Associate in Arts Program Fall 2015 – Fall 2019				
FA15	FA16	FA17	FA18	FA19
279	233	245	213	225

Source: Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment. NACC ACCESS/400 database system. February, 2020.

What are the enrollment trends in the program over the last five years by gender?

Number of Students Enrolled in the Associate in Arts Program by Gender Fall 2015 – Fall 2019					
	FA15	FA16	FA17	FA18	FA19
Male	186	155	166	141	151
Female	93	78	79	72	74
Total	279	233	245	213	225

Source: Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment. NACC ACCESS/400 database system. February, 2020.

What are the enrollment trends in the program over the last five years by race/ethnicity?

Number of Students Enrolled in the Associate in Arts Program by Race/Ethnicity Fall 2015 – Fall 2019					
	FA15	FA16	FA17	FA18	FA19
African American	5	4	4	7	9
Asian	1	2	1	-	-
Hispanic	26	27	31	23	28
Native American	7	4	7	11	9
Other	5	3	1	1	2
White	235	193	201	171	177
Total	279	233	245	213	225

Source: Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment. NACC ACCESS/400 database system. February, 2020.

What are the retention rates in the program over the last five academic year?

Student Retention and Completion * Associate in Arts Program Fall Cohorts 2014-2019				
Fall 2014-Fall 2015	Fall 2015-Fall 2016	Fall 2016-Fall 2017	Fall 2017-Fall 2018	Fall 2018-Fall 2019
28.0%	25.1%	29.6%	26.9%	26.8%

Source: Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment. NACC ACCESS/400 database system. February 24, 2020.

* Retention and completion refers to the percent of students who were enrolled in the program during one fall semester and either completed an associate degree or were enrolled at NACC the following fall semester.

What do the data indicate about student retention in the program?

Although the retention rate for students in the A.A. Program has dropped since 2014-2015, it has increased since 2015-2016. Also, the rate of 26.8% indicates the program is important in offering quality instruction in core classes required in various types of transfer programs as well as freshman and sophomore courses in specific majors. Obviously more students should be encouraged to complete the degree at Northeast before transferring since the rate of earning awards or degrees is fairly low.

How many students have earned a credential in the program in the last five academic years?

Completers in the Associate in Arts Degree Program Fall 2015 – Fall 2019					
Credential	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
AA	31	32	88	125	113
Total Completers					389

Note: A student who earned multiple awards is counted in all applicable rows.

Source: Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment. NACC ACCESS/400 database system. February, 2020.

What are the plans for increasing the retention and completion rates in the program?

Advisors within the program are fulfilling division unit goals by placing greater emphasis on working with advisees to better prepare them for completion of degrees. A retention specialist has been hired to work with faculty in contacting students in an effort to retain those at-risk students. The college now uses Advisor Trac which enables faculty to report students who are at risk of not completing courses. These reports are submitted three times throughout the semester, and students are contacted by email, phone call, and letters to ensure they are aware of what needs to be done to complete the coursework.

The college incorporated an advising program, MAPS, to address the issue of retention campus wide not only for the A.A. program but for all students. NACC students entering college as undecided majors could possibly be steered toward the A.A. in General Studies degree to ensure that they have a degree plan to follow. These students will be making progress toward degree completion and have an opportunity to take a variety of classes to enhance their decision. This degree plan also allows these students to work toward the Community College Completion Challenge which is an integral part of the college mission. Participation in various classes, ensembles, and theatre productions offered as part of the A.A. curriculum often keep students interested and in school even if they are not A.A. majors.

Student Follow-Up Reports

Is student satisfaction with the program assessed? If so, are students in the program satisfied with the program? Please describe.

The Student Evaluation of Campus Services and Facilities conducted in Spring 2019 indicates that 98% of students are satisfied with the academic support services provided by the college.

Is alumni satisfaction with the program assessed? If so, are alumni of the program satisfied with the program? Please describe.

Alumni Surveys collected and compiled during the past three years consistently indicate that a majority of transfer students who earned the General Associate in Arts (AA) Degree feel they were more than adequately prepared for continued education in academic work at a four-year institution. In 2019 Alumni Survey findings, 79.2% of transfers reported a current grade point average of 3.0 or above at the transfer institution. A majority of alumni felt their experiences at NACC contributed to their growth in the general education outcomes referenced earlier in this program review.

Findings of Review THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW!

What are the strengths of the program?
This program offers quality instruction in core courses required in various types of transfer programs as well as freshman and sophomore courses in specific majors. For those undecided majors, the General Pre-Liberal Arts A.A. degree is perfect. Pursuing this degree gives those students the opportunity to be successful in completing a college degree while taking a variety of courses which can be personally satisfying to them.
What are recommendations for improvement?
Advisors need to be more aware of those students close to completing a degree and encourage them to consider the A.A. degree before transferring.
Please provide any other findings that are pertinent to the review.
N/A

Report	<p>SIGNATURES ON FILE IN OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT</p>	
Signed		
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	<p><i>Rodney Lund, Chemistry instructor and chair of the Curriculum Committee</i></p>	