FOCUS 2015

INTRODUCTION

The University's current strategic plan “Focus 2015: Blueprints to Excellence” continues to stress the University’s theme of Excellence and provides the focus and guidance for its completion in 2015. The overarching framework for the plan is the mission, vision, core values, and identification of challenges and opportunities. The plan was enacted after two years of data gathering and consensus building, with input from all segments of the campus community, the University Board of Trustees, and external consultants through survey and other data. It was the consensus of stakeholders that facts were more important than fears and opted for an innovative path to the future, resulting in “Focus 2015: Blueprint to Excellence. As the University pursue its’ vision for the future, this plan allows for the continual assessment and establishment of priorities in order to reach its overall goal.

To begin the process, the President scripted the millennium document (Appendix A), which outlines areas of emphasis for University excellence. The President then organized various Planning Committees to begin to address various aspects (Appendix B) of the near and distant future of Alabama A&M University. What has resulted is a revised and expanded mission statement; a set of core values to guide our actions associated with planning and implementing various activities for the university; areas of focus to pinpoint important emphases in order to realize the overall vision for the University; and the Vision: What do we want to accomplish?

This document is organized in the following manner:
- External Parameters and Assumptions
- University Parameters and Characterization
- Opportunities and Challenges
- Mission
- Vision
- Core Values
- Focus Areas 2015
- Strategic Plan 2008-2015

I. EXTERNAL PARAMETERS AND ASSUMPTIONS

In a time when the cost of higher education is rising steadily throughout the country, Alabama trails the Southeast region in increasing financial support for its campuses. Alabama has the dubious distinction of leading the region in percentage increase of tuition and fees revenue exacted to compensate for this shortfall. The state’s lower income students are less likely to be able to achieve higher education when compared with their counterparts nationally. On a more positive note, while Alabama’s enrollment in public four-year institutions has dropped off in the past decade, Alabama A&M University’s has increased an average of 13%.
Students

The value and importance of a college education has increased, yet, Alabama has trailed other states in the Southeast during the past five years in increasing its support for its colleges and universities. A recent study by Illinois State University showed that Alabama increased its support by a yearly average of only 1.3%, compared to 10.4% for Florida, 8.2% for Mississippi, 6.8% for Georgia, and 2% for Tennessee.

Therefore, Alabama students must pay higher tuition and fees to make up for the lack of financial support the state provides in appropriations to colleges and universities. In the past decade, universities in Alabama have had to rely more on support generated from tuition and fees. Tuition and fees revenue has increased from 23.4% to 31.1% of our university budgets. This is much higher than neighboring states such as Florida whose tuition and fees constitute 20.2% of its university budgets. The regional average is 26.3%. Georgia's percentage is 20.3%, Mississippi's is 25.9%, and Tennessee is 28.4%. The regional average is 26.3%.

State Investment in Higher Education

Unfortunately, lower income students find it even more difficult to achieve a higher education. A recent study by the Center for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education revealed that only 14% of Alabama's low-income students were able to attend college, compared to 24% nationally. Alabama ranked lower than all other states except Alaska in this category. If the trend of higher tuition and fees continues, the door to higher education for low-income students will be closed for many of our deserving students.

Alabama Trends in Four-Year Public Institution Enrollment (FTE) and High School Graduates.

The total enrollment of Alabama’s four year public institutions has been level to decreasing in the last decade and for clearly understandable reasons. First, the number of Alabama high school graduates has also been level to decreasing.

Furthermore, based on 2000 census counts of children already enrolled in K-12, the numbers will continue to be the same or decrease through 2012. Alabama A&M University FTEs have increased, decreased, and rebounded over the past 10 years.

If AAMU head counts and FTEs are to continue to rise in the next ten years, it will be necessary to out-compete both other institutions and the allure of the job market -- in Alabama and out-of-state. Competitive recruiting in an already competitive market requires solid budget planning and support. Further research is needed on the costs and returns to recruitment efforts. Recruitment costs to compete for average and above
average students may be greater. If Alabama A&M University settles for more than its share of below average students, its programs are in danger of being less challenging to better students. To insure quality outcomes for all, highly resourceful faculty and staff are needed to provide for a wide range of learning styles expected of a student-centered university.

**Degree Completion Rates for AAMU and Alabama Four Year Public Institutions.**

Total degree completions at four-year public institutions of Alabama increased an average of a half percent per year from 24.7 thousand to nearly 25.2 thousand between 1996-97 and 1999-2000. According to data on the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) web wages, completions at AAMU declined three years in a row from 1031 to 828 as the economy heated up near the end of the 1990s. As the economy was peaking in 2000, the number graduating at all three levels rebounded to 983, still about five percent below the 1996-97 high. The AAMU trend reflects the student body’s symbiotic relationship with the Huntsville job market. A majority of students do work to cover expenses part or full time either on or off campus. Completion numbers rebounded as the dynamic part-time job market peaked and became more competitive. This rebound is consistent with the increase in FTE data above.

**II. UNIVERSITY PARAMETERS AND CHARACTERIZATION**

Alabama A&M University is an 1890 land grant university, a part of the family of historically black colleges and universities, and belongs in the Carnegie classification of Doctoral/Research - Intensive. To assess opportunities and threats, strengths and weaknesses, it is necessary to characterize the institution with respects to its students, faculty, financial aid, finances, and other parameters. Below is a profile of what AAMU is and has been in terms of these different areas.

**Students**

Since 1984, enrollment experienced a transient decrease during the periods from 1986 to 1988 to a low of 3,040 and then underwent a change increasing until it reached a peak in the 1993-1994 academic year with 5,593 registered for Fall 1993. There was a gradual decrease from 1993 to 1998, but enrollment rebounded again, due in part, to more aggressive recruitment strategies until reaching an all time high in 2002-2003 with 5,914 students registered in Fall of 2002. A linear model applied to enrollment from 1997-1998 ($R^2 = 0.908$) gives a projected enrollment of 6,111 for 2003-2004 and 6,308 for 2004-2005.

The Huntsville area is a high technology one, and when jobs become scarcer in that sector, graduate enrollment tends to be increased by those seeking additional education to gain a competitive edge in the job market.

The students at Alabama A & M University have been fairly evenly divided with respect to gender. In 1984, males constituted 50.9% of the student body. By 1989, this
percentage had dropped to 44.5%. It has remained relatively constant since that time with Fall 2008 enrollment being divided into 44.4% males and 55.6% females. (Update)

Alabama A & M University's student body, consistent with its history and role, is predominately black (89.0%) with 8.7% white and 2.3% other races enrolled. The percentage of black enrollment was 85.0% in 1986 and slowly declined to a low of 80.1% in 1995, with white enrollment peaking at 15.5%. Since 1995, percentage of black enrollment has steadily increased to 89.0%, with a concomitant decrease in white enrollment (8.7%) to its lowest percentage since 1986.

**ACT Scores**

AAMU’s admission requirements include 18 on the ACT as one of several admission criteria. Clearly AAMU is reaching this goal with an average ACT of 23.91.

**Degrees Awarded**

Total graduate degrees awarded have gradually increased since 1993 to a peak of 1,072 in 1997. Since then, there has been a small decrease to 800 in 2003.

The number of Bachelor's and Master's degrees has followed the same pattern. The number of Bachelor's degrees awarded in 1997 was 608 and in 2003 were 475. In 1997, the number of Master's degrees was 417 and in 2003, they were 300. Educational specialist degrees peaked at 18 in 2003.

The number of doctoral degrees peaked in 1997 with 17 degrees awarded, decreased to 8-9 from 1998 to 2000 and subsequently increased again to 15 in 2001. In 2003, 3 doctoral degrees were granted.

Particularly notable is the number of minorities receiving doctoral degrees in discipline areas for which minorities are vastly underrepresented.

In the period since 1994, there have been 5 black students receiving PhD degrees out of 13 total, representing 38.5%. Of the 29 receiving PhD degrees in Plant and Soil Science, 21 (or 72.4%) were black and of the 27 receiving PhD degrees in Physics, 12 (or 44.4%) were black.

Of those students receiving Masters degrees in various discipline areas in which minorities are particularly underrepresented, 48.7% of graduates in Food Science and Technology were black, 70.3% in Plant and Soil Science, 18.5% in Computer Science, 54.8% in Technology, 72.2% in Biology, and 76.9% in Physics.

Clearly, Alabama A&M University is fulfilling its goals in providing a significant number of minority graduates to these discipline areas.
Scholarships to Students

Scholarships to students were relatively stable from 1991 to 1997, fluctuating slightly from $5,329,349 to $5,782,678. In 1998, the amount of financial aid increased to $6,669.80 increasing yearly (with a small decrease in 2000) to a high of $12,540,300 in 2001. Revenue from tuition and fees has also increased steadily from 1991 at $7,984,072 to a value of $19,383,641 in 2001 with only a small decrease seen in 1997.

University Financial Information

The following two graphs indicate the university revenue sources (by annual dollar amount and percentage of the total annual revenue) from 1991 to 2001. State appropriations have increased steadily to $30,600 in 2001, constituting 32.07% of the total revenue. Federal grants and contracts have also increased to a value of $24,801,480 in 2001, which represents 25.99% of the total revenue. Revenue generated from tuition and fees has increased steadily since 1991 to a value of $19,383,641 in 2001 consisting of 20.31% of the total revenue for that year. In 1991, tuition was 14.21% of the total revenue for that year.

Revenue generated from auxiliary enterprises has increased in both dollar amount and percentage of total revenue reaching $11,677,624 in 2001 and representing 12.24% of the total revenue. Revenues generated from federal appropriations, state grants and contracts, and private gifts, grants, and contracts have remained level in both dollar amounts and the percentage of total revenue.

Expenditures and transfers (by annual dollar amount and percentage of the total annual expenditures) from 1991 to 2001 are presented in the following two graphs. Expenditures on instruction generally increased from 1991 until reaching a peak in the period from 1995 to 1997.

After 1997, the dollar amount expended on instruction decreased to a low of $13,098,304. Since 1997, expenditures on instruction have increased to $17,077,455, exceeding the previous peak in 1997. Expressed as a percentage of the total expenditures, the amount spent on instruction was relative stable between 1991 and 1997 (~21-24%). From 1998-2001, the percentage has decreased to ~18% with a value of 17.18% for 2001.

Expenditures on institutional support have fluctuated with a decrease occurring in 1996, a peak in 1998, to its current level of $16,522,530 in 2001, representing 16.62% of total expenditures. The dollar amount spent on research increased steadily from 1991 until 1998, after which it decreased to a relatively constant value reaching $8,167,183 in 2001, representing 8.21%. Expenditures on both student services and public service have both generally increased gradually since 1991 to the current values of $8,927,224 for student services and $10,996,312 for public service, each representing approximately 10% of total expenditures in 2001.
III. MISSION

Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University reflects the uniqueness of the traditional land-grant institution combining teaching, research, service, liberal arts, and vocational fields. The University offers baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral level degrees that are compatible with the times to all qualified and capable individuals who are interested in further developing their technical, scientific, professional, and scholastic skills and competencies. The University operates in the three-fold function of teaching, research, extension and other public service. Alabama A&M University, a center of excellence, provides and educational environment for the emergence of scholars, scientists, leaders, critical thinkers, and other contributors to a global society. In cooperation with business, industry, governmental agencies, and other private and community-based institutions, Alabama A&M University provides a laboratory where theory is put into practice globally; and is committed to:

1. Excellence in education and the creation of a scholarly environment in which inquiring and discriminating minds may be nourished;
2. Education of students for effective participation in local, state, regional, national, and international societies;
3. Search for new knowledge through research and its applications;
4. Provision of a comprehensive outreach program designed to meet the changing needs of the larger community;
5. Programs necessary to address adequately the major needs and problems of capable students who have experienced limited access to education; and
6. Integration of state-of-the-art technology into all aspects of University functions.

In cooperation with businesses, industry, governmental agencies, and other private and community-based institutions, Alabama A&M University provides a laboratory where theory is put into practice, in a productive environment.

IV. VISION

Alabama A&M University will continue its quest to be recognized globally as a world-class, land-grant, comprehensive university (Carnegie: Doctoral [Intensive]), with a focus on:

- Expanding doctoral offerings in education, science and engineering;
- Increasing research, scholarly publications and other scholarly activities;
- Enhancing the University’s academic environment;
- Expanding extension/outreach/public service activities; and,
Creating and implementing a national model for student retention/graduation with emphasis on students with limited educational access.

V. CORE VALUES

Six core values serve as the philosophical underpinning for the University. They provide the foundation for molding and integrating activities of faculty, staff and students in their quest to implement and access programs of instruction, research and extension/outreach. The core values stress inclusiveness, scholarship, diversity, leadership, and service.

**Leadership** – The University will continue to promote a service oriented leadership through input into internal University governance by faculty, staff and students, engagement in public policy, public debate, and assumption of the leadership role by students, faculty and staff.

**Engagement** – The University through its faculty, staff, and students will be involved in meeting the needs of the larger community with special emphasis on meeting the needs of economically, culturally, and educationally depressed communities, thereby ensuring the University’s unmitigated engagement with the community as well as Alabama A&M University’s commitment to serving this community.

**Access** – The University will continue to serve as a beacon for capable students, including those with limited access to education and students with disabilities. Access will continue to be a core value that guides the University’s mission.

**Diversity** – The University will continue to view diversity as an all-encompassing effort that promotes diverse ideas, cultures, ethnicities, programs, processes, and procedures.

**Scholarship** – The University will provide a scholarly environment focused on excellence in student scholarship, and through its faculty and staff, the creation of new knowledge and means of expression through research and the creative arts.

**Integrity** - The University will maintain high ethical and moral standards that are incorporated not only in administrative functions but also in academic.

VI. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Alabama A&M University utilized surveys and other assessment tools to ascertain its strengths and weaknesses to better position the University to respond to the needs of its students, faculty, and staff between the years 2002 and 2015. As a result of the internal and external assessments, the following opportunities and challenges/critical issues were identified.
Opportunities

- Expand the University’s marketing strategies to increase alumni, corporate, and foundation giving as well as governmental agencies’ opportunities.

- Improve internal marketing to ensure that students, faculty, and staff are acquainted with the services provided by the University and establish Alabama A&M as a “student friendly” campus.

- Provide a more focused and expanded approach to international collaborations.

- Strengthen interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaborations.

- Expand and enhance the University’s technological infrastructure to increase the integration of technology in the classroom and distance learning opportunities.

- Pursue aggressively external funding opportunities that will facilitate the University’s ability to deliver quality services and enhance endowments.

- Position Alabama A&M as the “Community’s University”.

- Strengthen and expand graduate degree programs.

- Develop a national model for meeting the needs of students who are not academically prepared when they begin their matriculation in institutions of higher learning.

- Develop promotional materials to advertise and expand Alabama A&M University’s first-rate areas of study such as teacher education, forestry, and engineering.

- Expand the reach to nontraditional students and undeserved populations through distance learning.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive approach to strengthen the University’s undergraduate program.

- Develop and implement fiscal processes that align resource allocations with the University’s priorities.

- Fortify the University’s governance structure and revisit the University’s organizational and administrative structure.

- Create an environment and administrative structure that values, nurtures, and promotes professional growth for the University’s entire constituency including students, faculty, and staff.
VII. CHALLENGE/CRITICAL ISSUES

- Ensure that the University’s policies, procedures, programs, and resources address the needs of an academically and socially diverse student population.
- Secure and maintain financial resources that appropriately support the University’s programs, personnel, and facilities.
- Ensure that the University’s governing board continues its practice of providing a model for promoting integrity, leadership and knowledge.
- Continue to provide an executive administration that is stable and mature.
- Continue to ensure that academics are the University’s priority.
- Ensure the effective use and implementation of the planning and budgeting process, which involves all of the University’s departments, schools, and administrative staff.
- Increase the support of the alumni, community, and corporate entities.
- Improve the University’s plan for assuring a functional university-wide effectiveness/accountability plan.
- Strengthen University policies and procedures and monitoring processes to provide an operational environment consistent with approved policies and procedures.
- Maintain a critical mass of highly qualified, innovative, creative, research-oriented faculty and efficient support personnel.
- Ensure an adequate physical and technical academic environment that supports stimulating, educational and research activities.
- Enhance technology integration and utilization.
- Assess and promote high levels of academic performance.
- Assess, evaluate, and reward faculty and staff who have excellent performance reviews.
- Ensure internal program collaboration.
- Provide an organizational structure that enhances the University’s effectiveness and efficiency.

VIII. FOCUS AREAS 2008 - 2015

The Focus Areas delineated by the University are areas that will be addressed during 2008-2015. These areas are of sufficient importance that the University has developed short range and long range strategies that will influence the realization of these broad
focus areas. In order to zero in on these foci, “Blueprints to Excellence” were identified to guide the University’s efforts during its strategic planning process (2008-2015). These “Blueprints to Excellence” are the vehicles through which the University will institutionalize the Focus Areas. Each Blueprint to Excellence is related to a Focus Area and when accomplished, will strengthen the University’s effectiveness.

The University’s focus areas were developed through a broad-based comprehensive process that yielded a shared vision for the University. The nine focus areas reflect the vision of the President and the University’s constituent groups for strengthening, enhancing and advancing the University for several decades to come. The focus areas encompass the vision, mission, and core values and outline the parameters and strategic targets useful for the planning, evaluation, and institutional effectiveness. The University is utilizing a 1-3-5 model for planning. Every five years, deans and unit heads are required to submit a five-year strategic plan that addresses the focus areas delineated in the Focus 2015 Plan. Annually the University reviews annually its five-year plan to determine priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

**Focus Area 1: Program Viability and Advancement**

- Advance the level of faculty and student scholarship.
- Ensure that program accreditation, certification, or approval by state, regional, national and discipline accrediting, certifying and approval bodies are current.
- Strengthen program relevancy through the inclusion of technology and global perspectives.
- Strengthen program viability through planning, and effectiveness/outcomes assessment.
- Ensure program viability and accreditation through resource reallocation, and qualified faculty and staff.
- Enhance programs through increased regional and Carnegie standing.
- Increase the number of graduate offerings at the master's and doctoral levels.
- Provide ongoing quality through professional development for faculty and staff.
- Expand linkages with community, business, industry and civic organizations to address crucial economic, business and socio-economic needs.

**Focus Area 2: Quality of Student Life Social Development**

- Offer programs that will enhance student leadership, engagement, cultural, and social development.
- Increase student leadership through participation in university governance, and daily life of students and student related activities.
- Increase student activities that promote physical, intellectual, social, civic, and economic development.
- Devote attention to intellectual, psychological, social, emotional, ethical, and personal development.
Focus Area 3: Increased extramural funding through grants, contracts, and fund development

- Expand research activities by faculty and staff.
- Increase extramural funding through government, industry and private sources.
- Increase fundraising initiatives through alumni, corporate and private gifts, donations and contributions as well as research initiatives.
- Develop innovative, professional marketing and communication materials that enhance University constituents’ perception and awareness of all achievements, progress, and growth.

Focus Area 4: Enhanced physical resources, and space utilization

- Enhance campus facilities and space utilization.
- Update/implement a deferred maintenance plan for existing and new facilities
- Update/implement a security plan for physical resources and equipment
- Develop and implement a campus beautification program.
- Update the campus master plan.

Focus Area 5: Maintain fiscal stability and efficiency of resource management

- Manage a fiscally solvent operation.
- Initiate competitive faculty/staff salaries, inclusive of a reward structure for performance.
- Integrate planning in the budgeting process.
- Conduct annual internal and external audit of fiscal operation.

Focus Area 6: Enhanced University engagement through expanded outreach

- Engage through expanded outreach and distance learning activities.
- Certify that community service initiatives are integrated into student academic and student development activities.
- Offer continuing Education activities and programs that match University competencies with community needs.
- Integrate community service and service learning initiatives that support the University’s commitment to the development of the total student.

Focus Area 7: Student enrollment, retention and graduation

- Ensure by 2015, a fifty percent increase in student enrollment (Baseline: 2002).
- Ensure a fifty percent increase in student retention and graduation rate.
- Implement infrastructure re-tooling to accommodate increased student enrollment.
- A student enrollment of 9,000 by 2005.
Focus Area 8: Institutional Effectiveness

- Strengthen campus-wide process and involvement to ensure institutional effectiveness.
- Enhance data gathering procedures and infrastructure to enhance data integrity.
- Develop quality improvement indicators through outcomes assessment.
- Institute ongoing institutional research to enable data-driven decisions.
- Ensure continual quality improvement plans for academic and academic support units.

Focus Area 9: Technology Integration

- Expand the utilization of various technologies in instruction and research programs.
- Assure the graduation of students with state of the art technology, knowledge and skills.
- Develop a comprehensive plan for the infusion of technology in all the University’s functions.
- Upgrade and expand state-of-the-art technology and equipment to support the University’s infrastructure, including instruction, and research, and administrative effectiveness.
- Establish an adequate, appropriate organizational structure to support the coordination and integration of technology.

IX. “BLUEPRINTS TO EXCELLENCE”

Blueprint to Excellence in Academic Programming (Focus Area 1)

RATIONALE: The quest of quality in academic programming is the foremost priority of the University for charting its course through the year 2015 and beyond. To assure that this will become a reality, the University needs need to continuously reevaluate, revise and, and some cases, reinvent its comprehensive system of academic policies, procedures, and criteria, with implementation/follow-up-follow-through of plans designed to guarantee academic quality, control and accountability. Through this ongoing process of assessment, the University can assure an educational process that is dynamic and responsive to change in order to meet the needs of students.

OBJECTIVES:

1.0 To continually enhance the University’s academic programs by evaluating current programs for relevancy and eliminating, restructuring, consolidating or replacing as appropriate program offerings utilizing established criteria.

2.0 To expand as a result of analyses and feasibility studies the University’s graduate division by implementing as appropriate additional graduate programs at the master’s and doctoral levels.
3.0 To strengthen the University’s academic programs through an ongoing process of cost analysis and evaluations/revisions designed to assess program/instructional quality and viability.

4.0 To continually ensure institutional effectiveness as related to the University’s academic program through the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of annually assessing faculty’s progress in remaining current in their academic discipline, current instructional technology, and instructional strategies that are critical to providing students with the skills and knowledge for success in an ever-changing, global world.

5.0 To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the University by continually assessing administrative, staff and faculty performance supported by a system that facilitates instructional improvement, program, infrastructure and administrative enhancement while providing opportunities for professional development, and recognition through merit, promotions and other awards.

6.0 To assure students’ preparedness for intelligently addressing global societal challenges by continually providing for the review, evaluation and revision of general education (core curriculum) and other liberal arts offerings on a timely and consistent basis.

7.0 To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the University’s academic offerings and attendant support services provided for first-year and sophomore level students by continually strengthening the institution’s University College that houses the core curriculum, and other intervention programs, including placement services, assessment, advisement, counseling, and retention programs, as well as support for overachievers and students needing additional academic support.

8.0 To assure global integration in academic, research and outreach activities through ongoing analysis and refinement of international program activities, annually.

9.0 To strengthen the University’s academic outreach initiatives by offering comprehensive continuing education and distance learning programs with clearly defined policies, criteria and procedures for operations, effective 2008.

10.0 To strengthen the programs that address under-representation of minorities/women in science, mathematics, engineering and science/mathematics teaching by developing and implementing an ongoing process for identifying and addressing critical resource needs.

11.0 To assure a comprehensive, well-managed system of academic programming, quality control, and accountability by engaging a process for annually identifying and acquiring needed enhancements.
12.0 To continually strengthen the University’s library collections through the use of current technology and consortia and contractual arrangements.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Integrated program evaluation process to include the identification and assessment of student learning outcomes.
- Comprehensive advising, counseling and retention program.
- Retention of 85% of all entering students through the senior year.
- Faculty ratio at the undergraduate level of 1:25. (19 in 2011)
- Cutting-edge curricula that address critical thinking, technology, lifelong learning, problem solving, leadership and service.
- Professional growth of faculty.
- Faculty reward system that is based on merit and competitive salaries.
- Cutting-edge curricula that integrate practical activities to include internship, co-operative work experience for all program areas.
- National model for student retention.
- Integrated approaches for instruction, research and extension/outreach activities developed and implemented.
- Cutting-edge distance learning program.
- Renowned and diverse faculty and staff.
- Twenty-first century professionals and leaders.
- Restructuring of University College.

Blueprint to Excellence in Basic & Applied Research (Focus Areas 1 and 3)

GOAL 1: To ensure standards of excellence in basic and applied research through the enhancement of research centers, policies, procedures, programs and development opportunities for faculty so that state-of-the-art research can be fostered.
GOAL 2: To develop research programs and projects that enhance and increase viability and visibility of the University, provide state-of-the-art technology, and facilitate internal and external research collaboration.

RATIONALE: Excellence in academic programs in a university can be enhanced through its efforts in the performance of quality basic and applied research. The Southern Regional Education Board and other higher education agencies report that quality research affords the opportunity to strengthen the education students receive and contribute to the support of the economy and society. Our mission and commitment to excellence mean that basic and applied research must be an integral part of the education enterprise.

OBJECTIVES:

1.0 To continually position the University to offer solutions to the issues inherent in local, state, national and global problems (e.g., poverty, illiteracy, homelessness, etc.) through the provision of a sound program of basic and applied research that supports the University’s mission, expands existing knowledge, and develops new knowledge.

2.0 To enhance the University’s funded research initiatives with federal, state and private corporations by continuing to support and provide research and experimental learning opportunities for faculty and students, annually.

3.0 To annually enhance the University’s research programs and activities by strengthening library and related resources that support research initiatives.

4.0 To ensure campus-wide research collaboration by annually increasing the number of interdisciplinary research activities.

5.0 To address the needs of the citizens in Alabama by increasing the number of research and demonstration/training grants acquired, annually.

6.0 To improve the University’s research initiatives by increasing the amount of external funds by 20% annually (Baseline: 2002-2003).

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Comprehensive research initiatives developed based upon the University’s priorities.
- Interdisciplinary and intra-disciplinary collaborative research initiatives that address and solve problems that will benefit society and meet future scientific and technological challenges.
• Funding of proposals submitted to private, governmental, and corporate organizations increased by 20%, annually.

• Research initiatives that complement the curricula, utilize state-of-the-art equipment, and include collaborations with other HBCU’s and majority institutions.

• A cadre of faculty who hold the terminal degree with expertise in cutting-edge research dedicated to employing new pedagogical approaches to teaching and involve undergraduate students early in their matriculation in research and design projects and identify co-ops at industry, national laboratories, and major research institutions.

• Faculty and student publications in scholarly journals and presentations of research findings at professional meetings will increase by 15% annually.

• Faculty and departmental reward system that is based on funded research grants.

• Comprehensive development processes in the grants and contracts unit to ensure that federal grants are appropriately expended.

Blueprint to Excellence in University Support and Public Relations (Focus Area 3)

GOAL 1: To enhance the University’s image to position Alabama A&M’s ability to successfully compete for young scholars and renowned faculty, increase enrollment, and assist in revenue generating initiatives.

GOAL 2: To expand Alabama A&M University’s marketing strategies and tools to increase visibility, advance the University’s aspirations, and capitalize on the University’s distinctive heritage.

GOAL 3: To strengthen the University’s alumni involvement in University activities and to enhance services provided to the alumni constituency.

GOAL 4: To enhance the University’s ability to effectively fundraise by strengthening the development unit.

RATIONALE: A comprehensive University development plan supported by aggressive public relations and marketing strategy is necessary for growth, image building, and financial support of the University. Creating a public stance that identifies the University as one of research excellence will require a strong development unit to chart milestones and progress that will enhance the longevity of the University. Avenues for the exchange of knowledge and information facilitate effective utilization of human and physical resources as well as networking. The University must keep abreast of, and incorporate
within its environment, technologies that improve our capabilities and affirm our academic role in society.

OBJECTIVES:

1.0 To ensure consistency in the University’s public relations and institutional advancement activities by continually making available policies and procedures and up-dates on-line for faculty, staff, alumni, and various constituents.

2.0 To enhance alumni involvement in the University’s Alumni Association by providing ongoing opportunities for alumni to become involved with the University.

3.0 To enhance communication and opportunities for alumni support and participation by continuously maintaining an accurate and up-to-date alumni database that will serve as a medium for ongoing exchanges of information and ideas between the University and its Alumni.

4.0 To enhance continually the University’s image and marketing capabilities by providing broadcast support to University Relations through radio, television, news and public affairs programming.

5.0 To strengthen the University’s outreach initiatives by annually increasing strategic alliances between the University community, business, industry, local, federal, and State governments, and professional organizations.

6.0 To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the development function by utilizing communications technology to continually maintain an accurate and up-to-date list of donors.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Semi-annual alumni publications that promote alumni accomplishments and disseminate important and relevant University information.

- Alumni participation increased by 15% through the implementation of innovative activities (Baseline: 2002-2003).

- Marketing strategies and tools that skillfully portray Alabama A&M’s academic offerings, support services, scholarships, faculty, campus environment, and the institutional commitment to students’ successful matriculation.

- Integrated processes utilizing technology that ensure accurate maintenance of donor giving and provide reliable prospect donors.
• Educational and entertaining radio and television programs developed to support the University Relations Office as well as promote the University’s accomplishments.

• Alliances with external constituencies will increase annually by 10% to support the University’s programs (Baseline: 2002-2003).

Blueprint to Excellence in Extension and Public Service (Focus Area 6)

GOAL: To ensure the development of extension and other outreach programs designed to enhance and expand the social, economic, physical and emotional well being of citizens at various levels of development through programs of life-long learning which utilize the entire range of skills and knowledge of the University’s personnel, other resources, and students.

RATIONALE/JUSTIFICATION: Current and projected demographic trends indicate radical changes in the make-up of the population for southern states. Some of these changes include: an increase in the elderly/retired population; an increase in ethnic minorities; an increase in ethnic minorities and women in the workforce; the entrance of Generation X into the workforce and higher education institutions. Further, such trends continue to highlight issues such as: illiteracy at all levels of society; changing technologies that impact workforce skills and daily personal and business transactions; job stability as impacted by the declining average longevity rates of employees and rapid changes in technology; as well as increases in overarching societal problems such as teenage and domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, healthcare, child abuse, poverty and others. Based on these and other trends, every segment of society from infants to the elderly can benefit from the establishment of programs that utilize the wealth of resources of the University. More importantly, the establishment and effective operation of programs of life-long learning and community outreach help to underscore and support the ultimate and most important part of the University’s mission, that is to meet the needs of the citizens it serves in order to improve the human condition.

OBJECTIVES:

1.0 To strengthen the University’s focus on urban areas by expanding and redirecting some of the institution’s annual extension and outreach initiatives.

2.0 To strengthen the continuing education program by restructuring the unit into a comprehensive unit of outreach programs including community partnerships that will address on an ongoing basis life-long learning in various segments of the population.

3.0 To strengthen the University’s commitment to effectively addressing critical issues adversely affecting the “quality of life” of citizens in both rural and urban
settings through the continuous establishment of collaborations with other universities and private and public agencies.

4.0 To enhance the University’s ongoing internal outreach efforts through semi-annually scheduled opportunities for discussions by students, administrators, faculty, and staff on topics that define and impact the personal, social and academic lives of campus constituents.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Outreach and extension initiatives focusing on urban areas expanded to demonstrate Alabama A&M University’s expanded commitment to the community.

- Continuing education programs restructured and strengthened to include community partnerships to meet the ever-changing needs and on-going needs of life-long learners.

- Collaborative initiatives developed to redress the imparities that affect “quality of life” of citizens in urban areas.

- Semi-Annual forums that afford the students, faculty, staff, and administrators an opportunity to identify and provide recommendations for matters that impact all campus constituents.

Blueprint to Excellence in Student Support Services and Activities (Focus Area 2)

GOAL: To create an environment through comprehensive programs and administrative policies and procedures that is responsive to the personal, social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and cultural needs of students.

RATIONALE: The number of students, the varied abilities and backgrounds which they bring, and the attrition rate indicate the justification for more comprehensive and coordinated services that are congruent with the needs of students and with the demands and trends in our society.

OBJECTIVES:

1.0 To enhance student services by semi-annually providing a comprehensive program of personal, social and a variety of cultural, social and recreational activities and experiences designed to enrich the lives of students.
2.0 To ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive plan for health care and prevention that provides for the timely, regular dissemination of relevant information.

3.0 To assure students that they will have student housing that is suitable and safe by continuously monitoring housing conditions and student concerns.

4.0 To ensure a campus environment that is safe and conducive to optimum learning by improving the University’s security staff through an ongoing, comprehensive mandatory training program for current and new hires.

5.0 To expand opportunities for encouraging University team spirit and interaction by annually providing and supporting a comprehensive intercollegiate athletics and intramural sports program.

6.0 To promote the integration of athletes into the University’s academic community and ensuring that their graduation rates equal those of non-athletes by strengthening and increasing academic support initiatives and services for athletes who miss classes while provision of a service to the University.

7.0 To strengthen the University’s ongoing commitment to ensuring that students are continually exposed to an integrated and coordinated plan for living and learning activities in the residence halls.

8.0 To ensure that all graduates are provided information, counseling and skills that will strengthen their opportunity for career placement and acceptance to graduate or professional school, after graduation and for internship and cooperative education placement while matriculating at the University.

9.0 Restructure University College.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Comprehensive student support services program that is accessible and provided regularly designed to assist students in all aspects of their academic life.

- Strengthened public safety policies, training, and staffing.

- Appropriate and secure student housing with structured living learning facilities, and program equipment.
• Comprehensive intercollegiate and intramural athletic programs that promote team spirit and afford positive student interaction.

• Academic support services and initiatives designed specifically for athletes to ensure progress and successful matriculation.

• All-inclusive advisement and counseling program that assists students in selection of and acceptance in graduate and professional schools via strengthened internship and cooperative programs.

Blueprint to Excellence in Business and Finance (Focus Area 4, and Focus Area 5)

GOAL 1: To establish clear, strong directions for financial analyses, planning, budgeting, and management, utilizing state-of-the-art technology and procedures for measuring results against rigorous standards.

GOAL 2: To assure the maintenance of an Office of Human Resources with appropriate mechanisms and procedures for attracting, selecting, developing, assessing and maintaining the best qualified personnel (faculty, staff, and administrators) that will contribute to the creation of an environment that fosters and supports academic excellence.

GOAL 3: To improve physical facilities and maintenance, and provide a greater aesthetic appearance to increase student and faculty/staff morale, impress the community, attract potential students and provide an increased appreciation for the physical plant as a place to study and work.

RATIONALE: A major strength of any university is its ability to successfully obtain appropriate financial resources for program development and enhancement; and to properly manage and demonstrate accountability for those resources. Regional and national reports continue to stress the need for stringent requirements in policies and procedures relative to business and financial affairs in higher education. At AAMU there is a need to upgrade financial planning, budgeting and management policies and procedures to assure quality and accountability. Such an endeavor will greatly enhance the University’s ability to achieve academic excellence.

With two-thirds of the operational budget being spent on personnel, a comprehensive system of human resources management is needed to assure a high level of accountability, productivity and efficiency. The system, through new technology, policies
and procedures, must be able to respond to a broad-range of personnel needs from initial employment, yearly service and termination.

The symbolic meaning of a university as an intellectual center and a place where the mind can be nurtured is an abstract yet universally embraced concept. The physical image and the care and maintenance of the space that encompasses the University transmits a message to all who interact/involve themselves with the University. Therefore presenting and creating a cared for, well-maintained physical environment is critical to the scholarly image and the professional atmosphere expected at an institution of higher learning.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1.0 To strengthen the University’s ability to increase its financial resources through the aggressive development and implementation of a continual, comprehensive resource identification and acquisition initiative.

2.0 To strengthen the University’s financial operations and planning system by maintaining a stable balance between resources and spending through the coordination, integration, and monitoring of the annual planning, evaluation and budgeting processes, thereby, yielding a fiscally solvent operation.

3.0 To strengthen the University’s Human Resources function by continually reviewing and revising its policies and procedures as mandated by good practices and state and federal law.

4.0 To improve the University’s physical plant by evaluating and improving the current physical plant, i.e., the infrastructure and facilities through ongoing renovation of substandard structures and construction of new classroom and support facilities.

5.0 To continually improve the University’s facilities by updating and revising the University’s Master Plan in conjunction with student affairs, business and finance and academic affairs, including projections for new facilities targeted to growth programs and land use consistent with local, state and federal building ordinances.

6.0 To continually improve the University’s facilities and services by developing a standardized computerized inventory and scheduling system for maintenance and repairs and/or replacement of equipment and furniture.

7.0 To enhance and continually update the system of shipping, receiving and property management by instituting and maintaining a state-of-the-art computerized system of tracking purchases, distribution of goods, inventories, and property management activities.
8.0 To strengthen the University’s security and response systems by developing, implementing, monitoring and updating a plan for annually maintaining security of buildings and equipment.

9.0 To continually maximize the use of space through the annual review and revision of the University’s Space Utilization Plan.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Stringent budgeting processes will be implemented and monitored by the Budget and Planning Committee to ensure fiscal stability.
- The University’s fiscal needs will be prioritized without jeopardizing the quality or integrity of its services.
- Current Human Resources manual, policies, and procedures to ensure adherence to federal, state, and local laws.
- University’s Master Facilities Plan will be continually revised to ensure that renovation of deficient facilities occurs and that the University’s physical plant also includes plans for growth and the financial resources that will support the new initiatives.
- Technology based facilities maintenance and upgrade system monitored by the Facilities Director adhering to Alabama A&M University’s Master Facilities Plan.
- Computerized system that maintains inventories, monitors and tracks purchases, and timely delivery of acquisitions.

Blueprint to Excellence in Technology Integration (Focus Area 9)

GOAL 1: To improve the University’s technological infrastructure to support its tactical needs and strategic goals by providing enhanced educational experiences both inside and outside the classrooms as well as providing the needed technologies to support the academic and administrative departments.

RATIONALE: Recognizing the vital importance of information technologies to the success of all areas of the institution’s mission from instruction delivery, effective research, to effective administration of a research institution, Alabama A&M University developed an Information Technology Plan that was revised in 2003. The Alabama A&M Information and Technology Plan directly relates to the University’s Strategic Plan and demonstrates the University’s commitment and readiness to utilize information technology as a central component of teaching, learning, student services, research, and administration. In addition, the Information Technology Plan provides a detailed assessment of the University’s current technological capabilities and delineates automation priorities, budget allocations and projected emerging technologies.
OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide adequate computing, information access, and network resources to satisfy the needs of students, faculty, and staff for teaching, learning, research and administration locally and remotely,

2. To support and maintain the academic and administrative computing activities of the University and to enable quality, efficiency and productivity through development, training, expansion of technical support and realignment/reengineering of information technology processes and systems; and

3. To facilitate and enhance processes to provide quality information services and reliable information access to our clients in a reliable and secured way.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- All (100%) faculty, staff and student labs should be equipped with networked computers and access to devices, office productivity tools, virus protection and e-mail.

- Provision of a solid foundation of campus-wide IT infrastructure, wired and wireless.

- Increase the number and improve the support of “smart” classrooms to 50 percent by 2015.

- Full sensitivity to on-line student surveys to satisfy students computing requirements, minimize down time of computing resources and extend the useful life of open computer labs.

- Secure, well maintained and manage mission critical servers and services. Also, deploy new servers, network appliances and network services as needed.

- Well trained faculty in the field of Distance-Learning/Distributed Education (Asynchronous /synchronous) skilled in creation of Web-enabled course(s) facilitated with secure world-wide access for 50 percent of all courses by 2015.

- Increase the number and coordination of IT staff based on number of computing devices, the level of complexity of services and scope of works to insure provision of prompt and reliable services.

- Improved Delivery and Secure Access to web-based Application Programs, Students Information Systems, Web Registration and Institutional Data.
• Fully employ data security mechanisms against intruders and deploy disaster recovery system in case of natural disaster, riot and vandalism.

• Forward looking evaluations of new Information Technologies, including IT support for individuals with disabilities.

Blueprints to Excellence in Institutional Effectiveness (Focus Area 8)

GOAL 1: To institutionalize planning and assessment.

RATIONALE: Institutional Effectiveness permeates all Blueprints to Excellence and is an integrated aspect of all of the University’s focus areas. As part of Alabama A&M’s commitment to Institutional Effectiveness, all of the Blueprints to Excellence will demonstrate and document on an ongoing basis effectiveness, progress, assessment, evaluation, and utilization of assessment results in the planning and budgeting process.

OBJECTIVES:

1.0 Strengthen campus-wide process and involvement to ensure institutional effectiveness.

2.0 Enhance data gathering procedures and infrastructure to enhance data integrity.

3.0 Develop quality improvement indicators through outcomes assessment.

4.0 Institute ongoing institutional research to enable data-driven decisions.

5.0 Ensure continual quality improvement plans for academic and academic support units.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

• Planning and assessment committees at the various unit levels.

• Policies and procedures as well as expanded staff for data gathering and analysis.

• Process that integrates assessment and programs enhancement.

• Institutional processes and procedures for identity and assessing student learning outcomes.