



COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Note: Enter "NA" wherever data are not applicable or not available for the program under review.

Program Characteristics

Academic Program Name: **General Studies**

Degree: **Associate of Arts (A.A.)**

Program CIP Code: **24.0101**

School and Department: **Liberal Arts**

Time frame for this review: **Fall 2012 – Fall 2016**

Date of last internal review: **May 2013**

Current date program reviewed for this report: **November 2, 2017**

Program Goal Statement and Student Learning Outcomes

Program goal statement:

This degree is designed for students undecided on a particular field of study or a career path, for students planning to pursue majors not offered at Dalton State, for students planning to transfer to private or out-of-state institutions, or for students wishing to earn the general associate's degree only. The Associate of Arts in general studies provides students a solid foundation for further academic or professional achievement. For students planning to enter a baccalaureate degree program, coursework allows them to explore a variety of fields including psychology, history, literature, natural sciences, mathematics, and communication toward selection of an academic major of interest. For students preferring to enter the workforce, the acquisition of communication and interactive skills prepares them for successful careers in such diverse fields as management, health care, sales, and marketing. Whether pursuing academic or professional goals, students following the Associate of Arts in general studies program develop foundational knowledge and skills in communication, problem solving, and critical thinking that will enable them to be successful in whatever endeavors they engage.

The general goals of the program include the following:

- Provide students with foundational knowledge and skills in oral and written communication, critical thinking and reading, humanities and fine arts, and social sciences.
- Provide students the opportunity to explore a wide array of subject areas and to complete the general education curriculum in order to gain admission into a bachelor's program or to enter the workforce.

Program outcomes:

1. Graduates will communicate effectively and clearly in standard written and oral communication.
2. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to read and think critically.
3. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate literary, humanistic, and artistic works and performing arts.
4. Graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the forces shaping contemporary society as revealed in the social sciences and history.



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5. Graduates will continue their education in a bachelor's program or find meaningful employment.
6. Students who take Liberal Arts courses will express satisfaction with the quality of instruction.

Student learning outcomes:

1. Students will determine forms of communication appropriate to particular audiences and purposes and organize and communicate knowledge and ideas in a logical and purposeful way (assessed in ENGL 1101).
2. Students will use accepted patterns of grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure in written communication (assessed in ENGL 1101).
3. Students will exhibit expertise necessary to research, organize, and present an oral report of speech (assessed in COMM 1110).
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to use technology and gather data to conduct research, demonstrating an understanding of plagiarism by citing sources correctly (assessed in ENGL 1102).
5. Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions and arguments (assessed in ENGL 1102).
6. Students will demonstrate the ability to make informed judgments in interpreting works of art, literature, or other aesthetic experiences of cultures (assessed using a sampling of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment reports for Area C courses).
7. Students will articulate their understanding of the forces, events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society (assessed in HIST 2111 and HIST 2112).
8. Students will articulate the constitutional principles of governmental processes fundamental to American Democracy and political participation (assessed in POLS 1101).



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Brief Assessment of Previous Program Review

Outcome of previous program review (brief narrative statement).

The previous program review for the AA transfer degree for 2007-2011 concluded that it was a “viable program with over 100 majors. Since the program is comprised of courses taught as a part of the general education core, it does not cost the College any additional money to operate. In addition, the program provides an affordable option for students who would like to complete the first two years of their degrees close to home before transferring to an institution that offers their desired degree.” Moreover, assessments of student learning outcomes and program goals showed that most objectives were met and that “the College’s assessment measures compare favorably with other institutions throughout the United States both on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency and the National Survey of Student Engagement.”

What improvements have occurred since the last program review or assessment?

We recently added a pathway in theatre, giving students the opportunity to explore this degree at Dalton State before transferring to a more expensive program to complete the degree.

Another improvement resulted from changes at the University System level. Now any class offered in Areas B through F (and not otherwise required in the core) can be used to fulfill Area F in general studies; consequently, students who change majors lose fewer credits, shortening the time to degree completion.

What changes or revisions have been made to the program, its curriculum, or its program/student learning outcomes since the last program review? Please include a follow-up discussion of the previous review’s action plan?

The action plan associated with the assessment focused on low graduation rates for the program. Associate of Arts students were beginning their programs at Dalton State but appeared either to be transferring before they completed their degrees or losing interest and dropping out. They did not appear to be enrolling in Dalton State’s bachelor programs. To address this issue, the School worked to add targeted degree programs that meet students’ needs, including the BA in interdisciplinary studies, the BA in communication studies, and the BS in psychology. The School’s action plan was successful. We were able to add targeted bachelor’s degrees in interdisciplinary studies, communication studies, and psychology. The bachelor’s degrees in communication and psychology have proved to be highly effective in attracting students, and we deactivated and eventually terminated the associate’s degrees in communication, psychology, foreign language, geography, English, history, and political science. Moreover, the number of associate’s degree conferred increased by 210% during the period covered by this current review.



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Student Demographics

Enrollment	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Headcount	106	105	109	108	98	-7.5%
FTE	100.08	100.91	105.50	104	94.5	-5.6%
Enrolled Full-time	76	77	82	75	68	-10.5%
Enrolled Part-time	30	28	27	33	30	0
Female	45	60	53	60	63	40%
Male	61	45	56	48	35	-42.6%
Alaskan Native/Native American/American Indian	-	1	1	2	1	0
Asian, Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	-	0
Black/African-American	1	1	1	-	4	300%
Hispanic	-	-	-	-	-	0
Multi-racial	-	-	-	-	-	0
Undeclared	47	61	58	65	67	41.6%
White	58	42	49	41	26	-55.2%

Analysis and comments on student demographics.

The number of students enrolled in the AA transfer program has decreased by 7.5% over the last five years. The most likely reason for the decrease is the addition of new bachelor's-degree programs in Liberal Arts and throughout the College. Since 2012, Liberal Arts has added the Associate of Arts in Music, the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies, the Bachelor of Science in Psychology, and the Bachelor of Arts in Communication, with the latter two especially popular with students.

The number of women choosing the program has grown in proportion to the decline in the number of men choosing the degree program, suggesting that more male students are enrolling in our bachelor's degree programs, though there is some evidence that fewer male students are pursuing higher education.

While the percentage of blacks has increased by 300% in the last five years, the numbers are so small as to make the percentage increase not particularly meaningful. Over the past five years, the percentage of students who choose "undeclared" as a racial category has increased by 41.6%, which may offer some insight as to why there do not seem to be any Hispanics in the program. It is possible that our Hispanic students are choosing "undeclared" because of the current political climate. The percentage of white students has also declined, and this may be related to the increase in the number or types of bachelor's degrees the College now offers.



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Faculty Indicators of Program Quality	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
School (not Department) faculty teaching in program Including Areas A-F as the curriculum includes all areas.	69	70	72	78	76	10%
Full-time program faculty	53	54	53	51	54	2%
Part-time program faculty	16	16	19	27	22	28%
Total program faculty	69	70	72	78	76	10%
Percent of program classes taught by full-time program faculty	86%	94%	73%	85%	74%	-12%
Gender (full-time and part-time faculty)	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Male	33	33	36	36	32	-3%
Female	36	37	36	42	44	22%
Race/Ethnicity (full-time and part-time faculty)	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Alaskan Native/Native American/American Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian, Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	2	2	2	2	2	0
Black/African-American	1	1	2	2	2	100%
Hispanic	1	1	0	0	0	-100%
Multi-racial	0	0	0	0	0	0
Undeclared	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	65	66	68	74	72	11%
Tenure Status (full-time faculty)	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Tenured	27	28	29	33	39	44%
On-tenure track	21	22	20	13	9	-57%
Non-tenure track	5	4	4	5	6	20%
Rank (full-time faculty)	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Professor	10	10	10	12	14	40%
Associate Professor	16	18	22	24	26	63%
Assistant Professor	22	22	17	10	8	-64%
Instructor/Senior Lecturer/Lecturer	5	4	4	5	6	20%



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Faculty Indicators of Program Quality

Highest degree (full-time faculty)	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Doctorate	36	38	41	39	41	14%
Specialist	-	-	-	-	1	N/A
Master's	17	16	12	12	12	-29%
Bachelor's	-	-	-	-	-	-
Associate's/Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average salary for program faculty	43,220	44,031	43,545	46,107	49,181	13.8%

Provide additional details, analysis, and comments regarding faculty indicators of program quality.

The number of full-time Liberal Arts faculty teaching in the associate's degree program in general studies has remained very stable throughout the five years of this review period. While the total number of faculty teaching in the program has increased by 10%, the number of full-time faculty increased by only one position. The 10% increase is largely comprised of part-time music faculty who teach the applied lessons coursework that can count towards the AA in general studies. The 12% decrease in the number of courses taught by full-time faculty can be attributed to two factors: more full-time faculty are teaching upper-level courses in the relatively new bachelor's programs in interdisciplinary studies, communication, and psychology, and more part-time faculty are teaching music courses that can apply toward the AA in general studies or the AA in music.

There has been very little change in the racial and ethnic diversity among the faculty, with the majority being white. The percentage of women on the faculty, however, has increased by 22% in the last five years.

The stability of the faculty can also be seen in the increase in the number of full-time faculty who are tenured, a 44% increase. While the number of non-tenure track positions has increased by 20%, this is not significant since the 20% represents an increase of only one position (a last minute hiring of a lecturer to cover needed general education communication courses).

Other indicators of quality and stability are the increased percentages of the number of faculty who are now full professors (a 40% increase) and associate professors (a 63% increase). Since there has been very little faculty turnover in Liberal Arts, the decrease in the number of assistant professors is simply the result of the number of faculty who have been promoted in the last five years. Still another indicator of program quality is the increase in the number of full-time faculty who have earned doctoral degrees, a 14% increase between 2012 and 2016.

The 13.8% increase in faculty salaries is largely due to three factors: the number of faculty who have been promoted to full and associate professor, the renewal of small raises beginning in 2015, and the new hires that have received higher starting salaries.



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Still other indicators of faculty quality are the high student evaluations that Liberal Arts faculty average each year. The 2016-2017 student evaluation average was an impressive 4.73 on a 5-point scale. In addition, these faculty members have a strong presentation/publication record (67% published or presented last year for a total of 124 presentations/publications) and a strong professional development record (100% participated in over 638 activities).



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

Student Input	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Mean ACT score	19.94	19.69	19.58	19.31	19.64	-1.5%
Mean SAT score	474.40	450.17	469.60	467.90	455.00	-4.1%
Mean Freshman Index	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Entry GPA mean score	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Program entry score, if applicable (e.g., nursing, business, education)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

If applicable to your degree program, provide any additional external quality assurance data/information or results (e.g., professional accreditation results, National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], market rankings, etc.).

The mean ACT and SAT scores have experienced a minimal decline in the last five years with some fluctuation in 2014 and 2015. Students typically enter the program as freshmen; thus, there are no program entry scores or mean GPA entry scores.



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Indicators of Measures of Quality

Student Output	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Exit scores on national/state licensure (if applicable)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Graduating majors' mean GPA	2.625	2.705	2.92	3.15	3.047	16.1%
Employment rate of graduates (if available)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of students entering graduate/professional programs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of students accumulating 120 credit hours	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of students accumulating more than 120 credit hours	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of students accumulating 128 credit hours (secondary education and early childhood education degrees)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of students accumulating more than 128 credit hours (secondary education and early childhood education degrees)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percent of program students on Dean's List	84%	14%	12%	1%	20%	-76%

Describe the extent to which students have achieved current program outcomes during this program review cycle (most recent year).

Students met or exceeded all program outcomes for the AA in general studies during the 2016-2017 academic year (see table below). In reviewing our program outcomes this year, we added a new outcome that we will begin assessing during the 2017-2018 academic year.

Results for 2016-2017

Program Outcome	Target	Assessment
1. Graduates will communicate effectively and clearly in standard written and oral communication.	A minimum of 70% of students enrolled in ENGL 1101 will demonstrate competence in written communication by successfully completing the course with a 70% or better.	Target Met: During the 2016-2017 academic year, 86% of the students enrolled in ENGL 1101 earned a C or better (excluding withdrawals), and 82% completed the course with a C or better (including withdrawals).
	A minimum of 70% of students enrolled in COMM 1110: Fundamentals of Speech will pass the course with a C or better.	Target Met: During the 2016-2017 academic year, 88% of the students enrolled in COMM 1110 earned a C or better (excluding withdrawals), and 82% earned a C or better (including withdrawals).
2. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to read and think critically.	Students will perform equal to or above the national average on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) reading test.	Target Met: Dalton State graduates exceeded the national average on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) reading test.



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	Students will perform equal to or above the national average on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency critical thinking measure.	Target Met: Students scored higher than the national average on the CAAP critical thinking measure.
	A minimum of 70% of students enrolled in ENGL 1102 will earn a C or better (excluding withdrawals).	Target Exceeded: 85% earned a C or better (excluding withdrawals); 81% earned a C or better (including withdrawals).
3. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate literary, humanistic, and artistic works and performing arts.	Students will perform equal to or above the national average on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency arts and literature measure.	Target Met: Dalton State graduates performed higher than the national average on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency arts and literature measure.
4. Graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the forces shaping contemporary society as revealed in the social sciences and history.	Students will perform equal to or above the national average on the CAAP social sciences measure.	Target Met: Dalton State students performed above the national average on the CAAP social sciences measure.
5. Graduates of the Associate of Arts in general studies will continue their education in a bachelor's program or find meaningful employment.	We will establish baseline data during the 2017-2018 year so that we can determine an acceptable target.	New Assessment Measure, not assessed this cycle.
6. Students who take Liberal Arts courses will express satisfaction with the quality of instruction.	Faculty in the School of Liberal Arts will achieve student evaluation averages greater than 4.5 on a 5-point scale.	Target Met: The student evaluation average for faculty in the School of Liberal Arts for 2016-2017 was an impressive 4.728.

Describe the extent to which students have achieved current student learning outcomes during this program review cycle (most recent year).

During the 2016-2017 academic year, students met or exceeded all student learning outcomes directly associated with the Associate of Arts in general studies. See details in tables below. Previous years' findings can be found in Weave online for all of the years covered by this program assessment.

2016-2017

Student Learning Outcome	Target	Assessment
1. Students will determine forms of communication appropriate to particular audiences and purposes and organize and communicate knowledge and	A minimum of 70% of the students enrolled in selected sections of ENGL 1101 will earn a 70% or better on the organization of their essays.	Target Met: 83% earned 70% or better on the organization of their essays.



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ideas in a logical and purposeful way.		
2. Students will use accepted patterns of grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure in written communication.	A minimum of 70% of students will earn a 70% or better on their grammar and usage exams or on the grammar and usage component of assigned essays.	Target Met: 83% earned a 70% or better on grammar and usage exams or on the grammar and usage component of assigned essays.
3. Students will exhibit expertise necessary to research, organize, and present an oral report of speech.	A minimum of 70% of students enrolled in COMM 1110 will earn a 70% or better on a grading rubric that focuses on the research, organization, and presentation components of an informative speech.	Target Met: 77% earned a 70% or better on an informational speech.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to use technology and gather data to conduct research, demonstrating an understanding of plagiarism by citing sources correctly.	A minimum of 70% of students in ENGL 1102 will earn a 70% or better on the research and documentation components of the required research paper.	Target Met: 79.5% of the students earned a 70% or better on the research and documentation components of the required research paper.
5. Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions and arguments.	A minimum of 70% of students in ENGL 1102 will earn a 70% or better on the content and analysis components of the research paper.	Target Met: 92.5% of the students enrolled in selected sections of ENGL 1102 earned a 70% or better on the content and analysis component of the required research paper.
6. Students will demonstrate the ability to make informed judgments in interpreting works of art, literature, or other aesthetic experiences (assessed using a sampling of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment reports for Area C courses).	A minimum of 70% of students in selected Area C courses will earn a 70% or better on a measure used to assess students' ability to make informed judgments in interpreting works of art, literature, or other aesthetic experiences. During the 2016-2017 cycle, THEA 1100 and MUSC 1110 were the targeted courses.	Target Met: 88% of students in selected sections of MUSC 1100 and THEA 1100 earned a 70% or better on measures pertaining to the ability to make informed judgments in interpreting works of art, literature, or other aesthetic experiences. In MUSC 1100, students evaluated a concert; in THEA 1100 students' ability was assessed using a rubric evaluating the origins, the development, the significance, and the different adaptations or uses of the practice components of the cultural project presentation.
7. Students will articulate their understanding of the forces, events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society	A minimum of 70% of students enrolled in HIST 2111 and HIST 2112 will earn a 70% on tests that assess	Target Met: 85% of the students in selected sections of HIST 2111 and HIST 2112 earned 70% or better on tests that assessed their



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(assessed in HIST 2111 and HIST 2112).	students' understanding of forces that shaped history.	understanding of forces that shaped history and society.
8. Students will articulate the constitutional principles of governmental processes fundamental to American Democracy and political participation.	A minimum of 70% of students enrolled in selected sections of POLS 1101 will earn a 70% or better on exams or debates covering constitutional principles fundamental to American democracy.	Target Met: 94% of the students enrolled in selected sections of POLS 1101 demonstrated their understanding of the constitutional principles fundamental to American democracy by earning a 70% or better on exams or debates covering these principles.

Indicators of Measures of Quality

If available, provide additional information and/or results of other indicators of quality related to student output such as completer satisfaction surveys, employer satisfaction surveys, stakeholder satisfaction surveys, completion and continuation rates, attrition rates, starting salaries of graduates, etc.

The AA in general studies is a two-year transfer degree. This degree is primarily intended for students who wish to transfer into a degree program not offered at Dalton State. This degree is also useful for students who are undecided about their major and who may decide to stay at Dalton State after exploring a number of different subject areas. Consequently, as a two-year transfer degree, employer and stakeholder satisfaction surveys and starting salaries of graduates are not relevant.

Describe efforts undertaken to achieve and maintain curricular alignment within the program and currency to the discipline.

Area F requirements for the AA in general studies are set by the Council on General Education of the University System of Georgia. Prior to 2015, students majoring in the AA in general studies took 18 hours of Humanities and Social Sciences classes to satisfy the 18 credit hours required in Area F. In 2015, the Council on General Education changed the requirement to allow students to take any courses from Areas B through F to satisfy this requirement. This change benefits students who change degree programs; however, it also served to make the AA in general studies almost indistinguishable from the AS in general studies since Area F is now the same for both degrees.



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Indicators of Measures of Viability

Internal Demand for the Program	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Number of students enrolled in the degree program	106	106	109	108	98	-7.5%
Number of students who applied to the program (if applicable)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of students admitted to the program (if applicable)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of students who declared the program at 60 semester-credit hours	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of credit hours taught in the program	61	61	61	61	61	0
Average faculty workload for the academic unit (not the degree program)	27 credits	27 credits	24 credits	24 credits	24 credits	-11%
Number of faculty supporting the degree program (within the academic unit but excluding Areas A through E)	69	70	72	78	76	10%
Number of faculty supporting the degree program (outside the academic unit but excluding Areas A through E)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of classes taught by full-time faculty	86%	94%	73%	85%	74%	-12%
Number of part-time faculty	16	16	19	27	22	28%

Describe additional details as deemed appropriate.

The number of students enrolled in the AA in general studies has decreased by 7.5% over the last five years. The most likely reason for the decrease is the addition of new bachelor's-degree programs in Liberal Arts and throughout the College. Since 2012, Liberal Arts has added the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies, the Bachelor of Science in Psychology, and the Bachelor of Arts in Communication, with the latter two especially popular with students. The decline in the associate's programs is also related to the College's emphasis on becoming widely known as a "First-Choice 4-year Destination College." In fact, the number of students enrolled in bachelor's programs in the School of Liberal Arts increased by 37.6% during the time period covered by this review, more than offsetting the decline in general studies.



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Indicators of Measures of Productivity

Time to Degree	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Mean student time to degree	4 yrs.	4 yrs.	4 yrs.	4 yrs.	4 yrs.	4 yrs.
Fall-to-fall retention rate of students enrolled in program	-	-	-	-	-	-
Graduating within 3 years – Associate’s degree program	1	-	2	2	2	100%
Graduating within 6 years – Bachelor’s degree program	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total student credit hours earned	77	74	107	90	80	3.9%
Graduation	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Number of degrees conferred	10	14	17	25	31	210%

Describe any institutional-specific factors impacting time to degree.

Students in associate’s degree programs at Dalton State typically do not complete their degrees in under four years. This is largely due to the nature of our student population. Our students are typically first-generation college students, the large majority of whom are eligible for Pell Grants and other forms of financial aid. Most of our students have jobs, they do not typically take more than 12 credit hours a semester, and many have family responsibilities that make it difficult for them to complete a two-year degree in a timely manner.



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Evidence of Program Viability

Based on evidence from ALL of the above information, data, and analysis, discuss whether continued resources should be devoted to this program. This discussion must be evidence-based. Your comments should consider external factors and address questions such as the following: Are your students getting jobs? What is the job outlook for graduates? Are students prepared for the jobs they get? How is the field changing? Are program faculty members in contact with employers and getting back feedback on graduates' job performance? Do employers state or suggest a need for changes in the program?

The AA in general studies is a viable program with almost 100 majors. Since the program is comprised of courses taught as a part of the general education core, it does not cost the College any additional money to operate. In addition, the number of students who graduate from the program has increased significantly during the last five years, from 10 graduates in 2012-2013 to 31 in 2016-2017, a 210% increase. The program provides an affordable option for students who would like to complete the first two years of their degrees close to home before transferring to an institution that offers their desired four-year degree. The program also enables those students who wish to continue in one of the College's bachelor's programs the opportunity to earn a credential along their way to completing a four-year degree. Since this is a two-year generalist degree that leads to students' transferring or continuing in one of our own bachelor's programs, job outlook information, job status, and employers' needs and feedback are not relevant to the assessment of this associate's degree program.



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Program Strengths and Weaknesses

Based upon this review, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?

Strengths:

Student interest in the AA in general studies remains respectable, and this program provides students with the opportunity of completing their first two years of college at an affordable institution while exploring options at Dalton State or before transferring to an institution that offers their desired degree. Since the courses in these programs comprise a large part of the required core curriculum, the AA in general studies itself is cost effective. Assessments of student learning outcomes and program goals show that most objectives are met, and the College's assessment measures compare favorably with other institutions throughout the United States on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency.

The faculty who teach in the AA degree in general studies are an additional strength. The number of full-time faculty teaching in the program has remained very stable, as demonstrated by the 44% increase in the number of tenured faculty. Other indicators of quality and stability are the increased percentages of faculty who are now full professors (a 40% increase) and associate professors (a 63% increase) and the percentage of faculty who have earned doctoral degrees, a 14% increase between 2012 and 2016.

Weaknesses and concerns:

Our main concern is that we have simply assumed what our students plan to do after completing their associate's degree. Since the AA in general studies is a two-year transfer degree, we have not focused our attention in following up with these graduates and simply assumed they were continuing their education at an institution that offered a degree they sought. While follow-up is difficult without staffing, we need a better understanding of whether our students stay at Dalton State to complete a bachelor's degree, whether our students transfer to another institution, or whether they look for meaningful employment. This follow-up will be the focus of our action plan for improving assessment of this degree program.



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Recommendations for Follow-Up and/or Action Plans (if needed)

Issue/Concern:

Since the AA in general studies is a two-year program, we have not been tracking what our students do after completing their degrees. We assumed that they were continuing on at Dalton State in our own bachelor's programs or transferring to another institution that offered their desired degree program. We need to begin tracking our associate's-degree graduates to see whether they stay at Dalton State or whether they leave for other programs. We may find this information helpful in retention efforts or in developing new degree programs.

Specific action(s):

We will have our professional advisor save all graduation applications so that we can determine our students' plans after graduation, and we will follow-up with graduates who do not list their post-graduation plans on their degree applications. We will evaluate these in our next yearly program assessment in Weave (Effect).

Expected outcomes:

We will have a better understanding of what our students actually do after completing a two-year transfer degree. We may be able to use this information in recruitment efforts.

Time frame for achievement:

We will begin collecting data during Fall Semester 2017.

Person(s) responsible:

Ms. Ginger Almon, Dr. Barbara Tucker (department chair), and Dr. Mary Nielsen (dean)

Resources needed:

A full- or half-time assessment staff member would be helpful.



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Prepared by:

Signature May T. Nelson Date: Nov. 14, 2017

Dean's Approval:

Signature: May T. Nelson Barbara J. Tucker Date: Nov. 14, 2017

Approval of the Chair of the DSC Comprehensive Program Review Committee:

Signature: [Signature] Date: 11/15/17

Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) Categorical Summation:

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

- Program **MEETS** Institution's Criteria
 - Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.
 - Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing, or a high demand field, and thus will be enhanced.

- Program **DOES NOT MEET** Institution's Criteria for continuation.
 - Program will be placed on monitoring status.
 - Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.
 - Program will be deactivated.
 - Program will be voluntarily terminated.
 - Other (Please elaborate):

VPAA Signature: Pat Chute Date: 11/17/17

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