



DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities application guidelines at

<http://www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-initiatives-historically-black-colleges-and-universities>

for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: "Strength from Adversity": A Reading, Discussion, and Mentorship Program  
Institution: Albany State University  
Project Director: Timothy Sweet-Holp  
Grant Program: Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

***Changing Lives:  
Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

Table of Contents

Project Summary -----	1
Project Narrative	
Intellectual Rationale -----	2
Program Content and Activities -----	4
Specific Activities -----	6
Project Personnel -----	7
Institutional Context -----	10
Follow-up and Dissemination -----	10
Program Evaluation -----	11
Appendices	
Appendix A - Plan of Work/Schedule of Activities -----	12
Appendix B - Reading List -----	15
Appendix C – Key Personnel Résumés -----	16
Appendix D – Letters/e-mails of Commitments -----	32
Appendix E - Institutional Profile -----	43

***Changing Lives:  
Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

***Project Summary***

Traditionally, bridge programs seek to fill the gap between what students need to enter and succeed within a postsecondary institution. When the focus is adult learners, this usually includes remedial coursework, career exploration, and academic advising. Generally, the student receives contextualized instruction--a practice which gives adult learners what they need to deal with specific situations and perform certain tasks that are important and meaningful to them.

This proposed project utilizes the above concept as a jump start, but is more comprehensive. Specifically, we plan to pair 25 students enrolled in GED preparation programs with 25 students enrolled full-time at Albany State University (who have similar interests and backgrounds) to share in a broad based humanistic experience. Together, the students will participate in an academic year long program which includes book discussions, art sessions, field trips to museums, and small group sessions with book authors and lectures from Albany State University English, history and philosophy faculty.

The underlying theme of the books and activities selected is understanding and overcoming adversity. Many of the adult learners that we will encounter in this program have experienced set-backs and misfortune in life which has side-tracked them. However, by engaging students in the Humanities, we will create a personal paradigm shift that will lead to the emergence of global citizens who think more critically and excel at the postsecondary level.

***Changing Lives:  
Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

**Intellectual Rationale:** The idea of “strength from adversity” is a central theme in the Humanities and it is expressed within great works of literature, art, music, history and philosophy. Everyone experiences some form of adversity during their lifetime whether it be sickness, economic despair, trials, tribulations or just simple disappointments. However, depending upon how a person responds to adversity, the circumstances, which seem insurmountable to conquer at the time, can lead to growth, refinement and progress.

While intellectuals take lightly their ability to read, write, and debate over the Humanities, many individuals lack the basic education skills necessary to appreciate the Humanities; especially those without a high school diploma. Some 25 million working-age adults in the United States lack a high school diploma or equivalent, barring them from most colleges and many training programs. When high school dropouts seek to continue their education, it is typically via the General Educational Development (GED) exam, and although a GED certificate is not as helpful in the labor market as a high school diploma, the economic benefits of college are as large for GED holders as for high school graduates. Unfortunately, few GED earners successfully make the transition to college. However, it is our hope that if these students are exposed to the Humanities, while being mentored by students already enrolled in college, (with similar backgrounds) they will overcome the odds, matriculate to college, be empowered to become responsible citizens, develop a love for lifelong learning, and mature world-ready leaders.

Studies indicate that the Humanities motivate low achieving students by fostering intellectual curiosity, global knowledge, and critical thinking, while promoting personal responsibility, ethical development, and cultural awareness. In addition, the Humanities establish a framework

***Changing Lives:***

***Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

for students to develop an aesthetic appreciation for the arts while preparing them to use language effectively. According to a study conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts, teenagers and young adults of low socioeconomic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement. Furthermore, they earn better grades and demonstrate higher rates of college enrollment.

The high school graduation rate in Dougherty County (the county where Albany State University is located) is startling. In the 2013-2014 school year, there were 1119 seniors, but only 672 graduated; putting the graduation rate at 60.1 percent. There are several factors contributing to this statistic, but poverty is among the highest. A Forbes report ranked Albany, Georgia as the fourth most impoverished city in the nation, and in 2014, an MSN report found that in 2011, 12% of all households earned less than \$10,000 - the highest rate in the nation. The New Albany State University (ASU), which will consolidate with Darton State College in 2017, will have a student population of more than 9,000 students, making ASU, an educational giant in southwest Georgia. Therefore, it is necessary for ASU to address this low HS graduation rate and create and implement innovative Humanities based programs. These programs will attract individuals to the University and develop them into more humanistic individuals who can better understand the causes, consequences, and context of poverty, and work to help eradicate poverty in the region. What better way to impact people who have been sidetracked by poverty, than to introduce them to books, plays, music and art that has been created by individuals who have overcome adversity?

### ***Changing Lives:***

#### ***Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

The cornerstone of our proposed project is to improve the lives of ASU students and adult and other nontraditional students working on earning their GED through enhancing their academic instruction by introducing them to humanistic content that helps them place their personal experiences into local, regional, and global perspectives. We accomplish this enhancement through pairing GED students with ASU students and providing them with a series of humanities activities. Thus, not only are the lives of the students improved through the humanities content, but also through the interaction with someone who has had similar life experiences, but with a different outcome. The benefit of this interaction is realized by both the GED students, and their ASU mentors. This theme of shared experiences and overcoming adversity is what makes our project so valuable to our students.

**Program Content and Activities:** Twenty-Five students enrolled in GED programs at Family Literacy Connection and Albany Technical College will be paired with 25 Albany State University students from similar backgrounds and life experiences. Together, these students will be introduced to the Humanities through a series of book discussions, lectures from University scholars and authors, and visits to local museums, historical sites and concerts. Our focus for the aforementioned activities is to explore the shared culture and history of Americans, Georgians, and specifically, Albanians to demonstrate the strength of the human spirit in overcoming social, political and economic adversity.

Central to the implementation of the program is the reading of four books that will be interwoven into a series of activities that will be held on Saturdays, evenings and throughout the academic school. Our selection of books, and the number of books, is a reflection of the limited literacy skills of our GED students. We do not want to overwhelm, thereby making reading a chore, but, rather, create an opportunity for them to experience the joy of learning. The content has been

***Changing Lives:***

***Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

carefully selected to be congruent with our theme of shared experiences and overcoming adversity.

The first book (a historical work of fiction) Beneath the Bars of Justice was written by an author from Albany, Bailey Bankston (whose real name is Sandra Webb), who in 1962, at the age of 13, was jailed for civil disobedience along with 66 other teenagers in the Camilla, GA jail (40 miles from Albany). Bankston (Webb) will present at the seminar, and serve in two capacities, first of all, she will discuss her Civil Rights experience, secondly she will discuss Bankston the writer. After all it took her nearly 50 years to actually bring her story to book form. In addition, this will allow the students to explore the concept of autobiography and participate journaling and other writing exercises to broaden their world view.

The second book, a memoir, is also by a local author who worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Shirley Sherrod, is a Civil Rights activist and co-founder of the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education, Inc. Sherrod's accomplishments in the field of human and Civil Rights is extensive, however, her book, Courage to Hope: How I Stood Up to the Politics of Fear, details her more recent struggle against adversity. In 2010, Sherrod was forced to resign from the Department of Agriculture as director of the USDA's Rural Development in Georgia, when conservative political blogger Andrew Breitbart attacked her for allegedly reverse racist comments she made at an NAACP event. Later, Sherrod was found innocent, and her fight for justice is compelling and outlined vividly in her book. She will also attend the seminar. Ms. Sherrod will visit with the students and discuss her personal experiences.

The author of the third book, (who will also be invited to participate in the seminar) Carolyn Curry, won the Georgia author of the year for her work Suffer and Grow Strong: The Life of Ella

### ***Changing Lives:***

#### ***Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

Gertrude Clanton Thomas. For more than 30 years, Dr. Curry has researched the life of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas. Born in 1834 to one of the wealthiest families in Georgia, Thomas kept a journal from the age of 14 years old detailing her life before, during and after the Civil War. Thomas experienced poverty, illness, and devastating family strife. She saw four of her ten children die. Thomas poured her thoughts into her diary, and through it all, she persevered. In her later years, she became a leading voice in the suffrage and temperance movements.

The fourth and final book, Men Like That: A Southern Queer History, by John Howard, taps into a taboo topic on most HBCU campuses that is overlooked and under researched. In this case study, Howard focuses on gay life in Mississippi from 1945 to 1985; helping the reader to understand not only sexuality in small and rural towns but also exploring issues of race and class. In light of the recent tragedy in Orlando, this literary work is important to the ASU campus, because it will allow students to better understand the LGBT community and open doors of communication. In addition, this book will also help students understand their prejudices so that they can overcome them.

#### **Specific Activities:**

- Identify and recruit students from ASU and the partnering GED programs (Albany Technical College, Family Literacy Connection) that are interested and committed to working with the program for an academic year.
- Match GED students with ASU students based upon similarities in backgrounds, including, but not limited to SES status
- Provide training for ASU students so that they can serve as mentors to GED students.



***Changing Lives:  
Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

- Encourage bi-monthly meetings between ASU and GED students through shared events, personal contact, and leadership development session for ASU students.
  
- Establish social media activities for all students, including, but not limited to developing Facebook, encouraging Snapchat posting, and tweeting.
  
- Host eight Saturday seminars for students
  
- Sponsor field experiences to local museums and concerts, such as Albany Civil Rights Institute, Albany Museum of Art, Albany Arts Council, and the Thornateeska Heritage Center.
  
- Engage students in small group art sessions with ASU Art Professor Scott Marini
  
- Introduce students to select authors, i.e. Shirley Sherrod, and Sandra Webb.
  
- Facilitate monthly book discussions for students.

**Project Personnel: Project Director:** Timothy Sweet-Holp is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and Political Science at Albany State University. He teaches classes in Philosophy, Political Science and Social Science. His interests include the history of science and the impact of technology on human evolution. Most recently, his classroom teaching has focused on the topics of poverty, inequality, modern slavery, and human trafficking. He currently serves as Director of the Center of Excellence for Community Engagement (CECE) at ASU. Formerly, Dr. Sweet-Holp has served as Director, Survey Group, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and as Director of Field Operations for the Survey Research Center at the University of

***Changing Lives:***

***Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

Arkansas, Fayetteville. In addition to his administrative duties, he has conducted numerous applied community research projects. He continues his commitment to community involvement by actively seeking opportunities to involve students in community-based projects. He stays connected to community needs through service. In the past he has served as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Albany-Dougherty Coalition to End Homelessness, and currently serves as Vice-Chair on the City of Albany Community Development Committee (CDC). The CDC is the advisory entity that recommends how the City allocates HUD CDBG funding to community nonprofit and faith-Based agencies.

**Project Coordinator:** Dr. Nancy J. Dawson has worked for more than 20 years in higher education as both a professor and director of African American Studies. Her career includes full time positions at Southern Illinois University and Austin Peay State University. In addition, she has been a consultant for the Center for Community Engagement at Albany State University for two years. As a community activist, entrepreneur and professional organizer; she directs a large team of volunteers and coordinates community partnerships to maintain the day to day operations of an urban farm entitled Russellville Urban Gardening Project. Dr. Dawson has an extensive background working with at-risk youth in programs at Job Corp and the Urban League. She is a published writer and a consultant for the National Park Service. She is also the owner of Music is Spirit, a cultural educational performance company. Lastly, she is also a professional textile quilt artist; having exhibited across the United States. Her quilt, “Primary Sources” was recently published in the book Quilts and Human Rights.

**Lead Scholars:** Dr. Devona Mallory is an Associate Professor of English at Albany State University in Albany, Georgia. She teaches undergraduate classes including Women's Literature

***Changing Lives:***

***Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

and graduate courses including African American Literature. She is also the Director of Strengthening Foreign Languages and International Programs. Her publications include Meeting Points in Black/Africana Women's Literature, Journal of Literature and Art Studies, and New Essays on Phillis Wheatley. Dr. Mallory's primary research involves analyzing the intersections of Women's Literature/Gender Studies, Magical Realism Literature, and Multiethnic Literature.

Mr. Scott Marini is an Associate Professor of Fine Arts at ASU and will serve the project in multiple capacities. First, Mr. Marini will take the students on field trips to the Albany Art Museum, and the Albany Art Council. During these trips, Mr. Marini will provide insight and context for the pieces on display. In addition, Mr. Marini will conduct studio sessions with the students. Given space limitations, Mr. Marini will work with groups of ten students per session. Each session will differ, but mediums may include, but are not limited to, chalk, charcoal, paint, and clay.

Matthew E. Stanley is Assistant Professor of History at Albany State University in Albany, Georgia. He teaches courses on Slavery, the U.S. South, the Civil War and Reconstruction, Revolutions and Social Violence, and the Long Civil Rights Movement and has contributed to The Public Historian, Civil War History, The Civil War Monitor, Ohio Valley History, Middle West Review, The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, Civil War Book Review, and the Kansas City Public Library Civil War Encyclopedia Project, "The Civil War on the Western Border". His first book, The Loyal West: War and Reunion in Middle America, will be published in the fall of 2016 by the University of Illinois Press. Stanley's current research focuses on the convergence of collective memory and radical class politics among Civil War veterans.

***Changing Lives:***

***Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

Dr. John E. Williams, Assistant Professor of History and Geography at Albany State University in Albany, GA. He teaches courses on American & World History, African Diaspora, U.S. South, Latin America, Principles of Geography, and Human Geography. His research concentrations are Urban Studies in history and geography; Atlanta, and Latin & World Cities. He is currently working on research centered on race and mobility in Atlanta, along with examining transnationalism and neighborhood change. Dr. Williams' previous research garnered the Dan Sweat Fellowship in Urban Policy and Georgia State University's International Education Fellowship for the Transnational Urban Futures Study Abroad Program in Hong Kong.

***Institutional Context:*** As a comprehensive university, the humanities play a critical role in the education and development of students. ASU core requirements include courses in art, music, history, English, foreign language and electives in philosophy and literature. Faculty from the ASU departments/programs of Art, English, History, and Philosophy will participate in this program.

As an institution, ASU also has strong relations with the Albany Art Museum, Albany Arts Council, Albany Civil Rights Institute, and the Thornateeska Heritage Center. Our students will visit each of these venues, as we endeavor to instill in them an understanding of the culture and tradition of Albany's shared history.

***Follow-up and Dissemination:*** For the students, the impact of participation is potentially life changing. For all participants, but particularly the GED students, our program might be the first time in their lives that they are exposed to art, literature, and history. Furthermore, having an opportunity to see the struggles that others (both elders and peers) have overcome, and

***Changing Lives:***

***Utilizing the Humanities to Understand and Overcome Adversity—A Bridge Program***

developing an understanding of shared experiences is a catalyst to recognize and build an inner strength. This inner strength is a personal asset that will stay with the students their entire lives.

In addition, it is our hope that at the end of this project, the institution will see the value of bridging GED students, ASU, and the humanities, and fund an on-going effort, utilizing the model presented herein. To this end, we will host a mini student conference at the end of spring term, May 2018, where students will share their thoughts on the program experience, as well as present poster and/or paper presentations. Faculty, students, administrators, representatives from the program partners, and the general public will be invited to attend.

**Program Evaluation:** Scholarship shows that students that become engaged in their community not only do better in school, but achieve greater levels of civic responsibility and self esteem. The program director along with the program coordinator will develop an evaluation plan to measure the project's success, which will include tracking the completion rate for the GED students, as well as the graduation rate for the ASU participants. Further, pre and posttest of the *Rosenberg's Self -Esteem Scale*, the *General Self-Efficacy Scale*, and the *Civic Responsibility Survey* will be administered to the participants. A brief satisfaction survey will also be administered to students, as well as participating faculty, seeking suggestions on ways to improve the program.

*Appendix A*  
*Changing Lives*  
*Work Plan and Activities*

**Changing Lives - GED Bridge Program**

Work Plan Calendar	Activities
Jan - July 2017	Identify and recruit GED students, hire and train program assistant, solidify dates and times with faculty scholars and guest authors.
Aug - Dec 2017	Identify and recruit ASU students, conduct 4 Saturday sessions, attend 1 ASU Lyceum event, take students on field trips to Civil Rights Institute and Thornateeska Heritage Center, read Bankston and Sherrod books, conduct 3 art sessions, meet with student pairs, administer evaluation pre-test.
Jan - May 2018	Conduct 4 Saturday sessions, attend 1 ASU Lyceum event, take students on field trips to Albany Art Museum and Albany Art Council, conduct 3 art sessions, read Curry and Howard books, meet with student pairs, administer evaluation post-test.
June - Dec 2018	Follow up with student participants and faculty and community partners, prepare dissemination and evaluation reports.

**Changing Lives - Year One**

Program Work Plan Details	
September 16, 2017	1st Saturday session, introduce topic, start reading Sherrod book, guest lecture and activities from Williams.
September - October	Conduct 3 art sessions, attend 1 Lyceum event.
October 21, 2017	2nd Saturday session, visit from Sherrod, guest lecture and activities from Williams.
October - November	Visit Civil Rights Institute and Thornateeska Heritage Center.
November 11, 2017	3rd Saturday session, introduce topic, start reading Bankston book, guest lecture and activities from Stanley.
November 18, 2017	4th Saturday session, visit from Bankston, guest lecture and activities from Stanley.

## **Changing Lives - Year Two**

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### **Program Work Plan Details**

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January 20, 2018	5th Saturday session, introduce topic, start reading Curry book, guest lecture and activities from Sweet-Holp.
February 17, 2018	6th Saturday session, visit from Curry (if available), guest lecture and activities from Sweet-Holp.
February - March 2018	Conduct 3 art sessions, attend 1 Lyceum event.
March 17, 2018	7th Saturday session, introduce topic, start reading Howard book, guest lecture and activities from Mallory.
March - April	Visit Albany Art Museum and Albany Art Council.
April 21, 2018	8th Saturday session, guest lecture and activities from Mallory.
May 5, 2018	Student mini conference offering posters and presentations.

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The T. Marshall Jones  
Fine Arts and  
Lyceum

# Performance Series

2015-2016

# at-a-glance calendar

2015  
Thursday, October 1

Special Guest Concert:  
Travis Pratt, international opera singer  
7:30 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge



Friday, October 2

Master Class:  
noon • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium

Thursday, November 19

12th Annual Concert  
ASU Chamber Winds and  
Percussion Ensemble

7:30 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge



Thursday-Sunday, February 25-28

*Flyn' West* by Pearl Cleage  
8 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
Sunday Matinee 2 p.m.  
No admission charge



Russell Brown  
& Friends  
**Back Woods Trio**  
Faculty Recital

Tuesday, October 6

Faculty Recital:  
Russell Brown & Friends  
The Back Woods Trio

7:30 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge

Sunday, December 6

Albany State University Annual  
Christmas Concert  
ASU Concert Choral and Chamber Singers  
Marcia M. Hood, conductor  
7:30 p.m. • St. Teresa's Catholic Church  
417 Edgewood Lane • Albany, GA  
No admission charge



Thursday, March 17

Jazz Faculty Recital  
Michael Decuit, Kenneth Timmins  
and Joel Johnson  
7:30 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge



Thursday, April 19

Symphonic, Concert  
and Jazz Bands  
in Concert  
7 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge



November 6-30

The 12th Annual College  
Art Competition  
Opening Reception:  
6-8 p.m. • November 6  
Gallery Open Daily:  
Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Carnegie Library • 215 N. Jackson St.  
No admission charge

Monday, December 7

Community Sing-A-Long  
Handel's *Messiah*  
7:30 p.m. • St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
212 N. Jefferson Street • Albany, GA  
No admission charge



2016

Tuesday, January 12

Faculty Recital:  
Mimi Noda  
Piano and Harpsichord Solo Recital  
7:30 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge



Sunday-Tuesday, November 8-10

9th Annual Poetry Festival  
Poet's Call: Innovative Voices and  
New Visions

sponsored by the Department of English,  
Modern Languages and Mass  
Communications

For more information: (229) 430-1715  
No admission charge



November 12-16

ASU Theatre Ensemble presents  
Two One-Act Plays  
*Funny House of a Negro* by Adrienne Kennedy  
*The Zoo Story* by Edward Albee  
7:30 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
Sunday Matinee 2:30 p.m.  
No admission charge



The Jane Wilson Emerging Stars Showcase Performance

Thursday, February 11

Community Sing-A-Long  
The Canellakis-Brown Duo  
7:30 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge



Friday, February 12

Master Class  
Noon • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge

Thursday, April 21

A Vocal Showcase  
Featuring the students of Dr. Christopher  
Hendley and Dr. Deanna Weber,  
accompanied by Dr. Mimi Noda  
7:30 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge



Thursday, November 19

The ASU Theatre Ensemble presents  
*Romeo and Juliet*  
by William Shakespeare  
7:30 p.m. • Billy C. Black Bldg. Auditorium  
No admission charge



For more information on these and other upcoming events, contact the ASU Department of Fine Arts at 229-430-4849, or visit [www.asurams.edu](http://www.asurams.edu).



***Appendix B***  
**Project Reading List**

Bankston , Bailey. *Beneath the Bars of Justice*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.

Curry, Carolyn Newton. *Suffer and Grow Strong: The Life of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas 1834-1907*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2015

Howard, John. *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2001.

Sherrod, Shirley. *The Courage to Hope: How I Stood Up to the Politics of Fear*. New York: Atria Books, 2013.

*Appendix E*  
*Institutional Profile*

## **Institutional History**

Albany State University, a historically black institution in Southwest Georgia, has been a catalyst for change in the region from its inception as the Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute to its designation as a university. Founded in 1903 to educate African American youth, the University proudly continues to fulfill its historic mission while also serving the educational needs of an increasingly diverse student population. A progressive institution, Albany State University seeks to foster the growth and development of the region, state and nation through teaching, research, creative expression and public service. Through its collaborative efforts, the University responds to the needs of all its constituents and offers educational programs and service to improve the quality of life in Southwest Georgia.

The primary mission of Albany State University is to educate students to become outstanding contributors to society. Offering Bachelor's, Master's and Education Specialist degrees and a variety of non-degree educational programs, the University emphasizes the liberal arts as the foundation for all learning by exposing students to the humanities, fine arts, social sciences and the sciences. Global learning is fostered through a broad-based curriculum, diverse University activities and the expanding use of technology.

A leader in teacher education, nursing, criminal justice, business, public administration and the sciences, Albany State provides a comprehensive educational experience with quality instruction as the hallmark of all its academic programs. The University embraces the concept of "students first" as a core institutional value. The University advocates the total development of students, especially the underserved, and provides a wholesome academic environment in which students can study, learn and develop through their interaction with fellow students, faculty, staff, administrators, visiting scholars and community leaders.

### **Key Institutional Data:**

#### **Total Number of Degree Programs**

Bachelor's	34
Master's	14
Specialist's	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>

#### **Organizational Structure**

Colleges	4
Academic Departments	15

#### **Fall 2015 Headcount Enrollment**

Undergraduate	2,991
Graduate	501
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,492</b>

#### **Fall 2015 Employee Headcount (Full-Time)**

Faculty: 201