

II. INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSE

An institution must have a clearly defined purpose or mission statement appropriate to collegiate education as well as to its own specific educational role.

Initiated in 2000, the most recent review and refinement of the Jacksonville State University (JSU) mission statement was completed and adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2001. The mission statement appears in the *2002-03 University Catalogue*, the *2002-03 Graduate Bulletin*, as well as the *2002-03 Student Handbook*, *2002 Faculty Handbook*, *2002 Staff Handbook*, *2000-01 JSU Annual Report (draft of Mission Statement)*, and *2002 Fact Book*. The revised mission statement, presented below, can be found on the JSU web site under any of the above listed publications.

JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

Jacksonville State University is a public, comprehensive teaching institution that provides educational, cultural, and social experiences for a diverse undergraduate and graduate student population. As a student-centered university, Jacksonville State University strives to balance academic challenges with a range of support services for students' academic, career, and personal goals. As an academic institution, Jacksonville State University seeks to produce broadly educated graduates with skills for employment, citizenship, and life-long learning. As a comprehensive university, Jacksonville State University supports scholarly and service activities consistent with its academic and professional strengths.

As one component of the comprehensive review of the University, the SACS Steering Committee administered a series of surveys in Fall 2001 and Spring 2002. One of the instruments, the Institutional Performance Survey (IPS) was administered in Fall 2001 to approximately 517 JSU employees including 244 faculty members, 42 executive and administrative personnel, 97 professional non-faculty employees, 17 University policemen, 48 technical/paraprofessionals, 58 secretarial/clerical staff, and 11 members of the Board of Trustees. A total of 259 surveys were returned for a response rate of 50 percent. Table 2.1 cites responses on three items related to the University's mission.

Table 2.1
Perceptions of Institutional Mission

Item	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
There is a general sense that this institution has a distinctive purpose to fulfill	21.8	51.6	12.9	7.7	3.2
The academic programs offered here reflect the mission of this institution	35.5	52.8	5.6	2.0	1.2
People associated with this institution share a common definition of its mission	21.8	50.4	10.9	12.5	0.8

The above responses indicate an overall positive reaction of respondents when asked about their perceptions of the institutional mission. The majority of respondents indicated that the University has a distinctive purpose and that the academic programs of the University support the mission of the institution. In responding to the third item, the majority of respondents reported that they shared a common definition, which suggests they know and understand the mission of JSU.

Conclusion: The committee finds that Jacksonville State University is in compliance.

Recommendation: None

Suggestion: None

This statement must describe the institution and its characteristics and address the components of the institution and its operations.

The mission identifies the University as a public institution, reaching a diverse population at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. According to the *2002-03 Fact Book*, the University's student body is comprised of 82 percent undergraduate and 18 percent graduate students, with 70 percent enrolled full-time. Over half the student body (59.4 percent) is female. The students represent 73 foreign countries and 45 states. Enrollment figures by ethnic group for Fall 2002 indicated 27.2 percent are minorities, 72.8 percent are white. The average age of the undergraduate population is 23.4 years and the graduate population average age is 32.7 years. A comprehensive enrollment profile may be found in the *Fact Book* with additional information highlighting the diversity of the JSU student body.

The University is further described as a student-centered, teaching institution with an array of services to enhance student success. To advance the primary mission of teaching through the generation and application of knowledge, the University supports and encourages scholarly and service activities of faculty as well as students. As an academic institution offering 39 baccalaureate programs, 21 master's programs, and 2 educational specialists programs, University graduates are prepared for meaningful employment, participatory citizenship, and a commitment to life-long learning.

As part of the University's on-going assessment activities coordinated through the Office of Assessment, graduating seniors, graduate completers, and alumni are surveyed on a regular basis. All three surveys contain items addressing preparation for employment, citizenship, and lifelong learning. Results from the Alumni Survey for the graduating classes of 1992, 1994, 1996, and 1998 revealed that over 80 percent of respondents each year reported that JSU prepared them for their current position. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents of the 1992 and 1996 graduating classes were employed full-time or engaged in graduate study; 3.4 percent were employed part-time and 3.1 percent were self-employed. The respondents in the 1994 and 1998 graduating classes reported that 94 percent were employed full-time or engaged in full-time graduate study; 1.2 percent were employed part-time; and 0.8 percent were self-employed.

The Fall 2001 Administrator and Faculty Surveys asked respondents to rate their agreement with the following item, "Most JSU graduates are well educated and well prepared to succeed in their careers." Ninety-eight percent of the administrators responding "agreed or strongly agreed" with the statement. Approximately 80 percent of faculty responding indicated that the graduates in programs in their departments were well prepared to succeed in their careers. Another item on the surveys addressed the general education program. The majority of respondents (95.4 percent of administrators and 86.9 percent of faculty) "agreed or strongly agreed" that JSU's general education program ensured that students received a well-rounded undergraduate education.

Table 2.2 reports eight years of responses to two items on the 1993-2001 Graduate Studies Completer Survey (GSCS) related to preparation for a career.

Table 2.2
1993-2001 Graduate Studies Completer Survey

This program has adequately prepared me for a career.	Strongly Agree %	Agree %
1993-94	31.2	64.2
1994-95	38.5	46.2
1995-96	34.7	56.8
1996-97	31.1	58.1
1997-98	43.9	45.6
1998-99	33.3	59.5
1999-00	41.3	55.8
2000-01	48.9	49.4
Quality of courses, as preparation for employment after graduation was...	Excellent %	Good %
1993-94	26.7	56.5
1994-95	40.9	28.8
1995-96	35.0	44.2
1996-97	28.7	50.7
1997-98	52.6	33.3
1998-99	28.6	51.8
1999-00	53.2	48.6
2000-01	48.0	38.3

Seventy-five percent of graduating seniors completing the Graduating Senior Survey (GSS) in 2000-01 reported that their major courses had prepared them for employment. The data collected from these three surveys support the premise that JSU prepares students for meaningful employment.

JSU acknowledges that graduates are prepared for responsible citizenship. The majority of the 1996 and 1998 graduates (58.5 percent and 65.5 percent respectively) completing the Alumni Survey indicated that JSU had prepared them to understand and exercise their rights, privileges, and responsibilities as a citizen. The graduates of 1994

and 1998 were asked to indicate whether they had voted in a public election in the past two years. The vast majority (84.3 percent and 80 percent, respectively) reported in the affirmative.

One section of the GSS consists of a list of learning goals supporting the University's mission. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the goals and then to rate their achievement of the goals. In the 2000-01 GSS, 91 percent indicated that citizenship's rights were very important or important. Of those respondents, 77.5 percent indicated their personal achievement of this goal as excellent or good.

In support of life-long learning, the Alumni Survey asked respondents to indicate if JSU had prepared them to make a lifelong commitment to learning. Over half of the 1992 respondents had participated in continuing education activities; 58.6 percent of the 1994 graduate respondents had earned degrees beyond the bachelor's; over 80 percent of the 1996 respondents felt their educational preparation at JSU had instilled a commitment to lifelong learning; 63.9 percent of the 1998 graduates planned to earn a master's degree, and 14.2 percent a doctorate degree. Ninety-five percent of graduating seniors responding to the 2000-01 GSS felt that a lifelong commitment to learning was important or very important. Of those students, 86.9 percent rated their achievement of this learning goal as "good or excellent."

Faculty, administrators, and staff, responding to surveys administered in Fall 2001 were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: "The University's mission statement, purpose statements, and goals are appropriate for JSU." The vast majority (93.8 percent, 93.5 percent, and 93 percent respectively) of each

respondent group “agreed or strongly agreed” that the University’s mission statement is appropriate.

Through the process of review, revision, and adoption of the 2001 mission statement, there was consensus from the University community that this mission statement accurately describes the University and all of its units.

Conclusion: The committee finds that Jacksonville State University is in compliance.

Recommendation: None

Suggestion: None

The official posture and practice of the institution must be consistent with its purpose statement.

As a comprehensive teaching institution supporting both scholarly and service activities, the University offers programs and services to assist students in reaching their academic as well as career and personal goals. JSU supports and rewards outstanding faculty members with recognitions such as: awards for Excellence in Teaching, Faculty Research, Faculty Scholarship, and Faculty Development Grants.

As part of the University’s ongoing assessment program, graduating seniors complete a GSS survey reviewing and rating their experiences at the University. Consistently over the past decade, when asked if their departmental faculty were effective teachers, over 85 percent responded in the affirmative. Initiated in 1992, the GSCS was administered to candidates for graduate degrees. Graduates were asked to rate the “professional quality of the faculty” and the “instructional competency of the faculty.” Consistently, at least 90 percent of the respondents rated these items “good or excellent.” When asked to rate the “quality of courses, as preparation for employment after graduation,” more than 80 percent of the graduates rated this item “good or

excellent.” In reviewing the written comments of the GSS (2000-01), students highlighted the faculty and the friendliness of the University community as the main strengths of JSU.

Since 1991, the University has administered the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) biannually to a random sample of students. The questionnaire asks students to report on how they spend their time at the University, perceptions of the University environment, and strength of relationships established. Both the 1998 and 2000 findings reported that over 70 percent of the respondents perceived that the University placed a strong emphasis on academic and scholarly qualities. The majority of respondents further reported that they felt faculty members were approachable, helpful, understanding, and encouraging, and that administrative personnel were helpful, considerate, and flexible.

On the Spring 2002 Student Survey, 85 percent of the students reported a high level of satisfaction with the classroom instruction in their major and with the overall classroom instruction at the University. On the same survey and on the On-Line Student Survey administered during the same time frame, 86 percent and 78 percent of the respondents respectively, indicated that faculty members were accessible outside of class to help them and that faculty members were sensitive to students’ needs and concerns. Ninety percent of respondents on the GSS (2000-01) reported their instructors were approachable. These findings acknowledge the University’s commitment to and success in being a student-centered institution with excellence in teaching as a cornerstone.

Through the efforts of the Enrollment Management Committee and the Academic Center for Excellence, a series of workshops entitled “Advanced Connections” have been presented to University employees with the goal of increasing their sensitivity to student issues and enhancing the philosophy outlined in the mission statement. A total of 17 sessions were held with 345 in attendance (60 faculty and 285 staff). The University’s longstanding reputation as the “Friendliest Campus in the South” is enhanced by employee training opportunities and supports the student-centered principle in the mission statement.

JSU provides a broad array of student and academic support services to enhance and complement students’ academic pursuits. Supplemental Learning Services, Learning Services, Counseling Services, Career Placement Services, Disability Support Services, Student Activities, Student Health Services, Recreational Sports, and University Housing are among a few of the services with a mission of assisting students in defining and reaching their academic and personal goals.

From the arts to the behavioral sciences to the physical sciences, the University’s faculty and students are involved in a plethora of scholarly activities and research. Federal and state grant acquisitions have increased over 50 percent over the past five years as evidenced in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3
Federal and State Grant Acquisitions

Year	Amount
1997	\$647,918
1998	524,495
1999	615,807
2000	826,330
2001	989,159

The Fall 2001 Faculty and Administrator Surveys contained a number of items related to University research. Table 2.4 lists those items and the percentage of respondents who “agreed or strongly agreed” with each statement.

Table 2.4
University Research Activities as Perceived by
JSU Faculty and Administrators

Survey Item	Agree/ Strongly Agree Faculty %	Agree/ Strongly Agree Administrator %
The researcher’s freedom to investigate and report research results is adequately preserved by University policy on grants and contracts.	90.0	100
Research and academic instruction are not compromised by accepting funds from outside agencies.	88.8	100
Externally funded grants and contracts at JSU are clearly related to the stated purpose of the University.	86.9	100
The University evaluates the effectiveness of its research mission.	75.5	78.4

Students responding to the Spring 2002 Student Survey were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statement: “Students have adequate opportunity to participate in research projects with faculty.” Over 70 percent of the respondents “agreed or strongly agreed” with this statement. On the 2000-01 GSS, respondents were asked to indicate their level of involvement in research projects. Over 75 percent of respondents reported they “occasionally or frequently” participated. In addition, seniors were asked to report their agreement with the following items related to their major program: “Current research methods in my field were taught.” The majority of respondents (81.1 percent) “agreed or strongly agreed” with this statement. Through practical training in the classroom and students’ involvement in research efforts, graduating seniors cited a high level of achievement of learning goals including multiple

items related to good research methods. From these responses, it is evident that students' exposure to research and research methodology is important and is in alignment with the University's mission and requirements of the discipline.

The following items on the 1993-2001 GSCS specifically support the research mission of the University: "How often did you have classes which required some form of research?" "Courses I have taken provided me with an understanding of the research methodology in my discipline." Over 69 percent of the respondents reported frequent class involvement in some form of research and over 90 percent of the graduate respondents "agreed or strongly agreed" that their coursework provided an understanding of research methodology.

Equally important to the University, is its public service mission. JSU has long been committed to serving the community, state, and region. Through partnerships and collaborative programs, the University serves the community through a variety of programs including the following examples:

- LIN=C program – The program works with area school systems in preventing violence in the schools.
- Alabama-Georgia Foothills Forum – A collaborative effort that fosters regional economic cooperation by bringing together citizens from the public, private, and educational sectors.
- Alabama Reading Initiative – A program utilizing University professionals to train public school teachers and administrators to effectively teach reading skills.

- Little River Canyon Field School – A project providing high quality environmental education for citizens of all ages.
- Teaching Learning Center – This program has served the area for 18 years in providing tutoring to students K-12.
- Nursing Center Clinic – A nurse-managed, primary care clinic that fosters health promotion/prevention.
- Center for Economic Development and Business Research/Small Business Development Center – plans and coordinates programs, workshops, seminars, and counseling for local government, businesses, and agencies. Publishes for statewide distribution a monthly newsletter containing economic development information.

The list of public service initiatives is quite lengthy and can be found in more detail in unit annual reports, Board of Trustee quarterly reports, and in unit self-study reports. However, these examples are representative of the impact that the University has on the area, state, and region and its commitment to public service.

The Committee found that the official posture and practices of the University are consistent with the mission statement. It further found that the mission statement encompasses all units of the institution.

Conclusion: The committee finds that Jacksonville State University is in compliance.

Recommendation: None

Suggestion: None

Appropriate publications must accurately cite the current statement of purpose.

The current mission statement appears in the *2002-03 University Catalogue* and the *2002-03 Graduate Bulletin*. In addition, the mission statement appears in the *2002-03 Student Handbook*, *2002 Faculty Handbook*, *2002 Staff Handbook*, *2000-01 Annual Report (draft of Mission Statement)*, and *2002 Fact Book*. The mission statement can be found on the JSU web site and is on display in prominent locations in all University buildings.

During the survey process, faculty, staff, and administrators were asked to respond to items concerning the University mission statement. Students were asked to respond to the following item: "The University's mission statement, purpose statements, and goals are communicated to and understood by students." The majority of on-campus students (77.7 percent) and students taking on-line courses (67 percent) "agreed or strongly agreed" with this statement. A similar item was included on the administrators' survey, and 95.5 percent of the respondents reported that the mission and purpose statements and goals were adequately communicated to them. From these responses, it appears that the mission statement is made accessible to students as well as to the larger University community, primarily through University publications and the University website. The high affirmative response from University administrators indicates an effective communication network is in place.

Conclusion: The committee finds that Jacksonville State University is in compliance.

Recommendation: None

Suggestion: The committee suggests that the mission statement have a direct link from the University's home page.

The formulation of a statement of purpose represents a major educational decision. It should be developed through the efforts of the institution's faculty, administration, and governing board.

It must be approved by the governing board.

The JSU mission statement, recently revised, is a product of the joint efforts of the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Committee, the administration, faculty, staff, and students. The Board of Trustees approved the revisions made to the mission statement as documented in the minutes on October 15, 2001. The revised mission statement was forwarded to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in November 2001 and appears in all 2002-03 University publications. The revised mission statement is currently posted on the JSU web site. (See explanation below for details of process.)

Conclusion: The committee finds that Jacksonville State University is in compliance.

Recommendation: None

Suggestion: None

An institution must study periodically its statement of purpose, considering internal changes as well as the changing responsibilities of the institution to its constituencies.

In 1995, under the direction of then President Harold McGee, the University engaged in a comprehensive program review process that resulted in reorganization of several departments and colleges. As part of this comprehensive review, the President requested a review of the University mission statement. This review was University-wide and involved representatives from the faculty, administration, staff, and student body. The process used in the review is outlined below:

- The President appointed a Mission Statement Review Group in November 1995.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs chaired the Group.

- The members of the Mission Statement Review Group reviewed the existing University mission statement with their constituencies in November-December 1995.
- Group members reviewed input from campus constituencies and drafted a revised mission statement for campus review in January 1996.
- The draft was distributed for campus-wide review and input in January/February 1996.
- The Mission Statement Review Group approved the revised mission statement on March 7, 1996.
- The revised mission statement was reviewed and approved by the Administrative Council on March 18, 1996 and submitted to the President.
- The Committee Chairperson sent the mission statement to the Commission on Colleges (COC) for review on April 2, 1996.
- In preparation for the University's five-year report to SACS, the President forwarded a copy of the draft mission statement to the COC for review and comment on January 20, 1998.
- Due to continuing program review and organizational changes, the draft mission statement was never presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. The proposed draft developed through this process was as follows:

**JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY
1996 DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT**

Jacksonville State University is a student-oriented university providing comprehensive educational, cultural, and social experiences for northeast Alabama and surrounding areas. The

University strives to balance academic challenge with support so students may achieve their maximum potential. Jacksonville State University is an equal-opportunity teaching institution that assists a diverse and changing student population. Jacksonville State University puts major emphasis on producing quality graduates who are broadly educated, prepared for life-long learning, ready to become productive citizens, and who possess requisite skills to compete successfully for employment and further study. To accomplish this, the University recruits and develops faculty who are committed to excellence in teaching. In addition, the Institution uses multiple approaches to instruction, such as distance learning and traditional classroom settings that facilitate increased faculty and student interaction. Jacksonville State University supports and encourages research and scholarship for faculty and students. The University strives to continuously improve teaching effectiveness and instructional delivery. In service, Jacksonville State University offers knowledge, skills, and human resources to the community and surrounding areas. The University also identifies needs, solves problems, and helps develop the region, state, and nation through service activities consistent with academic strengths.

In October 2000, President William A. Meehan charged the IE Committee with the task of reviewing the mission statement and determining if changes/revisions were

warranted. A subcommittee on Mission Statement was created and began the process which is outlined below:

- The subcommittee on Mission Statement, including representation from all University divisions, began its review in October 2000.
- The subcommittee studied the SACS criteria on mission/purpose, reviewed and evaluated the existing mission and purpose, reviewed mission statements from other universities, and reviewed the 1996 proposed revision.
- The subcommittee presented a draft mission statement to the IE Committee for review in February 2001.
- The IE Committee prepared a draft mission statement for consideration by the President in April 2001.
- With the President's approval, the draft mission statement was distributed to all University constituencies through the following organizational units:
Administrative Council (including Business Affairs, Data Systems Management, Academic and Student Affairs, and Institutional Advancement), Academic Council (Deans and other personnel from the Division of Academic Affairs), Student Affairs (Directors), Department Heads' Council, Athletics, Faculty Senate, and Student Senate.
- Feedback from all units was submitted to the IE Committee and used to revise the draft statement (June 13, 2001).
- The IE Committee prepared a revised draft for submission to the University community for another review in early July 2001.

- The IE Committee prepared a final draft on July 19, 2001 for submission to the President.
- The proposed revised mission statement was disseminated to all University employees and students through a variety of media, including the University's web site. All JSU employees and students had the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed revision. In addition, the Student Government Association and the Student Senate reviewed the statement.
- In mid September 2001, the revised mission statement was mailed to the members of the Board of Trustees for their review and consideration.
- The Board of Trustees adopted the revised mission statement on October 15, 2001.
- A copy of the adopted mission statement was forwarded to SACS in November 2001.
- The President charged the IE Committee with developing University goals and objectives in support of the adopted mission statement on November 6, 2001.
- A subcommittee to develop Institutional Goals was identified in November 2001. The committee is comprised of faculty, staff, and student members.
- The subcommittee reviewed the SACS criteria, the University's current educational, research, and public service purpose statements, the revised mission statement, and the James O. Nichols practitioner's handbook, *Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes Assessment Implementation on Campus*. The subcommittee presented its recommended goals and objectives to the IE Committee on February 19, 2002.

- A review and adoption of the Institutional Goals followed the same procedure as used with the adopted 2001 mission statement. The Institutional Goals were adopted in October 2002.

Conclusion: The committee finds that Jacksonville State University is in compliance.

Recommendation: None

Suggestion: The committee suggests that the Institutional Effectiveness Committee outline and publish the procedures for review of the mission statement and institutional goals.

The statement of purpose serves as the foundation for all institutional operations, programs and activities. Consequently, the institution must demonstrate that its planning and evaluation processes, educational program, educational support services, financial and physical resources, and administrative processes are adequate and appropriate to fulfill its stated purpose.

An in-depth analysis of the University as a whole through a comprehensive analysis of its component parts revealed that the University possesses a clearly defined purpose/mission statement appropriate to collegiate education as well as to its own specific educational role. During this self-study, it was evident that systematic planning has been integrated into administrative processes throughout all units. The budget process is well-defined and linked to planning through the completion of planning budgets by some units. However, years of level funding have diminished the relevance of the planning budgets at the division/unit level. While evaluation activity has been documented through the annual report process, a review of unit annual reports indicated varying levels of sophistication with outcomes evaluation and the documented use of evaluation data in the maintenance, development, and revision of programs/services (more details provided in Section III).

With the establishment of the Office of IE in 2001, the proposed planning template (PRISM—Planning Resulting In Successful Management) recommended by the IE Committee was approved by the President for campus-wide implementation effective with the 2002 reporting cycle. PRISM was designed to enhance the planning, budgeting, and assessment processes by providing a universal format that requires units to document how evaluation data are used for ongoing program improvement. PRISM will also provide the structure for showing the linkages between all planning units through the hierarchy to the President and ultimately the University mission statement and University goals and objectives.

The University offers 39 undergraduate programs, 21 master's programs, and 2 educational specialists programs to assist in meeting the educational mission of the University. A plethora of cultural events are scheduled for campus and community participation, including art exhibits, music recitals and performances, and theatrical productions. University students are provided many opportunities for social experiences through programs such as residence life, student government association, departmental clubs/organizations, athletic events, Greek Life, on-campus work experiences, and out-of-class group projects. The University supports a diverse student population attracting students from over 50 countries and across the United States.

To assist students in meeting their educational goals, JSU offers an array of academic support and student support programs which include tutoring, counseling, career exploration, student recreation, disability support services, freshmen orientation classes, and academic advisement. The University takes pride in preparing students for life after graduation. Scholarly and service activities are an integral component of the

University's mission and are reviewed annually as part of the faculty evaluation process and as part of the unit five-year plans.

The University's mission is financially supported through state allocations, tuition, and an array of grants and contracts. The University's physical plant is well maintained; however, several academic buildings and a residence hall are in need of significant renovations to meet the demand of a growing enrollment. While the administrative processes needed to fulfill the University's mission are in place, continued review of processes and increased use of technology will result in greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Conclusion: The committee finds that Jacksonville State University is not in compliance with respect to the adequacy of its planning and evaluation processes.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that the University demonstrate that its planning and evaluation processes are adequate and appropriate to fulfill its stated purpose.

Suggestion: None