



2020-2021 Annual Report





State of Alabama
Articulation and General Studies Committee
Statewide Transfer and Articulation Reporting System

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by Keith Sessions, Executive Director





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Questions and/or comments regarding this report should be directed to:

AGSC/STARS Program
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 334-670-3690





Message from the 2020-2021 AGSC Chair

July 22, 2021

It is my sincere pleasure to serve as chair of the Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC). The overarching goal of the AGSC is to facilitate the transferability of coursework among Alabama public colleges and universities. In 2020-2021, the dedicated AGSC Committee members met virtually due to COVID-19 protocols. In collaboration with the STARS staff, the AGSC members continued work on several priorities designed to enhance students' successful transfer between Alabama colleges and universities. These priorities include:

- Analyze and consider changes and modifications to the AGSC General Studies Core and Pre-professional Curriculum and Electives templates ensure their relevancy and efficiency for today's transfer students;
- Host the annual ACHIEVE Transfer Student Success Conference; Review Advanced Placement (AP) Credit requirements;
- Work with institutions to gain consensus regarding acceptable AP scores across the state;
- Investigate current STARS usage and performance metrics; and
- Revise and update the current AGSC/STARS website.

The AGSC has accomplished much in respect to these priorities. By exploring in greater depth meta- majors and guided pathways as potential models, the AGSC members will continue their analysis of changes to the AGSC General Studies Core, better known as the Areas I to V Framework, and the Pre-professional Curriculum and Electives, better known as Area V. AGSC members completed a review of Advanced Placement requirements at Alabama colleges and universities and proposed acceptable scores across the state. AGSC members hosted the third annual ACHIEVE Transfer Student Success Conference and first virtual conference. The conference's purpose is to foster continued collaboration between faculty, staff, and administrators at Alabama colleges and universities working to better transfer student success. The ACHIEVE Conference is the only large-scale activity in the state dedicated to transfer student success. Since the launching of the first ACHIEVE Conference, attendance has increased each year. This year over 360 educators attended the conference, up from 250 educators who attended the second ACHIEVE conference. Each year the feedback from the conference is overwhelmingly positive.

The Articulation and General Studies Committee members look forward to continuing their work on behalf of Alabama transfer students in 2021-2022. We welcome your suggestions and feedback.

Sincerely,

Pamela Arrington

Pamela Arrington, Ph.D.
Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs
Alabama A&M University
2020-2021 Chair, Articulation and General Studies Committee





AGSC VOTING MEMBERS & ALTERNATES (2020-2021)

NOTE: Members listed below served as AGSC Members for the majority of the past year.

APPOINTING AUTHORITY	VOTING MEMBER	ALTERNATE MEMBER
Alabama A&M University	Dr. Pamela Arrington (AGSC CHAIR) Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs	Dr. Wubishet Tadesse Professor and Chair, Department of Biological & Environmental Sciences
Alabama State University	Dr. Tanjula Petty Assistant Provost for Student Success and Special Initiatives	Dr. Kathaleen Amende Dean of College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Auburn University	Dr. Megan Good Director of Academic Assessment	Dr. Charles Israel Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
University of Alabama System	Dr. Eva Lewis Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Planning <i>University of Alabama at Birmingham</i>	Dr. Tonjanita Johnson Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs <i>University of Alabama System</i>
University of South Alabama	Dr. Angela Coleman Associate Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness	Dr. Eric Loomis Associate Dean — College of Arts & Sciences
Regional Universities	Dr. Hal Fulmer Associate Provost & Dean of Undergraduate & First Year Studies <i>Troy University</i>	Dr. Lisa Williams Associate Provost <i>Jacksonville State University</i>
Regional Universities	Dr. Kenneth Kitts President <i>University of North Alabama</i>	Dr. Tim Edwards Provost <i>University of West Alabama</i>
Alabama Community College System (2-Year Institutions)	Dr. Bruce Crawford (AGSC VICE-CHAIR) Vice President for Instructional Services <i>Lawson State Community College</i>	Dr. Bradley Fricks Director of Academic & Student Services <i>Alabama Community College System</i>
Alabama Community College System (2-Year Institutions)	Mary Beth Lancaster Dean of Instruction <i>Coastal Alabama Community College</i>	Ms. Leslie Reeder Dean of Instruction <i>Wallace Community College—Dothan</i>
Alabama Community College System (2-Year Institutions)	Dr. David Campbell President <i>Northeast Alabama Community College</i>	Mrs. Jackie Screws President <i>Chattahoochee Valley Community College</i>
EX-OFFICIO NON-VOTING MEMBERS		
Alabama Commission on Higher Education	Dr. James E. Purcell Executive Director	Dr. Robin McGill Director of Instruction & Special Projects
AGSC Secretary	Mrs. Jacinta Whitehurst Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director <i>Alabama Commission on Higher Education</i>	
AGSC/STARS Program	Dr. Keith Sessions Executive Director	



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPDATES 2020-2021

AGSC Priorities

PRIORITY 1 — Evaluate alternative models for articulation of general education courses and make recommendations for revision to the STARS Areas I-V model, if appropriate. Also, begin to investigate and research the impact of moving to a “META-MAJOR” system for future transfer guides.

STATUS REPORT—ONGOING

The Alabama General Studies Committee (AGSC) Subcommittee on General Education was charged to continue with the development of a proposal to the AGSC for restructuring the current STARS system of Areas I-V, informed by the meta-majors, guided pathways, and learning outcomes models. The subcommittee met a total of five times during the 2020-2022 academic year.



The goals established for the 2020-2021 subcommittee included one to provide education to subcommittee members about meta-majors, the Interstate Passport project with Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, and Career Pathways and discuss how one or more of these could be used to create a new model to replace STARS Area I-IV. This goal was achieved through presentations by WICHE on its Interstate Passport; Keith Sessions and his work with Robin McGill and ACHE on connecting general education to career clusters, preliminary work on a plan to organize current STARS templates into meta-majors, Dr. Linda Hagedorn about Guided Pathways and Meta-majors, and Catherine Preston and Eric Loomis from South Alabama about their development and use of meta-majors as an organizing/advising tool.

Two other goals for last year were to 1) establish guidelines/parameters for the new model to ensure it meets the legislative mandate and the intention to save students time, money, and credit with seamless transfer from two- to four-year institutions, and 2) submit a recommended model to the AGSC by its Spring meeting. The pros and cons of the current STARS Guides and Areas I-V were reviewed in detail, and the last meeting in February focused on the possibility of organizing the state’s General Education requirements around a core of 30 hours, with the remaining 11 hours represented in a metamajor or broader learning outcomes context. Nevertheless, these two goals were not fully realized and will continue into 2021-2022.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPDATES 2020-2021

AGSC Priorities

Outgoing subcommittee Chair, Dr. Angela Coleman, is to be commended for her dedicated work and the advancement of redesign efforts for General Education Curriculum, on behalf of the AGSC.

Subcommittee Plans for 2021-2022

To continue progress on these goals, the subcommittee will pursue either reviewing degree guides to find consistencies and differences in core requirements, or consider incorporating a learning outcomes approach for the core hours, along with the meta-major/learning outcomes concepts for the remaining credit hours. Again, the goal will be to submit a proposal for the AGSC to consider by year's end. Finally, additional consideration will be given to surveying how colleges and universities have redesigned their institutional core requirements; however, this highlights the need for a statewide communication strategy about suggested changes to the state core curriculum requirements and the intention to simplify student transfer.

Update provided by Dr. Eva Lewis — UAB



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPDATES 2020-2021

AGSC Priorities

(continued)

PRIORITY 2 — Review and take action on the AP Credit sub-committee’s final recommendation regarding the possibility of standardizing the AP test scores across the state in relation to how final grades awarded and how these grades appear on transcripts.

STATUS REPORT—WORK COMPLETED

The AP Scores subcommittee concluded their work in July 2020 with a recommendation to the full AGSC. The recommendations are:

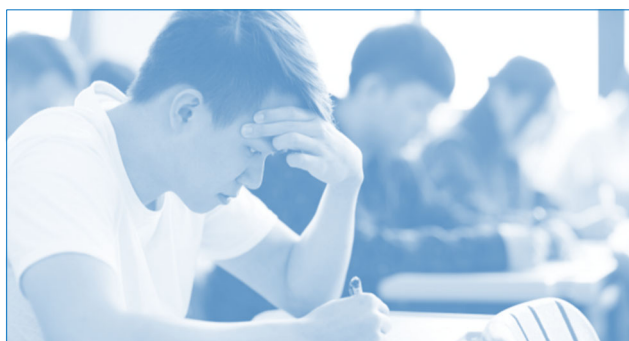


1. Disciplinary experts at each institution should assess the appropriate threshold scores for AP exams in the same way that they assess courses for articulation.
2. AGSC recommends that all state institutions set AP score expectations at “3” for all courses as a means to smooth transfer between state institutions.

State institutions should clearly report their AP credit awarding thresholds in their institutional materials (web/bulletin/etc.) and AGSC will link to these scores or provide a composite table for easy reference.

The sub-committee’s report and recommendations were accepted without modification by the AGSC. In January 2021, AGSC chair, Dr. Pamela Arrington, shared the recommendations with the Council of University Chief Academic Officers. This council has not yet responded officially to the recommendation from the AGSC.

Update provided by Dr. Charles Israel — AU





ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPDATES 2020-2021

AGSC Priorities

(continued)

PRIORITY 3 — Host the 3rd Annual Achieve Conference (via an online webinar format) which brings together key stakeholders from across the state who have a sincere interest in promoting the success of students transferring between colleges and universities in Alabama.

STATUS REPORT—ON GOING

Since 2019, the Articulation and General Studies Committee has planned and hosted the ACHIEVE Transfer Student Success Conference. It is a way to bring together key stakeholders from across the state who are committed to promoting the seamless transfer of students between colleges and universities in Alabama. The 2021 ACHIEVE Conference was the first virtual conference due to COVID-19 and the need to be safe. The theme of the March 3-4, 2021, conference was Charting the Path Ahead: Providing Opportunities for Transfer Student Success Amid a Pandemic. The agenda featured four renowned speakers: Dr. Janet L. Marling of the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students who gave presentations at four plenary sessions., Dr. John N. Gardner of the Gardner Institute, Dr. Mark D’Amico, of the University of North Carolina Charlotte, and Dr. James E. Purcell, Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. For a modest fee, the University of Alabama Continuing Education Division managed the administration of all virtual platform coordination, registration, technical assistance, and evaluation surveys. In general, participants found the sessions informative and provided knowledge, skills, and recommendations that will aid them in their work on campus working with students. A summary evaluation report is available upon request. For the third year there were significantly more conference participants than the year before at the ACHIEVE conference. This year, there were 360 attendees.

Update provided by Dr. Pamela Arrington— AAMU





ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPDATES 2020-2021

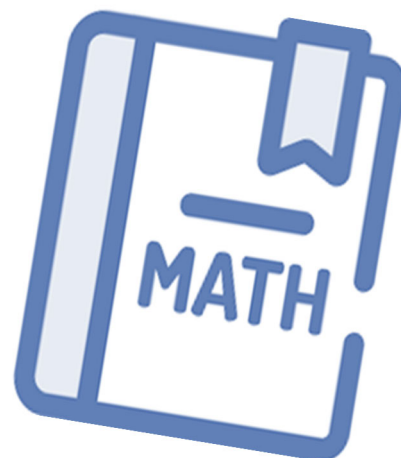
AGSC Priorities

(continued)

PRIORITY 4 — Explore possible issues related to the current math requirements in the state core, generate improvement ideas, and determine one or two actionable changes related to mathematics to recommend to the AGSC.

STATUS REPORT—ON GOING

In Fall 2020, a sub-committee of AGSC members began to explore math pathways in the core curriculum. The group evaluated other states and noted that there was a need to continue exploration with more content experts. Thus, in Spring 2021, the MATH PATHWAYS sub-committee was created with 2-year and 4-year representatives who met bi-weekly throughout the spring semester. The group made two decisions. First, that the Finite Mathematics course was a sound option for many non-STEM majors, but many students do not know what the course is about from the name. A subset of the committee worked with Dr. Bradley Fricks (ACCS) to create a marketing campaign for this course. This effort is ongoing. The second decision of the group was to model the approach Arkansas took and survey degree programs in Alabama to inquire about the math topics needed for their majors as opposed to the specific courses. This survey was developed and will be launched in late summer or early Fall 2021. The goal is to take the results and brainstorm new course offerings that best suit the different needs of majors. Currently, Gary Martin (AU) and Jim Gleason (UA) are leading the survey effort. The sub-committee's plan is to reconvene in the Fall after the survey results are collected.



Update provided by Dr. Megan Good — Auburn University



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPDATES 2020-2021

STARS Priorities

PRIORITY 1 — Continue to work towards launch date of new website and re-branding of STARS program to emphasize “Alabama Transfers—Powered by AGSC/STARS”.

STATUS REPORT—ON GOING

Our goal was to have launched the new AGSC/STARS website early this summer. While we are getting closer to having the new site completed and ready for use by students, administrators, and the general public, the site is not yet ready to go live. We are re-designing the entire site and adding a lot of new features and tools. The primary focus of web-design team is to create a new website that caters to the needs of “transfer students” as they prepare to transfer in order to complete their bachelor’s degrees at institutions across Alabama. The launch of the new site is now slated to take place later this year or early in 2022. One up and running, the new site will provide end-users with numerous new features and tools (see list below):



- Career Exploration / Major Selection Tools (aptitude testing)
- Career insight and videos from experts in the chosen field or career
- New Student Accounts (ability store information and transfer guides for future reference)
- Transfer Guide Improvements (View, print, save, email, interactive, etc.)
- Grouping Transfer Guides by major pathways or categories
- Interactive Transfer Equivalency Database
- Ability to do “What-if?” analysis in real-time (If I change majors how will that impact my time to degree?)
- Information request forms - Students can quickly connect with prospective four-year institutions and ask questions and request information
- Enhanced and improved usage reports for administrators, recruiters, and advisors.
- Administrative modules (committee/group meeting and voting tools and resources)

We hope to have a few focus group events in early fall to preview and test different tools and features in order to work out any problems or issues prior to going live with the new site. **See Appendix B.**



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPDATES 2020-2021

STARS Priorities

PRIORITY 2 — Create additional training videos and presentations that match the re-branding plan and provide valuable training resources for all end-users—specifically transfer students.



STATUS REPORT—ON GOING

A major part of the new website will involve training of end-user groups to use the new tools and features. As the new web-site comes on-line, we will include multiple training videos and make them available through our you tube page as well as embed them throughout the new site for quick reference. We will also be making a shift in marketing and branding from STARS to Alabama Transfers (powered by AGSC/STARS). For more information about the new site features, the rebranding initiative, and the project timeline, see Appendix B.

PRIORITY 3 — Assist and provide support to the AGSC in their work to investigate/research a possible shift from individual transfer templates/guides to meta-major templates/guides.



STATUS REPORT—ON GOING

The STARS staff has assisted, as needed, in the creating of various reports and spreadsheets to help the AGSC sub-committee investigate and research a possible shift from individual transfer guides to some modified meta-major type transfer guide system. The following is a list of reports and spreadsheets that have been developed and updated to assist in this effort:

- 1) Grouping of current transfer guides into possible meta-major categories
- 2) Spreadsheet of specific math requirements for each of the current transfer guides
- 3) Spreadsheet of specific science requirements for each of the current transfer guides
- 4) Report showing how the literature / history sequence is laid out on each of the current transfer guides
- 5) Transfer equivalency spreadsheet (Areas I-IV only—Area V not yet available)

We will continue to help in the efforts of all our sub-committees to provide research and reports as needed.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPDATES 2019-2020

STARS Student Survey Project



During the spring of 2021, Dr. Keith Sessions, Mr. Shannon Nichols, and Ms. Brandi Stacey collaborated in producing a brief survey designed to collect STARS users' demographic information, analyze where students are in the education pipeline, ask how users rate the helpfulness of STARS, and solicit open-ended feedback relating to STARS. After receiving approval from both Institutional Review Boards at The University of Alabama and Troy University, Dr. Sessions, Mr. Nichols, and Ms. Stacey designed the survey in Qualtrics. Mr. Nichols provided contact information in the form of email addresses students used to access STARS guides. Only students who agreed to be included in STARS research were contacted and asked to complete the short survey. All student users' privacy and personal information was safeguarded in accordance with the IRB protocol.

Ms. Stacey launched the survey on Monday, June 28, 2021, and deployed it again on Friday, July 9, 2021. She will send it out once more by the end of July, 2021. The email distribution list includes 47,300 email addresses. At the time of this report's publications, 166 users completed the survey, with 20 additional surveys still in progress. The first page of the survey covers informed consent for survey respondents, and all respondents have the option to discontinue the survey after reading about informed consent, or at any subsequent time during the survey. Through the online survey, we:

- ⇒ Asked students to provide their current educational status
- ⇒ Asked students the number of times student's changed majors
- ⇒ Asked student how many credit hours transferred using STARS
- ⇒ Asked students the number of credit hours lost upon transfer
- ⇒ Asked students to provide a rating of STARS in terms of helpfulness
- ⇒ Asked students for feedback and suggestions for improving STARS
- ⇒ Asked students for basic demographic information (voluntary)



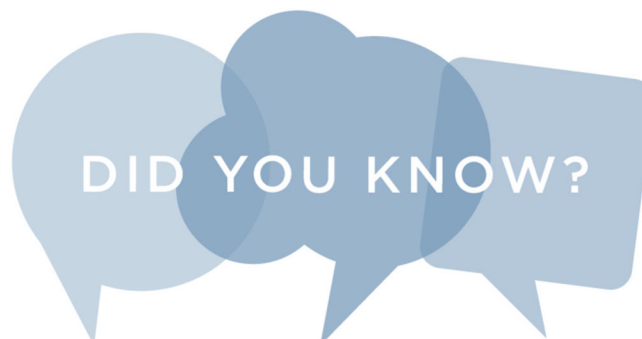
**SCAN QR CODE TO VIEW
ONLINE SURVEY**

The survey team is analyzing preliminary data and will share a more complete report during the Fall 2021 AGSC&STARS meeting. To view the survey scan the QR code above.



DID YOU KNOW?

- The STARS Office maintains over **159 different program templates** (these templates become the transfer guides that protect thousands of transfer students each year).
- The STARS Office maintains over **1,856 courses** in the course database. Of those, **1,382 courses have been approved** for statewide transfer by the AGSC. (The STARS Office works to keep current syllabi for each approved course on file and makes them available through the STARS website).
- The STARS Office works with approximately **268 two-year and four-year faculty members** who volunteer to serve on more than **20 separate discipline committees**.
- The STARS Office works directly with over **75 two-year and four-year points of contact** to maintain STARS and implement AGSC policy throughout the state.
- The STARS Office maintains over **500 html web pages** on the official STARS website. In addition there are hundreds of pdf documents accessible through the website. All coordination and maintenance of the STARS Website is accomplished by a full-time **staff of two**.
- If you add up all the years of service by the current STARS staff, you have over **88 years of experience** working with the state articulation program.
- Over **1,537,497 MILLION Transfer Guides have been obtained** through the STARS Website since Fall of 1998.
- Since 2009, the amount of money that the STARS Transfer Guide System has saved students and their parents is conservatively estimated to be **OVER 1.1 BILLION DOLLARS**. (See next page)





SAVING TAXPAYER DOLLAR\$. . .

Since 2011, the amount of money that the STARS Transfer Guide System has **SAVED** students and their parents (by simply preventing them from taking a course at a two-year college that would not transfer and then having to retake a course at their four-year institution to make up for the lost credit hours) is conservatively estimated to be **OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS**.



NOTE: This estimate only includes the average cost of tuition and books. It does not include other expenses related to attending college (i.e., cost of living, additional student fees, and loss of job opportunities due to delay in graduation.) It does not include lost wages due to delays in graduation caused by lost credit.



Year	Community College Resident Median Undergrade Annual Tuition and Required Fees *	Community College Resident Undergraduate Average Cost for 3 SH Course and Required Fees	Estimate Cost of Books for the 3 SH Course **	Total Number of STARS Guides for Current Year (Official and Unofficial)	Savings Cost of one Course if the STARS Guide Saved a Student from Taking one additional 3 SH Course
2011-2012	\$3,968	\$397	\$80	78,978	\$37,656,710
2012-2013	\$4,110	\$411	\$85	73,524	\$36,467,904
2013-2014	\$4,185	\$419	\$90	86,542	\$44,006,607
2014-2015	\$4,260	\$426	\$95	84,350	\$43,946,350
2015-2016	\$4,320	\$432	\$100	82,599	\$43,942,668
2016-2017	\$4,380	\$438	\$105	76,064	\$41,302,752
2017-2018	\$4,440	\$444	\$105	70,764	\$38,849,436
2018-2019	\$4,740	\$474	\$105	64,745	\$37,487,355
2019-2020	\$4,800	\$480	\$110	60,757	\$35,846,630
2020-2021	\$4,860	\$486	\$110	56,112	\$33,442,752
Totals				734,435	\$392,949,164

Year	Four-Year University Resident Median Undergrade Annual Tuition and Required Fees *	Four-Year University Resident Undergraduate Average Cost for 3 SH Course and Required Fees	Estimate Cost of Books for the 3 SH Course **	Total Number of STARS Guides for Current Year (Official and Unofficial)	Savings Cost of one Course if the STARS Guide Saved a Student from Taking one additional 3 SH Course
2011-2012	\$7,865	\$787	\$80	78,978	\$68,434,437
2012-2013	\$8,275	\$828	\$85	73,524	\$67,090,650
2013-2014	\$8,770	\$877	\$90	86,542	\$83,686,114
2014-2015	\$9,088	\$909	\$95	84,350	\$84,670,530
2015-2016	\$9,358	\$936	\$100	82,599	\$85,556,044
2016-2017	\$9,741	\$974	\$105	76,064	\$82,080,662
2017-2018	\$10,325	\$1,033	\$105	70,764	\$80,494,050
2018-2019	\$10,707	\$1,071	\$105	64,745	\$76,120,697
2019-2020	\$10,885	\$1,089	\$110	60,757	\$72,817,265
2020-2021	\$11,029	\$1,103	\$110	56,112	\$68,058,245
Totals				617,566	\$769,008,693

\$1,161,957,858

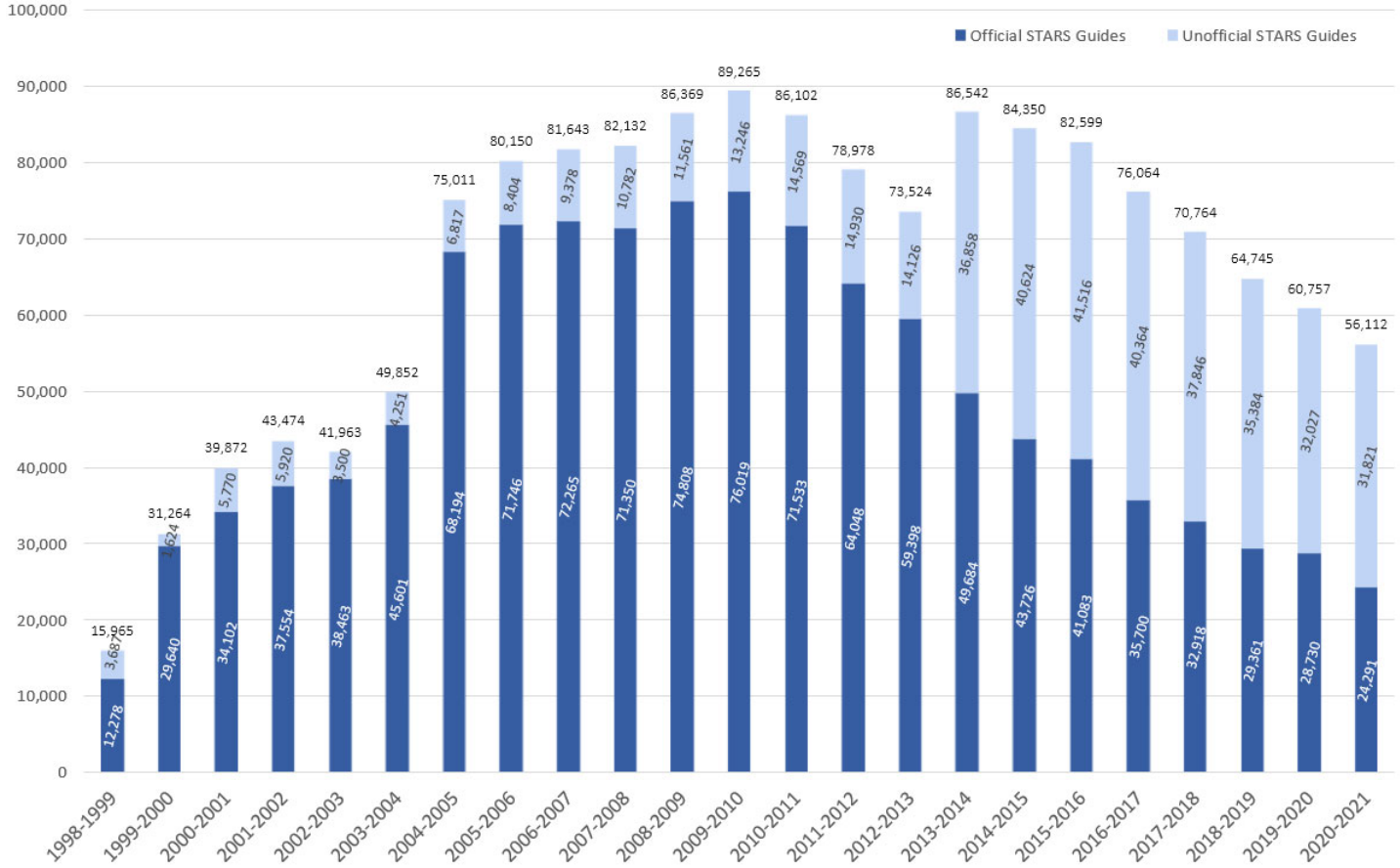
* Tuition amounts are based on undergraduate load of 30 semester hours. Other specific surcharges and fees may be required for certain programs. This data is from ACHE's website located at http://ache.edu/ACHE_Reports/Reports/Fees/2YR_%20Res_NonRes_TF.pdf and http://ache.edu/ACHE_Reports/Reports/Fees/4YR_UG_Grad_10YR_Hist.pdf

** Book costs estimated based off an article by Student PIRGS (Public Interest Research Groups) dated February 3, 2016. The article can be found at <http://www.studentpirgs.org/news/sp/student-group-releases-new-report-textbook-prices>



STARS TOTAL TRANSFER GUIDES OBTAINED BY YEAR SINCE 1998

This chart represents usage by end-users since the fall of 1998.



OVER 1,537,497 GUIDES OBTAINED SINCE THE FALL OF 1998

OFFICIAL GUIDES are obtained by transfer students who actually provide their name, address, phone, email, institution attending, and their major. The official guide also includes the Transfer Agreement Contract.

UNOFFICIAL GUIDES are obtained by various individuals for reference and comparison purposes only. These guides do not contain student information nor do they include the Transfer Agreement Contract.

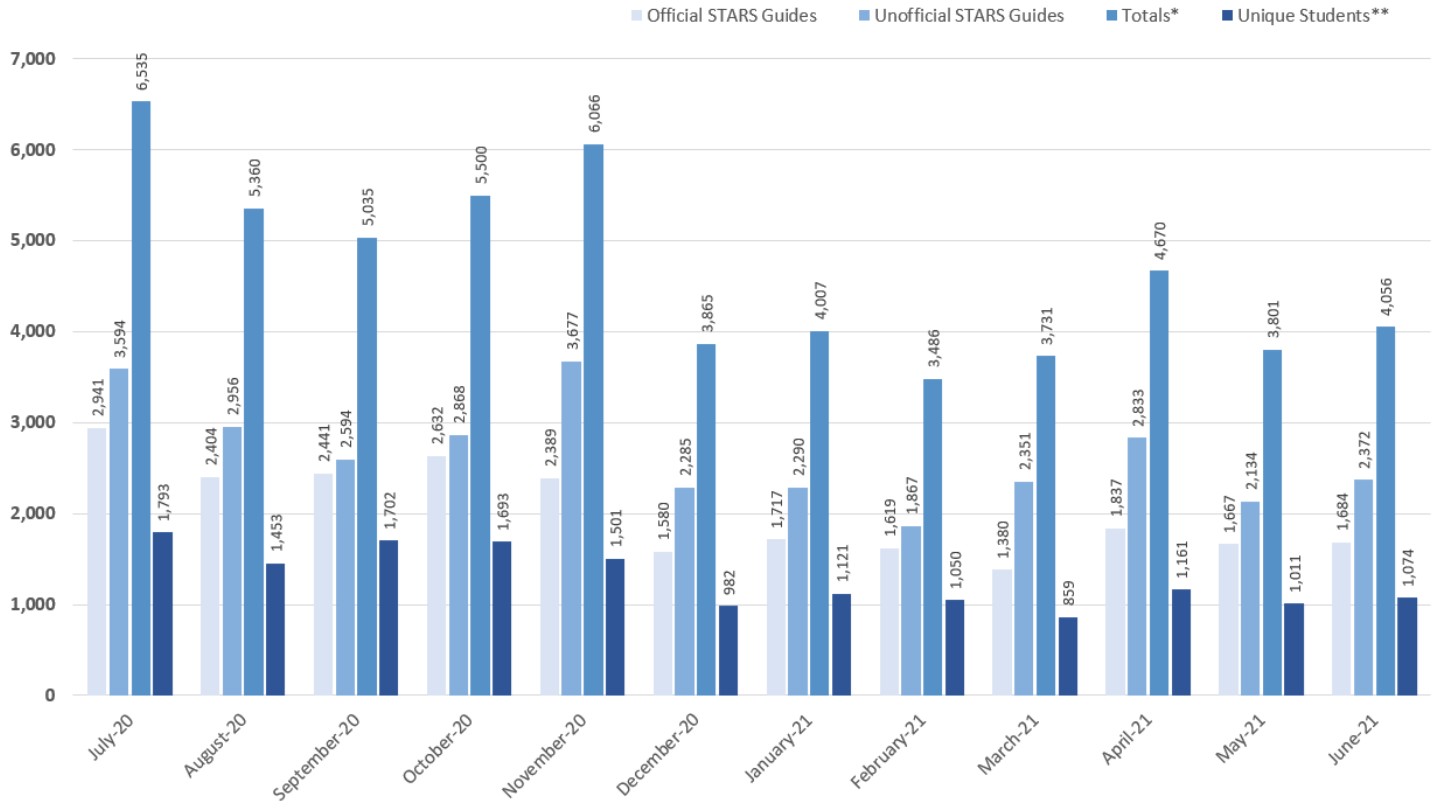
NOTE: For more detailed reports, please see the STARS website - <http://www.gettheguide.net>.

If you need a specific report for your institution, please contact Mr. Shannon Nichols at sgnichols@troy.edu



ANNUAL STARS TWO-YEAR STUDENT USAGE REPORT BY MONTH

This chart represents usage by two-year during the 2020-2021 academic year distributed by month.



OFFICIAL STARS GUIDES are obtained by transfer students who actually provide their name, address, phone, email, institution attending, and their major. The official guide also includes the Transfer Agreement Contract.

UNOFFICIAL STARS GUIDES are obtained by various individuals for reference and comparison purposes only. These guides do not contain student information nor do they include the Transfer Agreement Contract.

*** TOTALS** include the number of official guides obtained plus the number of unofficial guides obtained.

**** UNIQUE STUDENTS** – The unique student totals take into account that many students who use STARS print multiple guides. Students who print multiple guides in a given major are only counted one time. This number should provide a more accurate picture of how many individual students have printed/obtained guides.

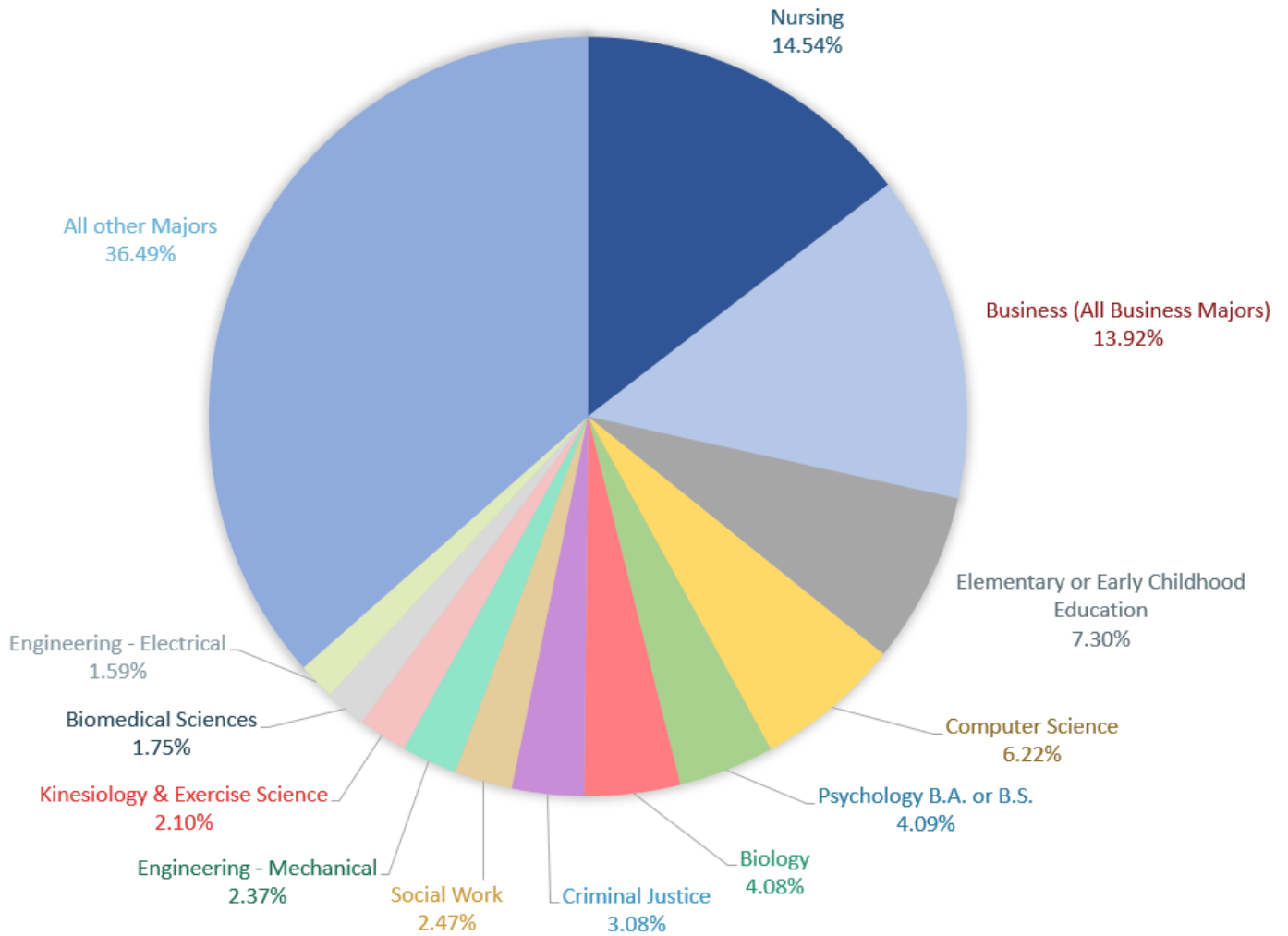
NOTE: For more detailed reports, please see the STARS website - <http://www.gettheguide.net>.

If you need a specific report for your institution, please contact Mr. Shannon Nichols at sgnichols@troy.edu



ANNUAL STARS TWO-YEAR STUDENT USAGE REPORT BY MAJOR

This chart represents usage by two-year during the 2020-2021 academic year distributed by major choice.



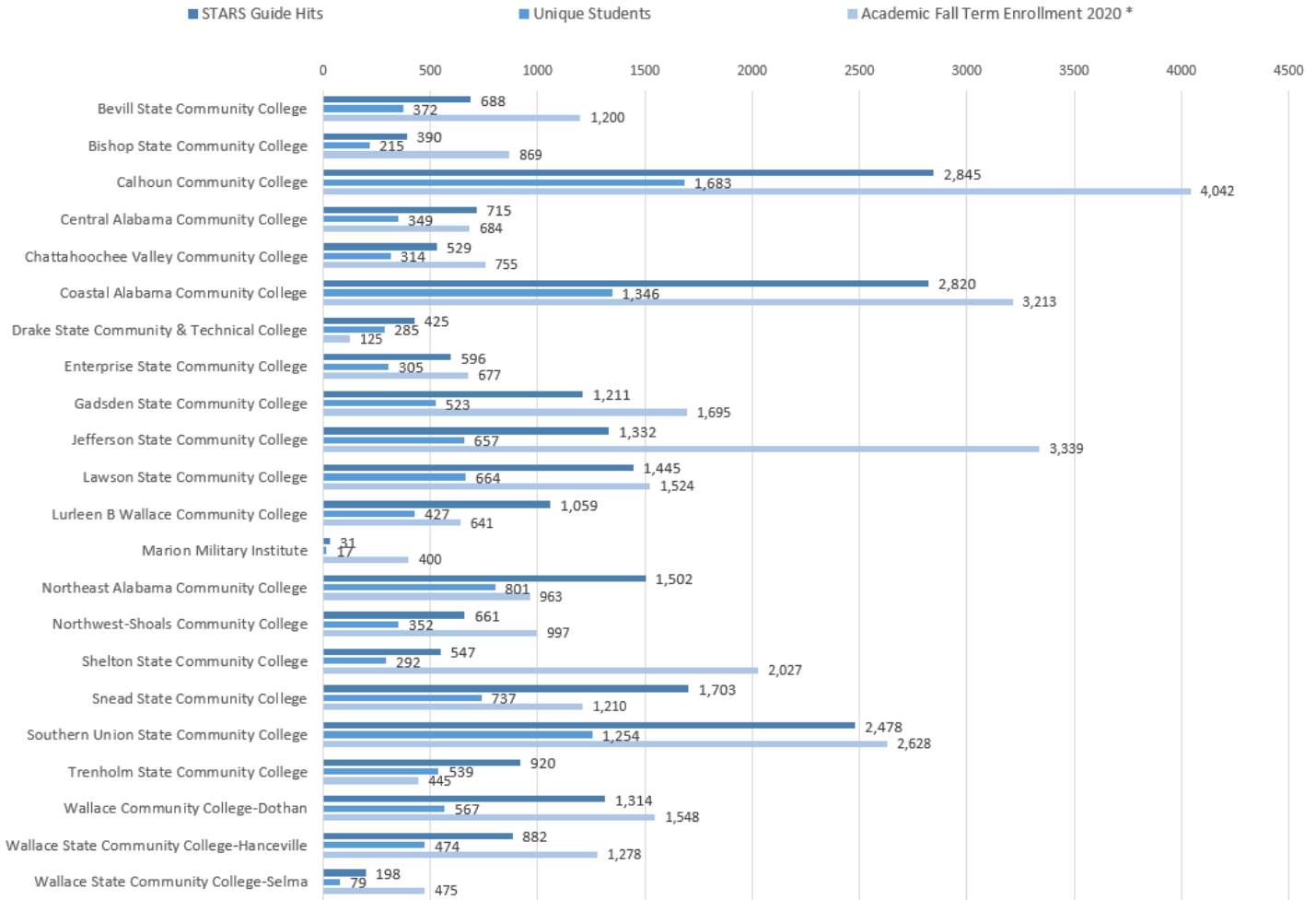
NOTE: For more detailed reports, please see the STARS website - <http://www.gettheguide.net>.

If you need a specific report for your institution, please contact Mr. Shannon Nichols at sgnichols@troy.edu



ANNUAL STARS TWO-YEAR STUDENT USAGE REPORT BY TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION

This chart represents usage by two-year students during the 2020-2021 academic year.



*** STARS GUIDE HITS** are obtained by transfer students who actually provide their name, address, phone, email, institution attending, and their major. The official guide also includes the Transfer Agreement Contract.

**** UNIQUE STUDENTS** – The unique student totals take into account that many students who use STARS print multiple guides. Students who print multiple guides in a given major are only counted one time. This number should provide a more accurate picture of how many individual students have printed/obtained guides.

***** ACADEMIC FALL TERM ENROLLMENT** of students who were on an academic track at their community college.

NOTE: For more detailed reports, please see the STARS website - <http://www.gettheguide.net>.

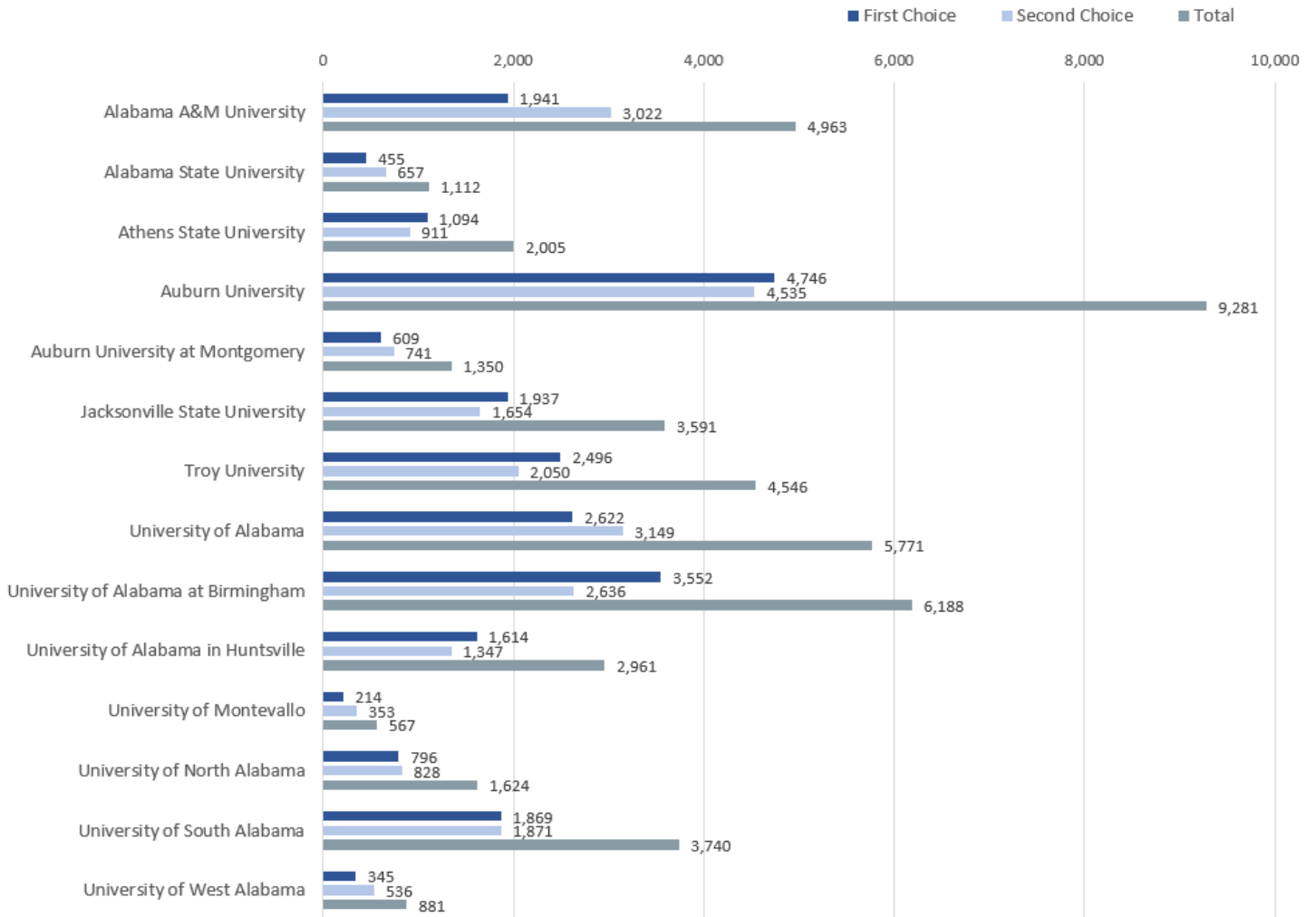
If you need a specific report for your institution, please contact Mr. Shannon Nichols at sgnichols@troy.edu



ANNUAL STARS STUDENT USAGE REPORT BY FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONAL CHOICE

This chart represents usage by two-year during the 2020-2021 academic year institutional choice.

NOTE: Each time a student requests a transfer guide, we ask them to tell us their first and second choices of possible transfer destinations. This report outlines these choices.



NOTE: For more detailed reports, please see the STARS website - <http://www.gettheguide.net>.

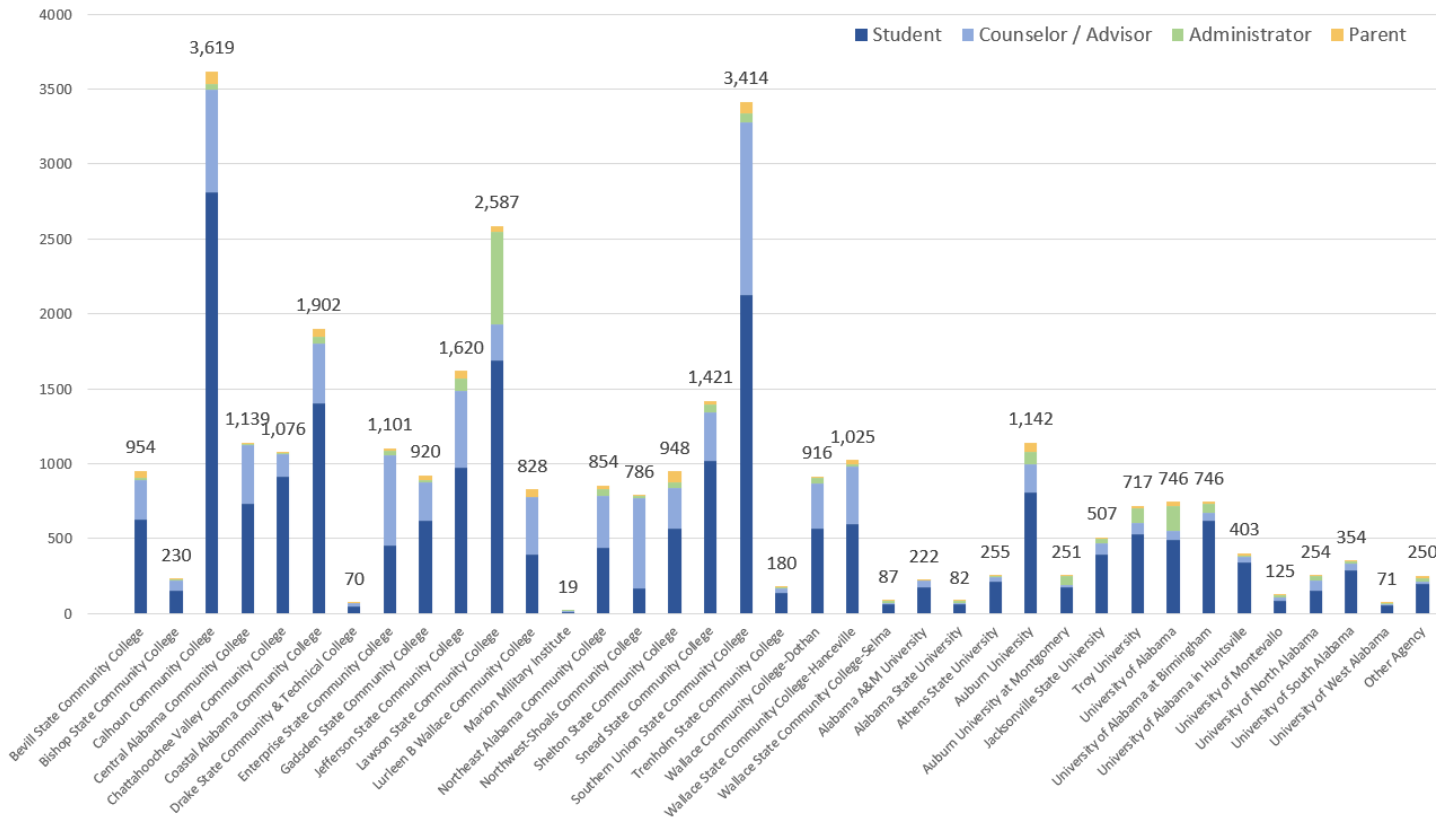
If you need a specific report for your institution, please contact Mr. Shannon Nichols at sgnichols@troy.edu



STARS UNOFFICIAL GUIDES REPORT BY USER TYPE

This chart represents unofficial guides obtained by user type during the 2020-2021 academic year .

NOTE: Each time a person uses the unofficial guide request we ask them to identify themselves as either a student, counselor/advisor, administrator or parent.



NOTE: For more detailed reports, please see the STARS website - <http://www.gettheguide.net>.

If you need a specific report for your institution, please contact Mr. Shannon Nichols at sgnichols@troy.edu



2021-2022 AGSC/STARS Priorities and Goals

The Articulation & General Studies Committee (AGSC) will:

1. Continue work of MATH PATHWAYS sub-committee to improve current entry level math courses and to research new math courses that would better serve the educational and career needs of non-STEM majors.
2. Delve more deeply into student transfer and curricular issues that arise in the state, relevant to General Studies. Focus on developing a proposal to innovate and improve the General Studies Core and Pre-Professional curricular requirements and transfer guides, to facilitate more seamless student transfer between institutions. Concepts informing the work are Meta Majors, Guided Pathways, and Program Student Learning Outcomes, as well as institutional input.
3. Host the 4th Annual ACHIEVE Transfer Student Success Conference.

The Statewide Transfer & Articulation Reporting System (STARS) Office will:

1. Complete work on the new AGSC/STARS Website and launch the new site in early 2022.
2. Create new marketing plan for the new site and for the overall re-branding of program to emphasize the new name—"ALABMA TRANSFERS - Powered by AGSC/STARS".
3. Provide new training opportunities (online and in-person) to explain all the new tools and features made available through the new website.



APPENDIX A

AGSC State Legislation—Act 94-202



AGSC/STARS LEGISLATION

Act 94-202: Section E



"The computerized advisement system for students operated by Troy State University which includes a comprehensive undergraduate program and course information for all public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education, existing on the effective date of this amendatory act, shall ensure students at each two-year institution accredited by the Southern Association's Commissions on Colleges, the opportunity to enter into a contract with a four-year institution guaranteeing the transfer of credit earned for courses taken at the two-year institution pursuant to the terms of the contract provided the student is admitted to the four- year institution. Under this contract, all agreed upon credits transferred from a two-year institution to a four-year institution shall fulfill degree requirements at the four-year institution as if they were earned at the four-year institution. Information regarding this advisement and contracting program shall be included in the official catalog of each institution of higher education. All public two-year and four-year institutions in the state accredited by the Commission on Colleges shall participate in this system.

"In addition, there is created an articulation and general studies committee which shall consist of ten members composed as follows: two representing the state's regional universities, three representing the state's two-year colleges (one of whom shall be black), one representing each of the following: Auburn University, the University of Alabama System, the University of South Alabama, Alabama State University, and Alabama A&M University. The Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the Director of the computerized advising system operated by Troy State University shall serve as nonvoting members.

"Unless provided by the governing board of the respective institution, the representatives to the articulation and general studies committee shall be selected in the following manner: The presidents of the state's regional universities shall select the two representatives of these institutions on the committee. The State Board of Education shall select the representatives of the state's two-year colleges on the committee. The Chancellor of the University of Alabama System and the Presidents of Auburn University, the University of South Alabama, Alabama State University, and Alabama A&M University shall each select the representative of their institutions on the committee. It is the intent of the Legislature that women be represented on the committee. This committee, utilizing whatever resources and task forces it deems appropriate, shall develop no later that September 1, 1998, a statewide freshman and sophomore level general studies curriculum to be taken at all colleges and universities. Nothing herein shall be interpreted as restricting any institution from requiring additional general studies courses beyond the statewide general studies curriculum.

"This committee shall also develop and adopt no later than September 1, 1999, for the freshman and sophomore years, a statewide articulation agreement for the transfer of credit among all public institutions of higher education. Under this articulation agreement, all applicable credits transferred from a two-year institution to a four-year institution shall fulfill degree requirements at the four-year institution as if they were earned at the four-year institution. The committee shall further examine the need for a uniform course numbering system, course titles, and descriptions.

"A four-fifths vote of the entire voting membership of the committee shall be required for the adoption of the articulation agreement and general studies curriculum. Upon adoption of the articulation agreement and general studies curriculum, this committee shall continue its duty and authority prescribed herein. The committee shall meet at least annually, or at other times as convened by the chair. The committee shall elect annually a chair from its membership. The chair of the committee shall rotate annually between a representative of the four-year institutions and a representative of the two-year institutions.

"In case of problems in the administration or interpretation of the articulation agreement or the general studies curriculum, institutions shall present the problem to the articulation and general studies committee for resolution. A majority decision of the committee shall be final and binding.

Passed SENATE – March 10, 1994 | Passed HOUSE – March 10, 1994 | Signed by GOVERNOR Jim Folsom March 17, 1995



APPENDIX B

AGSC/STARS Website Re-design and Program Re-Branding Initiative



STARS vs. Alabama Transfers for Students

More than a fresh coat of paint, the new Alabama Transfers system adds essential features and upgrades for students, advisors, counselors, AGSC members, and STARS staff.

Feature	STARS	Alabama Transfers	Details
Explore without commitment	×	✓	<p>Not all who wander are lost. Most students don't know exactly what they want to study, so we've designed the new site to meet them where they're at. Alabama Transfers encourages exploratory behaviors, enabling students to view and easily jump between multiple guides. By doing so, students will more thoroughly explore their options and make better, more informed decisions.</p> <p>This is in contrast to the old STARS site: even when submitting Unofficial Guides, students using STARS had to fill out a lengthy form with their personal information – and they had to redo this for each and every guide. Our surveys have shown that this hurdle discourages students from taking full advantage of our services. Who wants to fill out the same form a third, fourth, or fifth time on the mere chance of finding a more appealing major?</p>
Major guides	✓	✓	<p>In STARS, each transfer guide consisted of a single major, requiring students to sort through a list over 140 majors long. Alabama Transfers keeps this view, while adding some additional, helpful ways to browse.</p>
College-to-career pathways	×	✓	<p>While not a full-fledged career exploration tool – that will come later – Alabama Transfers takes several steps in that direction, enabling students to think not only in terms of majors, but in terms of college-to-career pathways. Our “pathway” guides cluster related majors together so that students can gradually hone in on their areas of interest, rather than shooting in the dark while selecting a major from a long list. These guides include helpful information such as sample careers and occupational outlook information so they can weigh their interests against practical realities.</p>



STARS vs. Alabama Transfers for Students

Feature	STARS	Alabama Transfers	Details
Institution profiles	×	✓	<p>While we'd like to encourage students to think primarily about their interests and career opportunities, the reality is that there's more to the transfer decision. Each university comes with its own heritage, a unique culture and campus life, as well as a particular geography. We'd be selling students short if we didn't provide them with this information.</p> <p>Rather than linking students out to the universities' websites, as on the old STARS system, Alabama Transfers aggregates this information into institutional profiles. These profiles are connected to the majors and pathways, giving students another way to explore.</p>
University transfer requirements	×	✓	<p>Once they decide to take the next step toward transferring, students will need a place to view their chosen university's transfer requirements. Alabama Transfers maintains each institution's requirements in our main institutional database and gives students multiple ways to find and view this information.</p>
Course equivalency tables	×	✓	<p>Whereas STARS merely links to different universities' course equivalency tables, Alabama Transfers shows that information right alongside the pathway requirements. This saves students the round trip between different websites and enables us to keep the guides more up-to-date.</p>
Advanced Placement (AP) equivalencies	×	✓	<p>In addition to tracking course equivalency between two- and four-year institutions, Alabama Transfers also maintains a database of AP test equivalencies for each university.</p>



STARS vs. Alabama Transfers for Students

Feature	STARS	Alabama Transfers	Details
Advanced search (majors, pathways & universities)	×	✓	With Alabama Transfers, students can find the needle without the haystack. If a student already has an idea of what they want to study but can't put it into words, they can find it via the Advanced Search functionality, rather than clicking through guide after guide.
Scholarship index	×	✓	Students' transfer decisions often depend upon the availability of scholarships. Alabama Transfers puts these opportunities at their fingertips, aggregating opportunities across all participating institutions.
College connection	×	✓	When students submit their transfer guides, they include some personal details including their current community college and major, as well as contact information. Alabama Transfers gives students the option to have these details forwarded to the universities of their choosing, so that the institutions can initiate contact and send additional recruiting information.
Guide versioning & redundancy	×	✓	When a student submits a guide, the new Alabama Transfers system will take a snapshot of the requirements. Each snapshot will then be accessible via a permanent link. That way, although universities' requirements will change over time, students can always refer back to the terms of their agreement at the time it was made. And all parties to the agreement – the student, the advisor, the institution, and the AGSC – will have a permanent record should any discrepancies arise.
Responsive web design	×	✓	The new Alabama Transfers site has been designed for use on all devices, from desktop PCs to laptops to tablets to smartphones.



STARS vs. Alabama Transfers for Advisors

Feature	STARS	Alabama Transfers	Details
College-to-career pathways	×	✓	In addition to helping students navigate transfer on their own, Alabama Transfers's college-to-career pathway guides serve as an invaluable framing device for advisors to initiate conversations with students about their futures. Armed with each pathway's selling points and occupational outlook information, in addition to its academic requirements, advisors can steer students down the pathway that's truly best for them.
Intuitive dashboard	×	✓	Unlike the old STARS system, which had a wealth of tools scattered throughout various site sections, the new Alabama Transfers site includes a landing page designed specifically for advisors, from which all the tools and information they need are a single click away.
Automated submission reporting	Manual, Quarterly	Real-time & Periodically	When a student submits a transfer guide, they may choose to have their information forwarded to one or more universities. With STARS, this process was manual and performed once every quarter. With Alabama Transfers, this process will be automated and done both in real-time (a notification per submission) and periodically (e.g. once per month). This way, the site will serve as a bridge between students, advisors, and institutions.
Offline access	×	✓	Because it's being developed as a progressive web app (PWA), Alabama Transfers gives advisors the ability to access the system even when they're offline.



STARS vs. Alabama Transfers for Administrators

Feature	STARS	Alabama Transfers	Details
Course & major template ratification	×	✓	With the old STARS site, the process to submit a new course or major was handled externally through email. Alabama Transfers closes this loop, enabling administrators to submit the forms to the same place where they retrieved them.
Real-time, granular usage reports	×	✓	On the old STARS site, usage reports are generated periodically and depict only certain data points. The usage reports generated by Alabama Transfers will be updated in real-time and will break down the data much more granularly, including new charts for the number of guides generated per student, the number of universities selected per official guide, and more.

STARS vs. Alabama Transfers for AGSC Members

Feature	STARS	Alabama Transfers	Details
Content editing	×	✓	On the old STARS site, all content changes must go through STARS staff. With the new Alabama Transfers system, we can create site accounts with scoped editing permissions, e.g. a secretary account with access only to meeting minutes, or a committee chair account with the ability to edit a specific equivalency table.
Meeting minutes	PDFs	Integrated	The integrated meeting minutes feature of the new Alabama Transfers system makes it easy to schedule future meetings, draft the agenda and send it out for comments, and record minutes and add attachments at the actual meeting.



STARS vs. Alabama Transfers for STARS Staff

Feature	STARS	Alabama Transfers	Details
Better content management	×	✓	On the old STARS site, information duplicated across multiple pages had to be updated multiple times, making it hard to keep all the content in sync. In the new Alabama Transfers system, nearly every piece of content on the website is editable through the content management system (CMS). Each content field can be reused on many pages.
Content delegation	×	✓	On the current STARS site, all content is maintained by STARS staff. With the new Alabama Transfers system, gone is the need for lengthy back-and-forths with stakeholders over email. While still retaining the ability to review and reject content before publication, the new Alabama Transfers system will be able to accept certain submissions directly from the relevant stakeholders. For example, advisors can submit scholarship listings; AGSC committee chairs can edit equivalency tables; meeting secretaries can edit minute meetings; and more.
Mailing lists & groups	×	✓	With the new system, we can manage newsletters, event RSVPs, surveys, etc. through the CMS.
Site analytics	×	✓	In addition to the transfer guide usage reports, the new Alabama Transfers site will keep detailed logs of web traffic, site search and navigation patterns, and more. This data will enable us to channel our efforts into the most used features. We may also use the information to facilitate improvements through A/B testing.
Test-driven development	×	✓	From security to accessibility, we ensure the new system exceeds the highest standards through test-driven development. This means that every feature and function will have a suite of automated tests that it must pass before it's deployed.
Backups & versioning	×	✓	The new system will be automatically backed up, and revisions will be stored in version control.



Project Timeline





Questions and/or comments regarding this report should be directed to:



AGSC&STARS

Alabama Articulation & General Studies Committee
Statewide Transfer & Articulation Reporting System

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