## HISTORY

Albany State University, established originally as the Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute and supported by private and religious organizations, was founded in 1903 by Joseph Winthrop Holley. The Institute provided religious and manual training for African American youths of Southwest Georgia. The mission was to train teachers to teach basic academic skills and to train in the trades and industries, with special emphasis on domestic science and art. The Institute remained a privately supported Institution until 1917.

In 1917, the Institute became a state-supported, two-year college with a Board of Trustees, and its name was changed to Georgia Normal and Agricultural College. Offering only a limited program in agriculture, the College viewed as its primary purpose the training of elementary teachers. In 1932, the Board of Regents was established, and the college became a part of the newly established University System of Georgia.

In order to meet the changing needs of society, the mission of the College was expanded in 1943, and the College was granted four-year status and authorized to confer the bachelor’s degree in elementary education and home economics. At this time, the College assumed the name Albany State College. Six years later, the program of the College was again expanded to include offerings in the arts and sciences, with majors in the humanities and social studies.

Beginning in 1954, secondary-level programs were developed for teacher preparation in science, health and physical education, business, music, mathematics and natural sciences. The College continued to experience growth and development and was authorized in 1961 to offer a four-year degree program in nursing.

Always striving to address the educational needs of the time, the graduate program, a cooperative effort with Georgia State University, was added to the curriculum during the fall of 1972. Under this program, master’s degrees were offered in business education, mathematics education, elementary education, English education, health and physical education, music education and science education (biology, chemistry and physics). In the spring of 1975, a master’s degree in business administration, through Valdosta State College, was added to the graduate program.

During the decade of the ’70s, the number of faculty earning the doctorate degree increased by more than fifty percent, and in September 1981, the College began offering a graduate program designed and delivered solely by faculty and staff of Albany State College. Master’s degrees in business administration and education were offered. Since then criminal justice, nursing and public administration have been added.

Albany State College was granted university status in July 1996, and the name of the Institution was changed to Albany State University. During this impressive growth and development, the University has been guided by the following presidents:

* (1903-1943) Joseph Winthrop Holley, D.D., LL.D.
* (1943-1953) Aaron Brown, Ph.D., LL.D., Ed.D.
* (1953-1965) William H. Dennis, LL.D.
* (1965-1969) Thomas Miller Jenkins, J.D., LL.D.
* (1969-1980) Charles L. Hayes, Ed.D.
* (1980-1996) Billy C. Black, Ph.D.
* (1996-2005) Portia Holmes Shields, Ph.D.
* (2005 – Present) Everette J. Freeman, Ed.D., M.A., B.A.,