

Inside this issue:

Staff Changes	1
Late Intervention	2
Legislative Preview	2
Rowdy Cents Turns One	3
Women Veterans	3
Welcome Back Participants Graduate	4
Degree Milestones	5
The GI Good Guy	6



Kristi Meyer
Director

It is my pleasure to greet you as the new Director of the Graduation Initiative. I have been honored to serve as Interim Director since July, when the GI staff and UTSA said good-bye to Clint Rodenfels, the inaugural Director of the Graduation Initiative. Clint has since moved into an administrative position with Austin Community College.

I grew up in rural East Texas, where graduating from high school is considered quite an accomplishment. It was my mom who instilled in me an appreciation and love for higher

education. A bachelor's degree, she said, was a ticket to a better life - a life with freedoms, independence, choices, and creature comforts almost impossible to achieve without a college degree.

The students of UTSA are poised and ready for expanded success, especially in terms of graduation.

My graduate education was incredibly valuable, but it was my undergraduate education that opened an entire new world to me. My experiences have made me passionate about working to help more students graduate. I welcome this new opportunity and look forward to leading the GI, and in turn, the students of UTSA, into a long and successful future.

Meet the newest GI Team member: Shannon Rios

The Graduation Initiative welcomes Shannon Rios as a Retention & Graduation Analyst. She takes the place of Diane Elizondo, who left the office to pursue her doctoral studies fulltime. Shannon has been with UTSA since 2006 and joined the Graduation Initiative in September 2010. She works with the staff, faculty, and students of the College of Sciences. Shannon is a double alumna of UTSA with a Master of Arts in Counseling and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

Shannon began her career at UTSA working as a mentor with provisionally admitted students and then moved into an advising capacity working with undecided students at the TRC. Shannon has taught a Freshman Seminar course offered through the Learning Communities. She has also presented at national conferences in first year experience studies, at student leadership conferences on campus, and programs targeting first year students.

Shannon currently serves on the UTSA Staff Council and is a faculty advisor for a student organization on campus. When Shannon isn't working, she is reading, listening to music, and spending time with her family.



Shannon Rios
Retention & Graduation Analyst

Did you know...

The name of our newsletter, "Fifty-three," comes from the commitment of UTSA President Ricardo Romo to raise the UTSA graduation rate to 53% by 2015.



Graduation Initiative

Dr. Patricia Glenn
Associate Dean for
Retention & Graduation

Kristi Meyer
Director

Jinny Case
Senior Retention &
Graduation Analyst

Linda Chalmers
Senior Retention &
Graduation Analyst

Shannon Rios
Retention & Graduation
Analyst

C. Michael Glade
Graduate Assistant

Silke Mendez
Student Assistant

GI's Late Intervention is a continued success

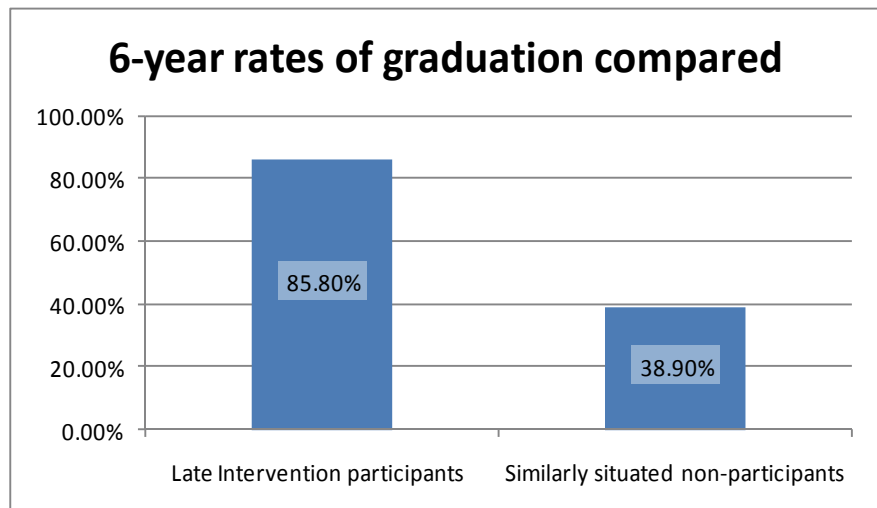
The activities focusing on the 2004 cohort of entering students marked the Graduation Initiative's fourth effort at working with students to help them graduate within six-years. Similar to our work with the previous cohorts, this effort started with students who were in their fifth-year of studies and had an additional four semesters ahead of them in which they could take classes (summer 2009, fall 2009, spring 2010, and summer 2010). In addition to the support and advocacy provided by members of the Graduation Initiative, these students also received the Graduation Incentive Award, a grant of up to \$4,000.

The difference in graduation outcomes between participants and non-participants is significant, $X^2(1, n=436)=104.47, p<0.001$. **Late Intervention participants were more than twice as likely to graduate** than similar, non-participating students.

—Jinny Case

"The Graduation Initiative guided me down the path towards graduating from UTSA. They were like a mentor that provided me with the information I needed to be successful. I am very appreciative to all of this team for being so helpful towards my goal!"

– Adriana Nelly Molina, Summer 2010



Legislative preview

The 82nd Texas Legislature will convene in Austin on January 11, 2011. Lawmakers have 140 days to take up a myriad of issues, many of which will impact institutions of higher education. Two major factors are expected to cast a shadow over every action taken by State Senators and Representatives: a projected \$21 billion budget shortfall and redistricting. \$21 billion is the greatest deficiency in Texas history. The Texas Constitution requires a balanced budget, which means tough cuts will have to be made—education will not be left out of these cuts. Following the 2010 Census, Texas is expected to receive up to 4 additional seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Our state legislators are responsible for determining how to re-draw those boundaries. The debate will be time consuming, heated, and highly partisan.

In sum, there will be less money, more accountability, and more public scrutiny. Watch future newsletters from the Graduation Initiative for more updates and a full legislative wrap-up when the session ends in June. — Kristi Meyer

Issues to watch:

- Cost savings for students & institutions
- Formula funding changes
- Tuition revenue bonds
- Financial aid & the Texas Grant
- Tuition de/re-regulation
- Developmental issues
- Closing the Gaps
- Transfer issues
- Online education

Rowdy Cents turns one year old

Rowdy Cents-Money and Time Matters online financial literacy program celebrated its one-year birthday this past May. Located on the UTSA website domain, the money matters site is more than a static web page. There are 16 web pages featuring financial literacy basics, interactive tools, links, and resources specific to and for college students to help them be better money managers.

While personal finance basics of budgeting, tracking expenses, saving, and avoiding debt are the cornerstones of any personal finance online program, Rowdy Cents goes further to inform college students about how to make good financial decisions, why and how to graduate in four years, money and time wasters related to policies (i.e., missing drop dates, failing classes, being academically dismissed), and about student loan debt, an increasing concern across the nation.

Monthly features are posted on the left-side menu bar and are also marketed by campus digital signage, bulletin board fliers, and mass e-mail messages to students. New features are added frequently, such as an interactive budget. Recently, the inaugural bluebird was replaced with the money globe to emphasize that Rowdy Cents is a world of money sense.

The site's pages have been visited over 22,000 times by over 4600 visitors, many of whom (51%) are returning visitors. While it's

exciting to see the increase in site usage, the program administrator, Linda Chalmers, was recently encouraged about its far-reaching effect. A personal finance counselor located at a Washington-state air force base contacted the GI about the site. Linda asked "how in the world did you know about the site." She replied, "Recently an airman came to our base and he was from San Antonio. Immediately he told us about the web site and we want to model one after it."

— Linda Chalmers



Wherever you are in your world of money sense, be sure to visit Rowdy Cents at www.utsa.edu/moneymatters.

Rowdy Cents

◆

Budget

Track Expenses

Save Money

Avoid Debt

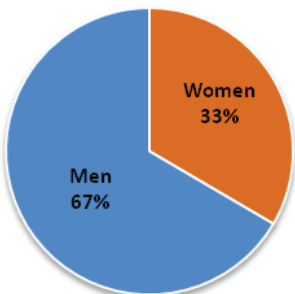
Women veterans on campus

This fall more than 1,800 veterans received either federal GI Bill benefits or state veteran benefits to enroll at UTSA. At UTSA, among student veterans, men outnumber women approximately 2:1. The much larger number of men is not surprising. Among all veterans, men outnumber women at an even greater rate. Women represent approximately 8% of all veterans in the US. However, women are much more likely than men to use their VA educational benefits. Of the 1,643 students receiving federal benefits, 571 are women. — Kristi Meyer

Sources: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (NCVAS) University of Texas at San Antonio, Office of the Registrar.

Did you know...
The Texas State Auditor's office has certified that UTSA has the largest number of student veterans of any 4 year public in Texas .

Undergraduate student veterans at UTSA by gender





“These maps will enable us to talk the same language with business students of all classifications. They will give the freshman advisors a way to help pre-business students stay on track or determine if business is really for them,” said April Lawver, COB Advising Center Director of Advising. “We are looking forward to having a more concrete way to emphasize timely progression through our program.”

See sample of partial milestone map on next page

Kudos Corner: COB adds degree milestones

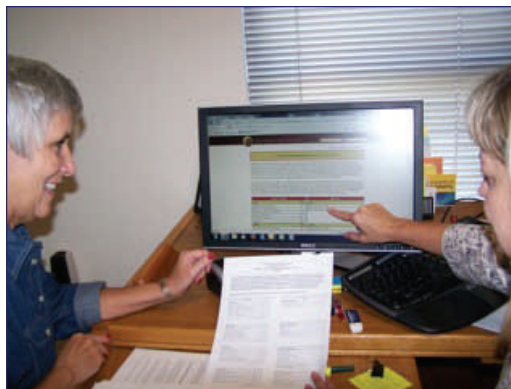



Progress toward graduation seems to come as a mystery to some students. But it will soon be de-mystified for College of Business (COB) majors. The academic advising center will roll out later this fall a tool to show students the courses AND the special requirements necessary for timely progress to complete a business major. This sounds like a degree plan but it's quite a bit more.

A new semester by semester plan for each of the 17 COB major areas of

study will illustrate not only the recommended sequencing of courses but also what students should accomplish as “milestones” each semester. April Lawver, Director of the COB Advising Center, commented, “I was really excited to see these academic maps from Florida State University. I felt they could serve a great purpose here with our students.” She has delegated the responsibility of formatting, editing, and reviewing the new business milestone maps to Lisa Talcott, Academic Advisor II.

Lisa has drafted the maps using the COB semester by semester plans printed in the 2010-2012 undergraduate catalog. Progress milestones are added to each semester and reviewed by all COB advisors for accuracy. Final review and approval comes from the Associate Dean, Dr. Lisa Montoya. Ultimately, these new milestone maps will replace the other plans for the 2012-2014 undergraduate catalog.



Lisa Talcott and April Lawver review the FSU milestones

Dr. Montoya received the idea for the degree milestone maps last spring from the GI's Linda Chalmers, Sr. Retention

& Graduation Analyst. She thought it would work for COB and shared them with April. It is a goal of the Graduation Initiative to be on the lookout for practices at other institutions that may be replicable and useful at UTSA and then to pass along these ideas to the colleges. Featured in a spring webinar that Linda attended on “Hardwiring Student Success” by the University Leadership Council's Education Advisory Board, the FSU maps are accessible at <http://www.academic-guide.fsu.edu/Maps/Mapaccounting.html>.

—Linda Chalmers

Welcome Back successfully graduates former stop outs

Welcome Back encourages students who left UTSA in good academic standing and have more than 100 credit hours earned, but no degree, to return to campus to earn their undergraduate degree. The program takes a case management approach and provides advocacy, limited financial support, and information to its participants. The first Welcome Back cohort began in spring 2010 and several have since graduated with their long desired degrees. — Linda Chalmers

See graph detailing participant status on next page

Kudos Corner: COB adds degree milestones

The University of Texas-San Antonio

Course Sequence Guide

Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Accounting 2010-2012

Kudos COB!
Continued from page 4

This course sequence guide is designed to assist students in completing their UTSA undergraduate business degree requirements. This is a tentative guide. Milestones are courses and special requirements necessary for timely progress to complete a major. If a milestone is not achieved it may result in delayed graduation or a required major change.

Students may choose to take courses during Summer terms to reduce course loads during long semesters.

Sample Schedule	
First Semester	Hrs
HIS (option 1043, 1053, 2053)	3
*MAT 1033 Algebra with Calculus for Business	3
Social and Behavioral Sciences (see catalog for list)	3
The Arts (see catalog for list)	3
WRC 1013 Freshman Composition	3
Total Hours	15

Second Semester	
	Hrs
COM 1053 Business & Professional Speech	3
HIS (other option 1043, 1053, 2053)	3
IS 1403 Business Info Systems Fluency	3
Science -Level I (see catalog for list)	3
WRC 1023 Discourse across the Disciplines	3
Total Hours	15

Third Semester	
	Hrs
ACC 2013 Principles of Accounting I	3
ECO 2013 Macroeconomics	3
Literature (see catalog for list)	3
POL 1013 Introduction to American Politics	3
MS 1023 Business Statistic/Comp Applications I	3
Total Hours	15

Fourth Semester	
	Hrs
ACC 2033 Principles of Accounting II	3
ECO 2023 Microeconomics	3
MS 3043 Business Statistics/Comp Applications II	3
POL 1133 or 1213	3
Science-Level II (see catalog for list)	3
Total Hours	15

Milestones	
First Semester Milestones	
UTSA GPA - above 2.0	
Complete Math 1033 "C" or better	

Second Semester Milestones	
UTSA GPA - above 2.0	
COB GPA - above 2.0	
Complete COM 1053	
Complete IS 1403 "C" or better	
Have your resume reviewed by a COB Career Counselor	

Third Semester Milestones	
UTSA GPA - above 2.0	
COB GPA - above 2.2	
Complete ACC 2013 "C" or better	
Complete ECO 2013	
Complete MS 1023 "C" or better	
Schedule and attend 45-hour advising appointment	
Declare Business Major	

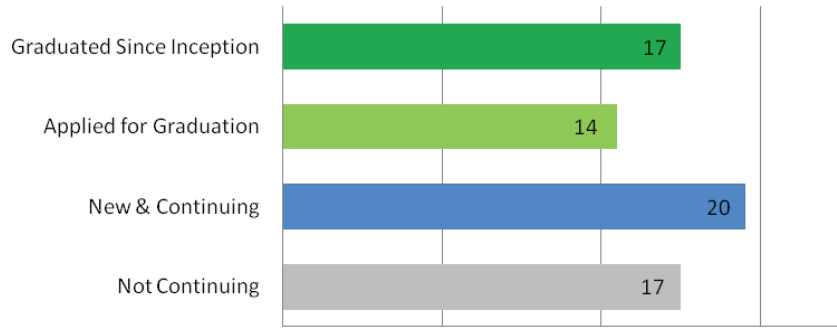
Fourth Semester Milestones	
UTSA GPA - above 2.0	
COB GPA - above 2.0	
Complete ACC 2033 "C" or better	
Prepare for and take PACE Exam before registration begins	
Attend an internship workshop	

The actual milestone map is two full pages and contains all milestones and courses required for graduation.



Welcome Back
continued from page 4

Welcome Back Participant Status Spring 2010 to Fall 2010



Participants = 68; Each status is % of all participants.

00% 10.00% 20.00% 30.00%

Scale at 30% instead of 100% because all categories together equal 100%

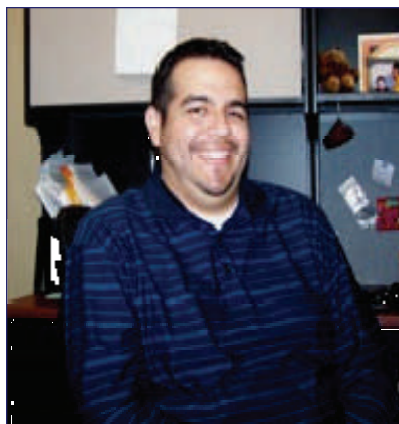
GI Good Guy

As we work with students to help them graduate, we occasionally have the pleasure of discovering someone who goes the extra mile for students, patiently, cheerfully and often. Some of these folks work behind the scenes and pull out the stops to help. For many years, we have called these individuals “Good Guys” forming a network of support and caring for all of our students. Many are unsung heroes and we’d like to change that. So, we are initiating a GI Good Guy Award to honor these exceptional individuals who make this a better place for everyone who comes into contact with them. (Oh, some of our Good Guys are Gals; hope you will allow us the linguistic license!) — Dr. Patti Glenn



The GI Good Guy Award for fall, 2010 goes to...

When you first meet Gabriel Mendiola, Assistant Director of Financial Aid/IT Operations, you might think he’s a student at UTSA. With a youthful look and a relaxed presence, Gabriel has been an employee at UTSA since 2006. His current position as Assistant Director has afforded him many opportunities to help UTSA students and, most particularly, the staff of the Graduation Initiative (GI).



*Gabriel Mendiola
Assistant Director of Financial Aid/IT Operations
GI Good Guy*

Gabriel Mendiola was honored and humbled with this distinction. “It’s so nice of you guys to do this. I never imagined you would honor me this way,” commented Gabe.

A 2003 alumnus of UTSA with a BA in Political Science, Gabriel had every intention of becoming a lawyer. But a stint as the President of the Pre-Law Society as a student convinced him otherwise. The stress of mock trials was an eye-opener, so he decided to take a different path upon graduation. Subsequently, he

worked in several positions in the San Antonio area writing grants, and then in admissions and financial aid.

In 2006 his wife, Rosie, who was working at UTSA and is currently on staff in the compliance section of financial aid, suggested he apply for a position in the recently-formed Call Center. “I liked customer service. Even in grant-writing you have customers and potential clients, and I had worked with many student customers over the years, so it seemed to be a natural transition.” He spent about two years in the Call Center and then applied for and was promoted to the Assistant Director position that he now holds.

When asked about his philosophy of working with students and parents Gabriel replied, “It’s important to understand communication styles of students and of parents because they are different. You must treat every “story” as if this were the first time you’ve heard it, otherwise you stereotype them into “buckets” and it hampers your ability to listen and help.”

On a personal note, Gabriel and Rosie have a son, Josh, who is 5 years old and another son, Jacob, expected in December. His father was a career Marine and Gabe grew up in Hawaii and Okinawa before his father retired to San Antonio. He enjoys playing softball with his 5 brothers and 1 sister, a myriad of aunts, uncles and cousins, and will certainly engage his sons in the sport, too.

Thanks, Gabriel, for being such a “good guy” in our UTSA world! —Linda Chalmers

