

Fifty-three

Volume 1, Issue 1

April 2008

Inside this issue:

Welcome	1
Graduation Rates	1
Late Intervention	2
Student Financial Habits	2

Special points of interest:

- **Currently, transfer and CAP students do not count in UTSA's graduation rate reported to the THECB**
- **UTSA's 2010 6-year graduation rate goal is 40%¹**
- **Almost 50% of UTSA students come from Bexar County²**
- **In 2005, 8.2% of students who began at UTSA in 1999 had transferred to and graduated from another Texas institution³**
- **UTSA freshmen score higher than the national comparative rate on the CLA Analytic Writing assessment⁴**

¹The University of Texas at San Antonio Compact with the University of Texas System FY 2007 through FY 2008 (page 5)
²The University of Texas at San Antonio Fact Book for Fall 2007 (page 18)
³The University of Texas System Board of Regents Accountability and Performance Report, 2006-2007 (page 38)
⁴The University of Texas System Board of Regents Accountability and Performance Report, 2006-2007 (page 56)

Welcome to the First Edition of *Fifty-three*

You're reading the first edition of the UTSA Graduation Initiative's newsletter, *Fifty-three*. We invite you to spend a few moments learning a bit more about what we do and items relating to undergraduate persistence and success.

Headed by Dr. Patricia Glenn, Associate Dean for Retention and Graduation, and under the auspices of Dr. Lawrence Williams, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Graduation Initiative is an UTSA institutional resource begun in 2007 and dedicated to identifying ways to improve undergraduate graduation rates. The Graduation Initiative works closely with stakeholders within the colleges and throughout the university. Additionally, the Graduation Initiative keeps current with developing trends and innovations related to retention and graduation across the country. The Graduation Initiative's ultimate goal lies in

helping UTSA move from its 2006 six-year graduation rate of 28.2% to its 2015 target of 53% - hence the title *Fifty-three*.

Our intent is to produce this newsletter on a regular basis. Initially, we have distributed to those individuals interested in receiving updates from us and others whom we thought might be interested. If you do not wish to receive information of this type, please contact us and let us know. We'll remove you from our distribution list. Also, if you know of someone who may be interested in receiving this, let us know or have them contact us.

Student success is our success!

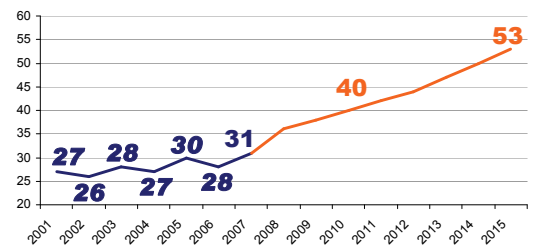
Patricia Glenn & Clint Rodenfels,
 UTSA Graduation Initiative
 graduation.initiative@utsa.edu
 (210) 458-4687

UTSA Undergraduate Graduation Rates

When we talk about "graduation rates" we're primarily focusing on the rate reported to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. In calculating this rate, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) uses a cohort of students who enter the institution as full-time students during the fall semester, who have not previously attended another college, and intend to pursue a degree offered by UTSA. Omitted from this calculation are students entering in spring, part-time, transfer, and CAP students.

As reported by the OIR, UTSA's 2007 six-year graduation rate (for freshmen entering the

institution in the 2001 fall semester) was 31.3%. President Ricardo Romo has committed to raising UTSA's six-year graduation rate to 40% by 2010 and 53% by 2015.



UTSA Past & Projected Graduation Rates

Late Intervention—Helping Students Reach their Goal

Cohort Year	GIA Recipients
2001	71
2002	135
2003	166

Students from different beginning freshman cohorts receiving the Graduation Incentive Award (GIA)

Late Intervention is an outreach program of the Graduation Initiative focusing on undergraduate students from the entering freshmen cohort of five-years earlier. Graduation Initiative team members contact these students, seeking to inform, encourage, and motivate them towards completing their undergraduate degree within six-years. Team members are not academic advisors. Instead, they are generalists with knowledge of the various university programs and service offerings.

Eligible students are invited to participate in the Late Intervention program and offered the Graduation Incentive Award (GIA) as a motivation to focus less on work and more on their academic studies. We offer up to \$4,000 to

students who meet specific enrollment and academic requirements. To qualify, students must be members of the entering freshmen cohort of five-years prior, maintain a minimum 2.0 UTSA GPA, receive passing grades in their classes, and have an identified plan for achieving their graduation goal within six-years. Funds are allocated across the student’s remaining semesters. At the end of each semester, we review the student’s progress for continued eligibility in the program.

Feedback from students participating in the Late Intervention program has been quite positive. Beyond just providing money, we are able to work with students individually and direct them to appropriate resources.

“Freshmen are better at managing credit than seniors”

Student Financial Behaviors and Academic Success

Student financial habits represent one of the often overlooked factors impacting their success in higher-education. A recent study by the *Take Charge America Institute for Consumer Financial Education and Research* at the University of Arizona looked at the financial habits of undergraduates and how those “...habits affect students’ quality of life, including financial satisfaction, physical and mental health, academic satisfaction and performance, and life satisfaction in general.”

Not surprisingly, the study found that better financial habits lead to a better quality of life for students. Some of the findings though were less intuitive and provided insight into the financial behaviors of undergraduates. A selection of findings from the report:

- Students manage cash better than credit
- Freshmen are better at managing credit than seniors

- Riskier attitudes towards credit are more likely in students with any of the following attributes: first generation, financially independent, high personal income, part-time enrollment, live off-campus
- Juniors and seniors, financial aid recipients, off-campus residents, and non-business students tend to have poor savings habits

Being informed about how undergraduate students may struggle with financial management concepts and which students may demonstrate different positive or negative financial habits helps us understand the challenges facing our students as they progress through their education. You can view the study’s findings in the report, “Academic Success and Well-being of College Students: Financial Behaviors Matter” available from: <http://cals.arizona.edu/fcs/tcai/research/pilotreport.pdf>