

What Students Say

Some of the comments we've received from students participating in our programs:

"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 in this team for being so helpful towards my goal!

—Adriana Nelly Molina

"This comes at a critical time in my college career, seeing that as of a month ago I wasn't sure how I was going to pay for the rest of school. I appreciate your confidence and willingness to contribute to my future education. Your work, efforts and the program will benefit me and my future. I am working towards a degree in Human Resource Management and this has given me a boost of confidence that I will get to finish my degree and become a successful individual in our striving society."

—Marie Martinez

"Thank you for helping me finish school in a timely manner. I don't know what I would have done if it weren't for the Graduation Initiative team. Keep up all the support you all give students helping them graduate on time. Thank you again."

—Coleinette Smith

"To be honest, I was struck with relief. Before I received information on this, I was worried sick about paying tuition for my final year at UTSA. Had it not been for this, there could have been a good chance that I would not have finished this year or finished at UTSA."

—Ivan Avila

Mission

The UTSA Graduation Initiative, through research, information sharing, and direct student programs, seeks to increase the university's graduation rate and the number of students earning an undergraduate degree.

History

The Graduation Initiative resulted from discussions in 2006 between Patricia Glenn, Associate Dean for Retention and Graduation and then Provost, Rosalie Ambrosino, concerning the success of students at UTSA. They realized the need to focus on students who persist at UTSA but do not achieve a timely graduation.

With a team of volunteers, Glenn developed the foundations of the Graduation Initiative and its signature program, the Late Intervention. The success of this pilot led to establishing the Graduation Initiative as a component within Academic Affairs in the office of Undergraduate Studies.

Officially launched in June 2007 with four Retention and Graduation Analysts and an Associate Director, the Graduation Initiative has focused on gaining a better understanding of our students' environment, sharing that information, and working collaboratively with faculty, staff, and students to overcome barriers to success.

Graduation Initiative

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A Diploma in Your Future!



The UTSA Graduation Initiative

In seeking to increase UTSA's undergraduate graduation rate and the number of students earning an degree, the Graduation Initiative focuses on:

- Research
- Information Sharing
- Direct Student Programs

Research

The Graduation Initiative was founded upon solid research in retention and graduation of students in higher education. Team members are well versed in current retention practices as well as having a strong grounding in student persistence programming.

Beyond theoretical knowledge, our team members have experience in conducting, analyzing, and presenting both qualitative and quantitative research. They employ these skills in gathering and analyzing information about the affordances and barriers to student success at UTSA.

This emphasis on research focuses inward as well as outward. All aspects of the Graduation Initiative are evaluated and assessed on a regular basis. Doing so ensures effective operations and helps to identify areas for future improvement.

Information Sharing

As important as research is in defining how and what we do, we realize the equal import of sharing the results of that research with the university community. We seek to keep

administration, staff, and faculty informed on matters of importance in retention and graduation.

The Graduation Initiative team prepares and distributes reports, analyses, newsletters, profiles, policy briefs, and articles on a variety of topics associated with student success. We also provide presentations on graduation statistics as well as what can be done to further help students succeed.

As a small team, we understand the importance and value of collaborating with other university offices. With analysts focused on seven of the academic colleges, we work closely with leaders within each college helping implement changes to reduce barriers and enhance affordances to graduation.



Direct Student Programs

We put our research to work, helping students directly through a variety of programs.

Late Intervention

We reach out to students who have exceeded their four-year time-to-degree, to help them overcome barriers and graduate within five- or six-years. Analysts work one-on-one with these students, who also receive a financial

grant, the Graduation Incentive Award. In 2009, the Late Intervention program was recognized with the *Star Award* from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for efforts to support state education goals.

Student Money & Time Matters

In order to avoid working so many hours outside the university or alternatively accumulating a great deal of debt from loans, students must carefully balance their time and money resources. The Student Money & Time Matters program helps students to achieve this balance through a variety of online resources focusing on budgeting, setting priorities, avoiding debt, and managing credit (www.utsa.edu/moneymatters).

Welcome Back

Students sometimes leave UTSA without earning their undergraduate degree. The Welcome Back program seeks out those students close to achieving their degree and invites them to return. Students are assisted through a variety of support services and offered various incentives, including a financial grant, to complete the remaining classes for their degrees.

