



The University of Texas at San Antonio

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
Student Ombudsperson's 2009-2010 Annual Report

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Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

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I. Introduction

The 2009-2010 annual report includes the following:

- a description of the role of this position,
- promotion efforts,
- a comparison of the individuals served including areas of concern for 2009-2010 and 2008-2009, and
- recommendations for change and/or improvement.

II. Role of the Student Ombudsperson

The primary role of the Student Ombudsperson is to assist students who are encountering challenges within the campus community by listening to concerns, providing and clarifying information, identifying and evaluating options, acting as a facilitator or mediator, serving as a referral agent, and making recommendations for change to enhance the mission of the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA).

The Student Ombudsperson offers confidential services to all students in a welcoming and safe environment and communicates with various representatives and offices to respond to and help resolve concerns in a timely manner. Parents and other individuals are also assisted within Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines in an effort to possibly remedy a particular situation. The Student Ombudsperson reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) and can be reached by appointment, email, fax, phone, and mail. Walk-ins are also welcome.

III. Promotion

The Student Ombudsperson position continued to be publicized on a welcome slide show at freshman orientation programs and through co-presentations with the university's Executive Director of Advising. The Student Ombudsperson web page - <http://www.utsa.edu/students/ombudsperson/> and online Information Bulletin also continued to serve as resources for information about this position.

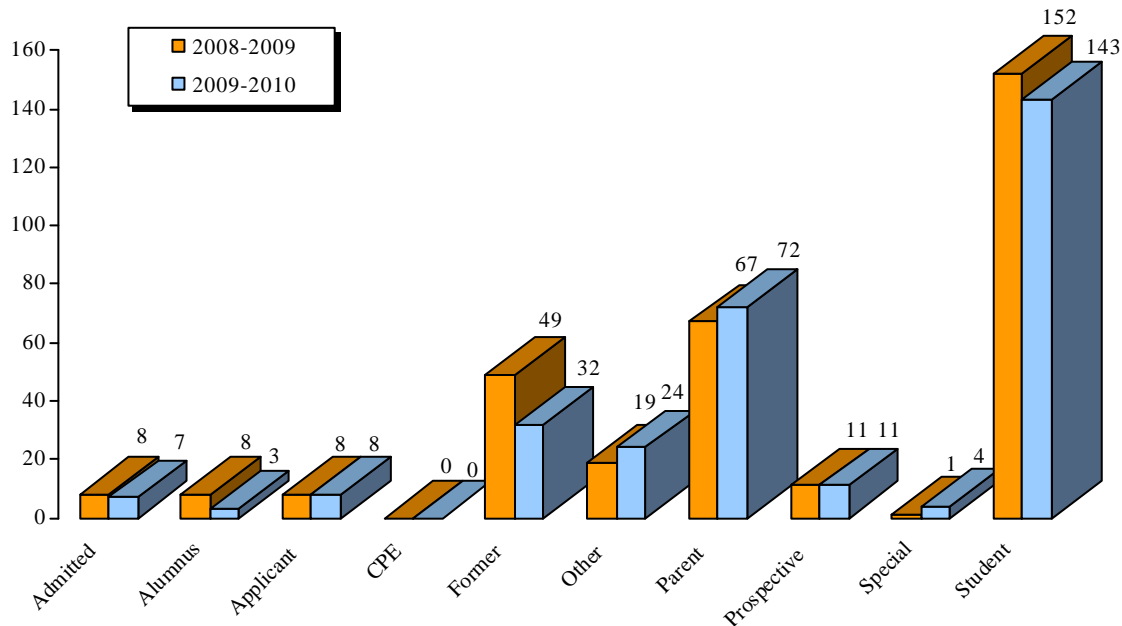
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IV. Statistics

Person Type

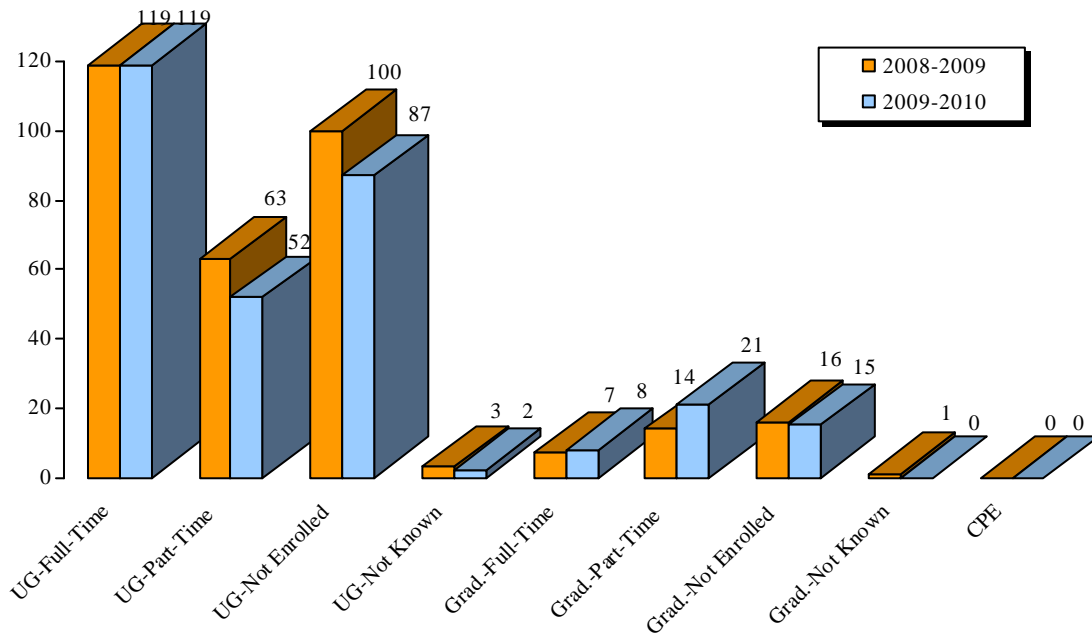


A total of 304 individuals were assisted by the Student Ombudsperson in 2009-2010 versus 323 in 2008-2009 which represents a difference of 19 contacts. The individuals assisted were as follows:

- Admitted Accepted to the University.
- Alumnus Graduated from the University.
- Applicant Applied to the University.
- CPE Enrolled in classes through the Center for Professional Excellence.
- Former Previously attended the University (not currently enrolled).
- Other Third party inquiry (e.g. aunt, uncle, counselor, etc.).
- Parent Inquiry by mother, father, step parent, or legal guardian.
- Prospective Interested in applying to/attending the University.
- Special Non-degree seeking.
- Student Currently enrolled at the University.

The majority of those assisted continued to be currently enrolled students (47% for both years), parents (24% in 2009-2010 versus 21% in 2008-2009), and former students (11% in 2009-2010 versus 15% in 2008-2009).

Enrollment Status



* UG = undergraduate students and Grad. = graduate students

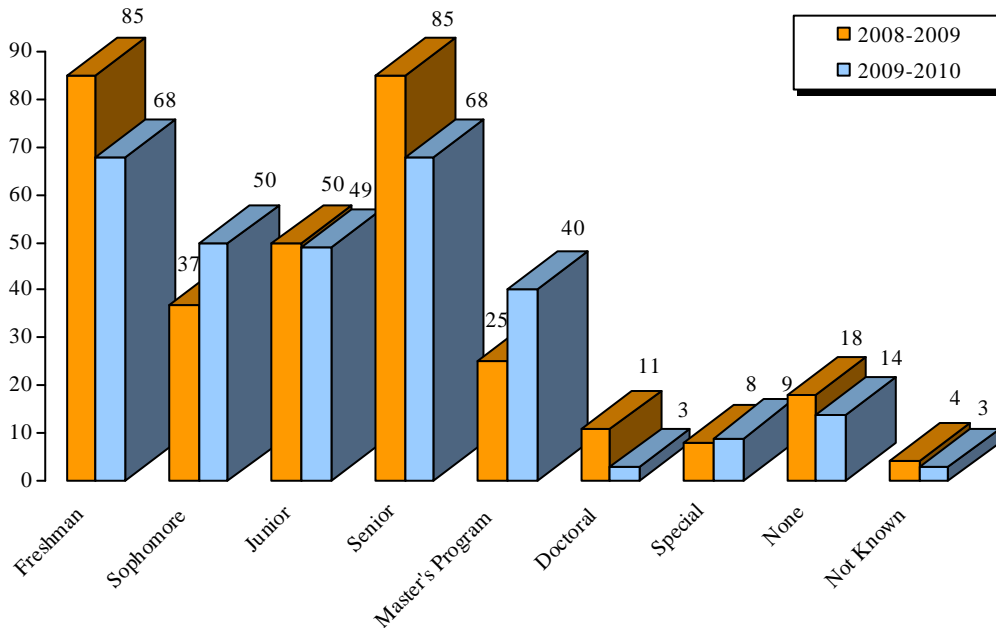
Undergraduates constituted a majority of the contacts in 2009-2010 (86%) and 2008-2009 (88%). Most continued to be categorized as full-time, not enrolled, and part-time. Graduate students made up 14% of the contacts in 2009-2010 and 12% of the contacts in 2008-2009.

Enrollment statuses included the following:

- Undergraduate Full-Time Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, or Special student enrolled at least 12 semester credit hours.
- Undergraduate Part-Time Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, or Special student enrolled less than full-time.
- Undergraduate Not Enrolled Not currently enrolled.
- Undergraduate Not Known Enrollment status not confirmed.
- Graduate Full-Time Doctoral, Master's degree, or Special student enrolled at least 9 semester credit hours.
- Graduate Part-Time Doctoral, Master's degree, or Special student enrolled less than full-time.
- Graduate Not Enrolled Not currently enrolled.
- Graduate Not Known Enrollment status not confirmed.
- CPE Center for Professional Excellence student.

Note: If a parent or other (e.g. aunt, uncle, etc.) were assisted, enrollment of the student was checked.

Classification



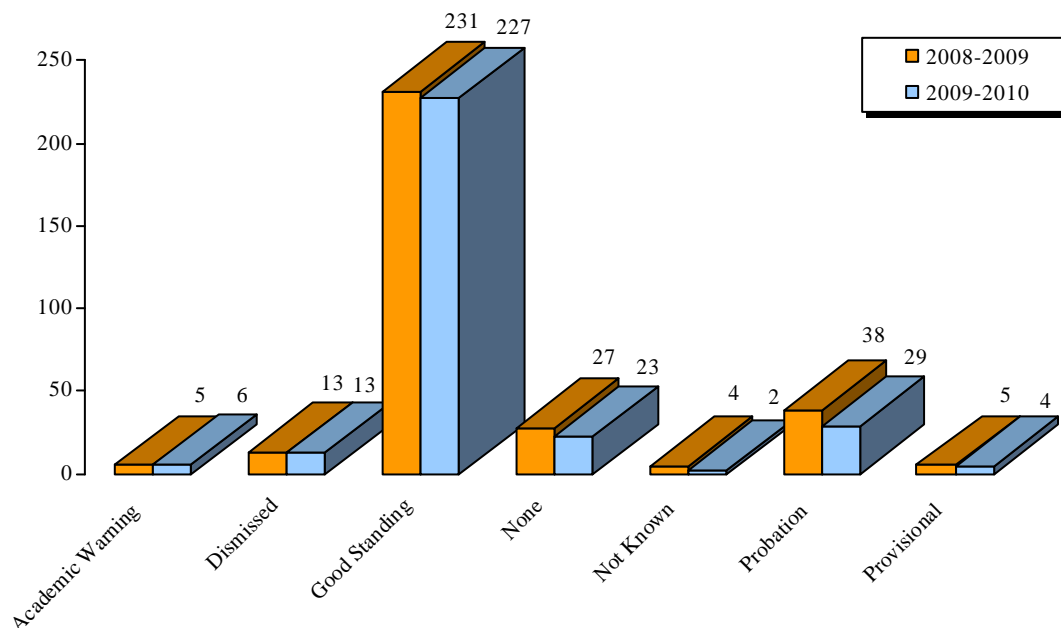
In 2009-2010, the bulk of the undergraduate contacts continued to be comprised of the same classifications as in 2008-2009. These classifications included seniors (22% in 2009-2010 and 26% in 2008-2009), freshmen (22% in 2009-2010 and 26% in 2008-2009), sophomores (16% in 2009-2010 and 11% in 2008-2009) and juniors (16% in 2009-2010 and 15% in 2008-2009). Students enrolled in a master’s degree program consisted of 13% of the classifications for 2009-2010 and 8% for 2008-2009.

Classifications included:

- Freshman 0–29 semester credit hours earned.
- Sophomore 30-59 semester credit hours earned.
- Junior 60-89 semester credit hours earned.
- Senior 90+ semester credit hours earned.
- Master’s Program Enrolled as a graduate student in a master’s degree program.
- Doctoral Enrolled as a graduate student in a doctoral degree program.
- Special Non-degree seeking at the undergraduate or graduate level.
- None Classification not available (e.g. prospective student, new admit, etc.).
- Not Known Classification not confirmed.

Note: If a parent or other (e.g. aunt, uncle, etc.) were assisted, classification of the student was checked.

Academic Status



Students who received assistance in 2009-2010 (75%) and 2008-2009 (72%) were predominantly in good standing with the university. Those experiencing academic difficulties encompassed 17% of the population in 2009-2010 and 19% in 2008-2009. The academic statuses consisted of:

- **Academic Warning** First-time undergraduate, admitted in good standing, who earned between a 1.00 and 1.99 semester grade point average during his/her first semester at UTSA.
- **Dismissed** Undergraduate on probation who earned below a 2.00 semester grade point average or a graduate who earned a grade point average of less than a 2.00 in any term, earned a grade of “F” in any course, or who was on probation and would be placed on probation again under the probation provisions listed below for graduate students.
- **Good Standing** Undergraduate who maintained at least a 2.00 or higher UTSA grade point average or a graduate who maintained at least a 3.00 or higher UTSA grade point average who did not fall into any of the categories which would cause a graduate student to be placed on probation or dismissal.
- **None** Academic status not available (e.g. prospective student, new admit, etc.).
- **Not Known** Academic status not confirmed.

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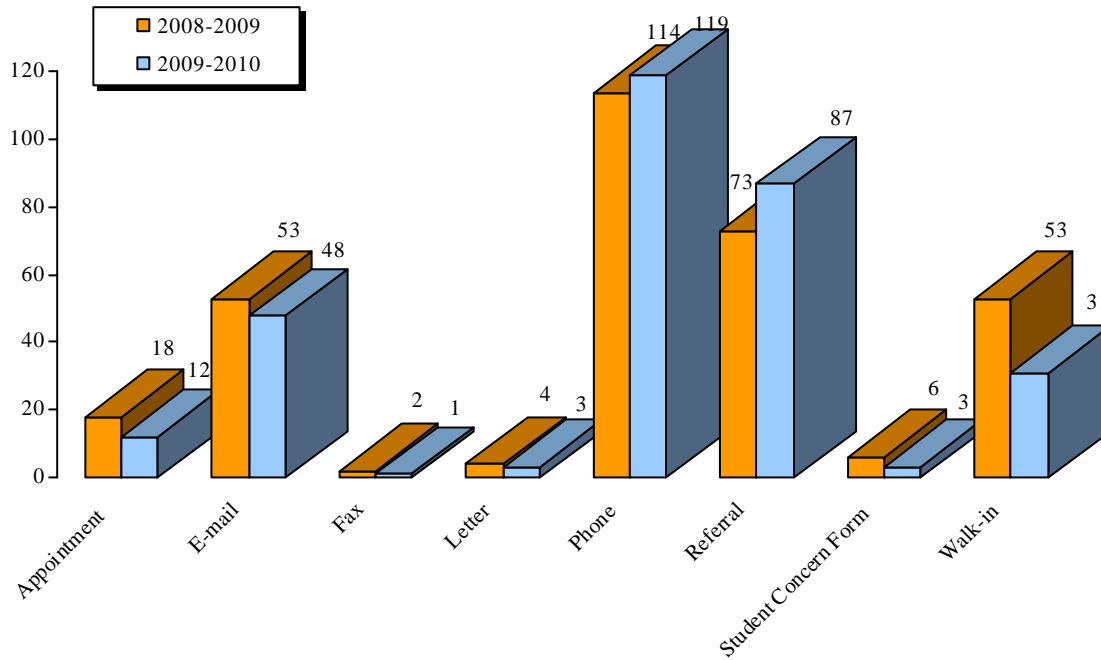
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- Probation Undergraduate in good standing whose overall UTSA grade point average fell below a 2.00 or a graduate who failed to achieve a grade point average of 3.00 in any term at UTSA, or who earned a grade of “D” in any course in a term, also includes undergraduates and graduates admitted on probation and those who have been reinstated following dismissal.
- Provisional Undergraduate admitted as provisional due to deficiencies in entrance scores or high school records.

Note: If a parent or other (e.g. aunt, uncle, etc.) were assisted, academic status of the student was checked.

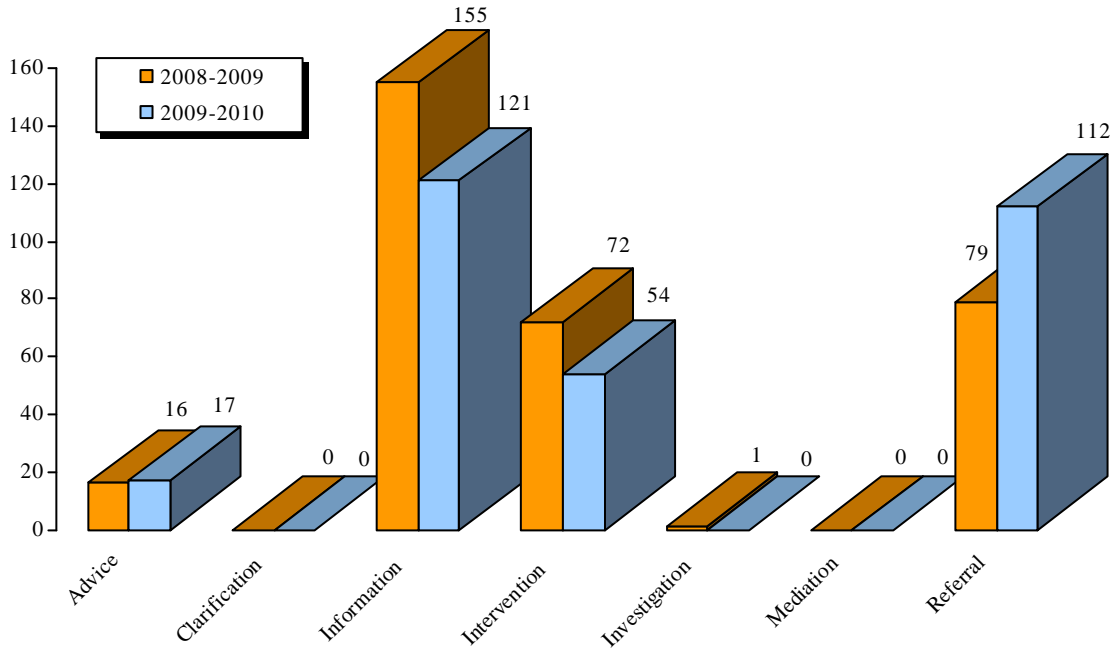
Contact Type



*Student Concern Form was created in 2006-2007

Phone (39% for 2009-2010 and 35% for 2008-2009) and referrals (29% for 2009-2010 and 23% for 2008-2009) were primarily used to communicate concerns for both years. Other methods that were utilized frequently included email (16% for 2009-2010 and 2008-2009) and walk-ins (10% for 2009-2010 and 16% for 2008-2009).

Action Taken



In 2009-2010, the actions used most often to aid individuals seeking assistance from the Student Ombudsperson included providing information (40%), referrals (37%) and intervention (18%). These same actions, providing information (48%), referrals (24%) and intervention (22%), were also carried out most often in 2008-2009.

Note: Some actions included multiple actions. The primary action taken is listed above.

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V. Areas of Concern

Area of Concern	Total 08-09	Total 09-10	Area of Concern	Total 08-09	Total 09-10
Accessibility	7	1	Fiscal Services	9	29
Admissions - Undergraduate	33	28	Grade Grievance	23	15
Admissions - Graduate	5	7	Grade Point Average	1	0
Advising – Undergraduate	12	22	Grades	3	1
Advising - Graduate	1	0	Graduation	4	1
ASAP	0	0	Grant	1	0
Bookstore	2	0	Health Services	3	1
CAP Program	0	1	International Programs	1	0
Card Office	0	0	Internship	0	1
Challenge Exam	0	0	Library	0	0
Change of Grade	0	4	Military Orders	0	0
Classification Change	0	1	myUTSA email	1	0
CLEP	0	0	Off-Campus Housing	1	2
Computer Lab	1	0	On-Campus Housing	15	17
Core Curriculum	0	0	Other	60	56
Course – Attendance	2	0	Paisano	0	0
Course – Drop	10	2	Parking	15	14
Course – Grading Process	5	9	Registration	4	5
Course – Instruction	5	8	Reinstatement	7	2
Course – Make-up Exam	1	1	Repeat Policy	0	0
Course – Missed Quiz	0	1	Residency	1	3
Course – Schedule	17	7	Safety	3	6
Course load Reduction	2	1	Scholarship	2	1
CPE	0	0	Student Judicial Affairs	5	2
Dance Team	0	0	Student Organization	0	0
Diploma	1	1	Study Days	0	0
Disability Services	2	2	Testing Services	0	1
Dissertation	0	0	Transcript Request	4	1
Enrollment Verification	0	0	Texas Success Initiative	1	0
ExCET/TEExES	0	0	Tuition	0	0
FCSA Evaluation	0	0	University of Texas System Online Consortium*	0	0
Fees	1	3	University Police	2	2
FERPA	0	0	Veteran Affairs	2	3
Field Placement	0	0	Visa	1	0
Final Exams	5	1	WebCT	0	0
Financial Aid	22	25	Withdrawal	20	16
			Grand totals	323	304

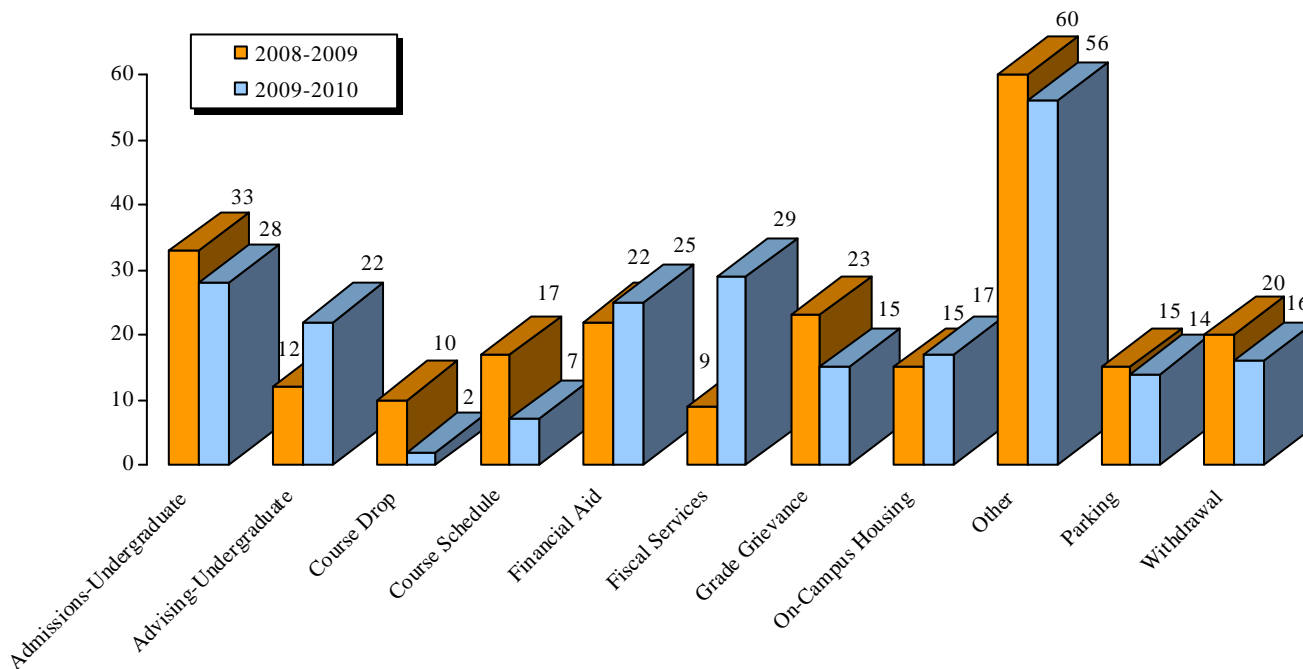
*Formerly - The University of Texas System Telecampus

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In 2009-2010, the areas of concern that were brought forward for assistance continued to apply to all components (academic, business, and student affairs) of the university. Similar areas of concern were expressed most frequently during both years. Concerns about course drops, course schedules and grade grievances decreased the most from one year to the next while the category of fiscal services showed the greatest increase.



The summary below provides details on the areas of concern that were communicated most frequently to the Student Ombudsperson.

Admissions – Undergraduate

- Questions about deferred admission, provisional admission and the Joint Undergraduate Matriculation Program (JUMP).
- Duplicate student identification number issue.
- Concerns about the evaluation of International Baccalaureate (IB) credit.
- Customer service concerns.
- Procedure for inactivating admission.
- Questions about the admissions process for various student types (e.g. freshmen, transfer, international, special and transient).*
- Status of incomplete files during peak periods; checking if credentials had been received.*
- Admission hold which prevented registration due to outstanding final high school transcript, dual credit transcript, etc.*
- Appeal process for those who missed the application deadline or were denied admission.*
- Questions about academic fresh start.*

* Similar for both years.

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Advising – Undergraduate

- Clearance from advisors in order to register for courses.
- Courses needed for graduation, major and/or minor were full/not offered.
- Seeking advising for early reinstatement.
- Requests for advising services from post-baccalaureate and pre-law students.
- Clarification about the six drop policy and the policy on repeating courses.
- Inquiries about changing majors, core complete, math placement, prerequisites, registration, Texas Success Initiative (TSI) and transfer courses.*
- Questions about pre-nursing coursework and Coordinated Admission Program (CAP) requirements.*
- Concerns about advising experience/information received.*
- Questions about appeal, grievance and petition processes, advising holds, returning after medical withdrawal, etc.*

Course Drop

- Process for appealing/adding classes after regular and late registration periods.
- Course inadvertently dropped by department or student.
- Questions about drop deadline dates, refund periods and how to drop courses online.
- Courses were cancelled, discontinued, dropped by departments or the prerequisite checking system.
- Inquiries about appeal process when automatic grade of W-Withdrawal deadline and/or 100% refund period has passed.
- Request to have course removed from schedule/record due to mitigating circumstances.*
- Requests for administrative and/or retroactive drops due to extenuating circumstances.*

Course Schedule

- Difficulty accessing the schedule of classes and/or registration system.*
- Questions about override permission for registration into various courses, independent study enrollment, etc.*
- Courses needed for degree program/graduation were full; lack of/limited course offerings.*
- Courses dropped due to non-payment, lack of prerequisites or teacher placement, portfolio assessment and academic dismissal.*
- Inquiries about registration dates, adding and dropping courses, switching sections and enrollment status.*

* Similar for both years.

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Financial Aid

- Questions about the processing and denial of the Educational Aide Exemption.
- Options for communicating with staff from enrollment services and financial aid; grievance process.
- Questions about processing College Access Loans (CAL), Federal Stafford Loans, Federal Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) and Texas B-On-Time Loans; reinstating and cancelling loans.
- Enrollment requirements for consortium agreement.
- Questions about book loans, part-time budgets, residency status, eligibility for financial aid under House Bill (HB) 1403, grants, scholarships, etc.
- Available funding options for international students.
- Understanding awarding, verification, unmet need and whether additional financial assistance was available.
- Options when aggregate loan limits had been reached.
- Availability of work-study jobs; how to find a work-study job.
- Inquiries about applying for and receiving financial aid during the summer.
- Other process issues which involved return of funds due to withdrawal, eligibility (e.g. degree seeking versus non-degree seeking), default on a student loan, etc.
- Questions about disbursement of financial aid funds when transitioning from undergraduate to graduate school, emergency loans, release of personal information via email, etc.*
- Inquiries about award cancellations and reinstating financial aid.*
- Eligibility requirements for the Hazelwood educational benefit.*
- Adjustments to financial aid awards due to audits, changes in enrollment status, graduation, etc.*
- Special circumstance and financial hardship requests.*
- Status of file and when funds would be disbursed.*
- Appeal process for those who did not meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards or missed the SAP deadline.*

Fiscal Services

- Questions about paying online, installment payment options, posting of payments, payment deadlines and refund periods.
- Courses dropped due to non-payment.
- Inquiries about how the university bills for the Texas Tomorrow Fund, refund eligibility due to military deployment, etc.
- Customer service concerns.
- Fiscal services hold on account; unable to register and/or request transcript.*

* Similar for both years.

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Fiscal Services continued

- Account sent to collections, balance owed from previous terms and scheduling payment arrangements.*
- Process for appealing to the University Bursar.*
- Status of appeals, refund checks and loan disbursements.*

Grade Grievance

- Attended grade grievance meeting with student, instructor and department chair.*
- Inquiries about where to find information on the grade grievance procedure.*
- Requests for a copy of the Student Academic and Grade Grievance form.*
- Questions about levels of appeal, status of grievance, time limit on submitting a grievance, change of grades, change of academic status, etc.*
- Concerns about grading subjectivity, retention of tests, communicating with instructors, classroom environment, structure and management.*

On-Campus Housing

- Room damaged by rainwater.
- Process used to assign rooms; status of housing assignment.
- Housing hold on account; unable to register.
- Maintenance and security issues.
- Requests to appeal charges assessed to account for damages to room.
- Understanding charges on bill and scheduling payment arrangements.*
- Questions about cancellation fees, contract renewals/releases, housing deposits, move out procedures, pet fines and subleasing options.*
- Concerns about lack of hot water, air conditioning, bug infestation and a broken gate.*
- Transfer requests due to living conditions and/or roommate issues.*

Other

- Loss of student identification card; protecting identity.
- Concern about temperature of classroom.
- Assistance with completion of forms for the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education fellows program.
- Practicum and field experience/placement concerns.
- Student employee issues and questions (e.g. disciplinary process, employment requirements, hiring practices, proof of employment, termination, etc.).
- Questions about the Access College and Excel (ACE) Program, the McNair Scholars Program and the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

* Similar for both years.

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Other continued

- Time conflict with exam and career fair.
- Concern about services received through the Writing Center.
- Referrals to United Way.
- Requests for information and/or services (e.g. applying funds to UTSA Card, child care services, proof of enrollment, surcharges, etc.).*
- Allegations of differential treatment, discrimination and harassment.*
- On-campus injuries (e.g. Kinesiology course, student athlete).*
- Inquiries about president's list, dean's list and honor roll designations.*
- Updates and/or corrections to student records (e.g. academic status, address, grade point averages, repeat indicators, etc.).*
- Inquiries about making arrangements to close out affairs (e.g. move belongings out of dorm room, return books, etc.) for deceased students and notifications about other extenuating circumstances.*
- Discussions about various processes, policies and resources for a better connection to and understanding of the university.*

Parking

- Concerns about the availability of on-campus parking during peak periods.
- Questions about ordering a permit online via ASAP (Automated Student Access Program).
- Process for filing a grievance.
- Inquiries about disabled student parking and shuttle services which had been discontinued.*
- Parking hold on account; unable to register and/or request transcript.*
- Questions about permit charges, parking citations, pay stations and immobilization boot on car.*
- Process for appeals including status of appeals.*

Withdrawal

- Questions about the withdrawal process including where to find the online withdrawal form.*
- Inquiries about medical and mental health withdrawals and reduced course load requests.*
- Status of requests and process for appeals.*
- Questions about refund periods and deadlines.*
- Retroactive withdrawal requests due to extenuating circumstances.*

Note: If there were multiple areas of concern, the primary area of concern was tracked.

* Similar for both years.

VI. Recommendations

As follow-up to the 2008-2009 report, the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) 5.9 Class Attendance Policies section was amended.

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Abbreviations

ACE	Access College and Excel
ASAP	Automated Student Access Program
CAL	College Access Loan
CAP	Coordinated Admissions Program
CLEP	College Level Examination Program
CPE	Center for Professional Excellence
ExCET/TEExES	Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas/Texas Examinations of Educator Standards
FCSA	Foreign Credentials Service of America
FERPA	Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
HB	House Bill
IB	International Baccalaureate
JUMP	Joint Undergraduate Matriculation Program
PLUS	Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students
QEP	Quality Enhancement Plan
SAP	Satisfactory Academic Progress
TSI	Texas Success Initiative
WebCT	World Wide Web Course Tools