



The University of Texas at San Antonio

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
Student Ombudsperson's 2012-2013 Annual Report

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Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

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I. Introduction

The 2012-2013 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 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, 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 continued to be utilized as a referral resource for the UTSA Listens Program (listening booth initiative) housed within the Division of Student Affairs. The Student Ombudsperson web page - <http://www.utsa.edu/students/ombudsperson/> and online Information Bulletin also served as resources for information about this position.

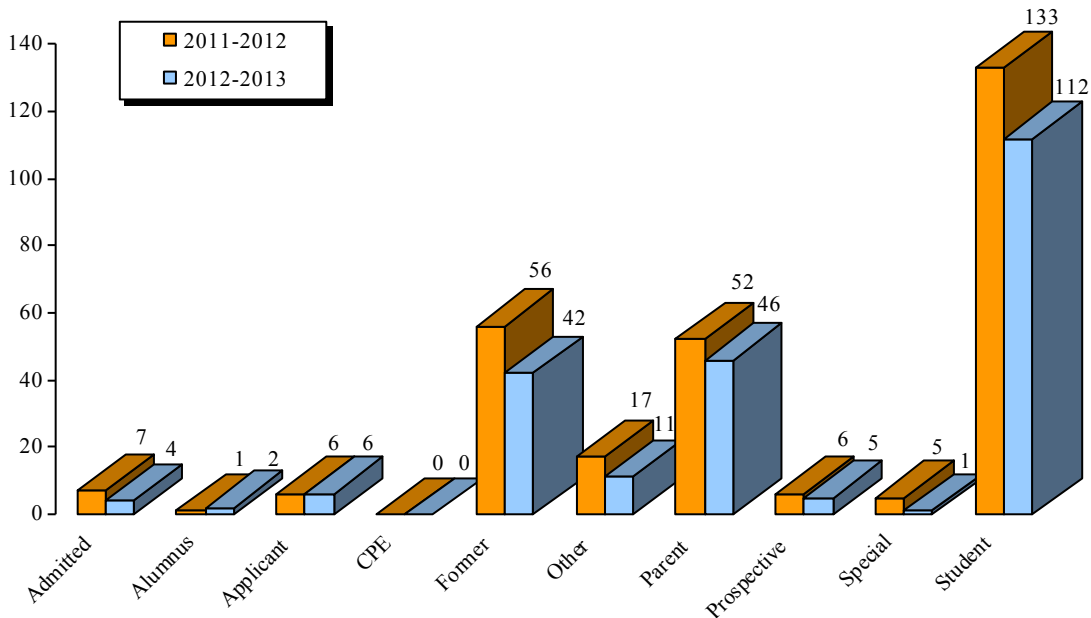
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IV. Statistics

Person Type

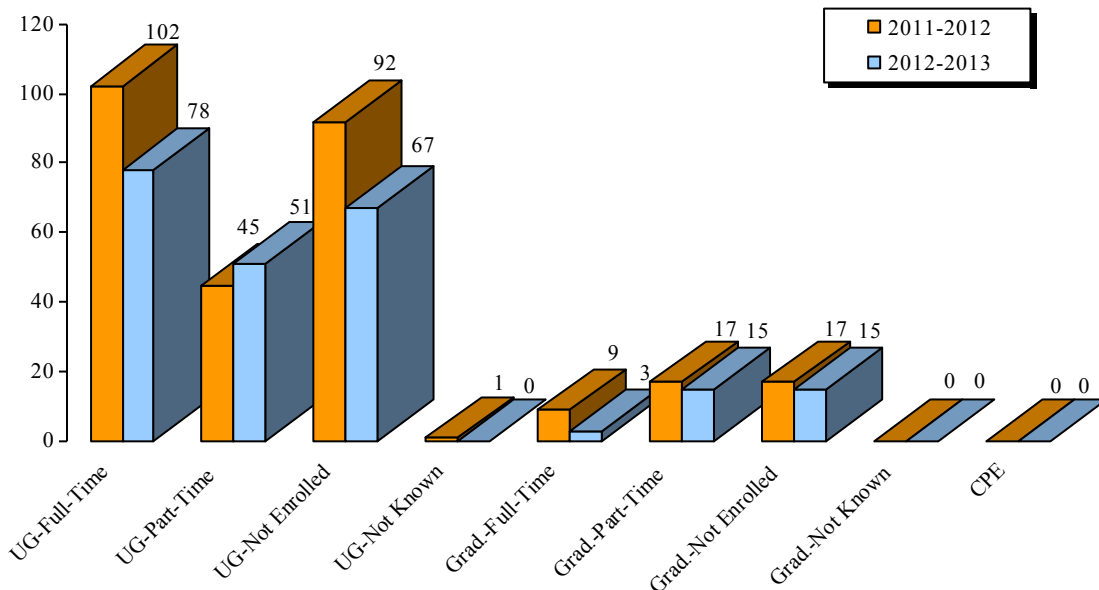


A total of 229 individuals were assisted by the Student Ombudsperson in 2012-2013 versus 283 in 2011-2012 which represents a difference of 54 contacts. The individuals assisted were as follows:

- 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 (49% in 2012-2013 versus 47% in 2011-2012), parents (20% in 2012-2013 versus 18% in 2011-2012), and former students (18% in 2012-2013 versus 20% in 2011-2012).

Enrollment Status



* UG = undergraduate students and Grad. = graduate students

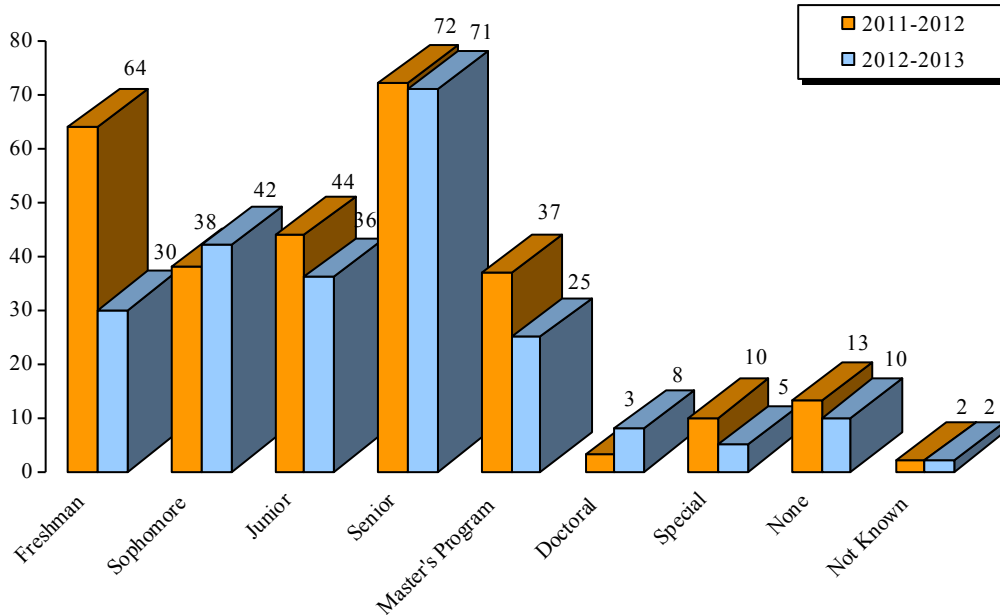
Undergraduates constituted a majority of the contacts in 2012-2013 (86%) and 2011-2012 (85%). Most continued to be categorized as full-time, not enrolled, and part-time. Graduate students made up 14% of the contacts in 2012-2013 and 15% of the contacts in 2011-2012.

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



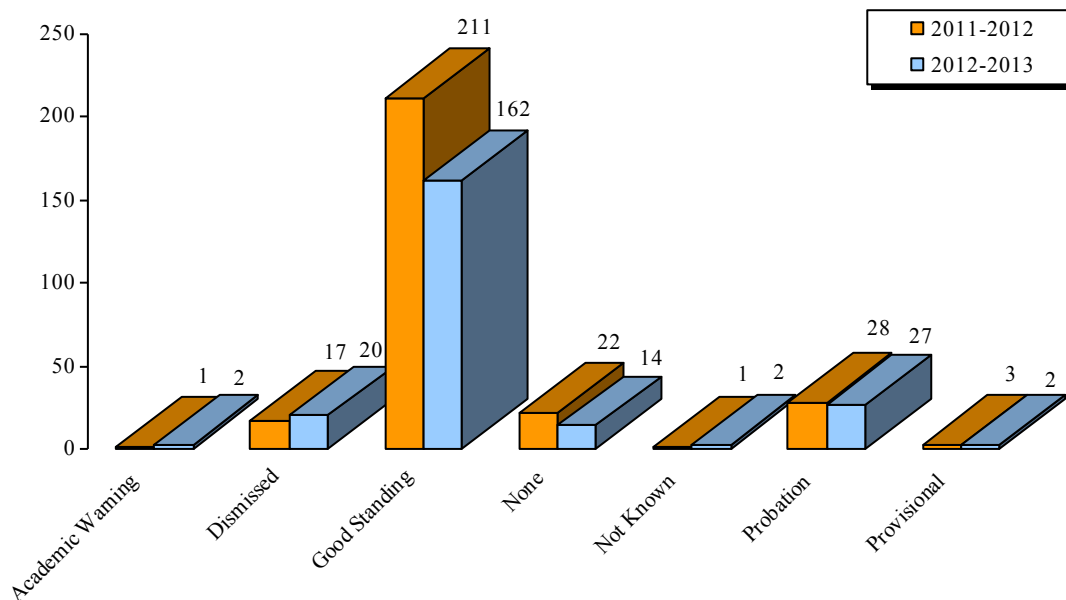
In 2012-2013, the bulk of the undergraduate contacts continued to be comprised of the same classifications as in 2011-2012. These classifications included seniors (31% in 2012-2013 and 25% in 2011-2012), sophomores (18% in 2012-2013 and 13% in 2011-2012), juniors (16% in 2012-2013 and 2011-2012) and freshman (13% in 2012-2013 and 23% in 2011-2012). Students enrolled in a master's degree program consisted of 11% of the classifications for 2012-2013 and 13% for 2011-2012.

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 2012-2013 (71%) and 2011-2012 (75%) were predominantly in good standing with the university. Those experiencing academic difficulties encompassed 22% of the population in 2012-2013 and 17% in 2011-2012. 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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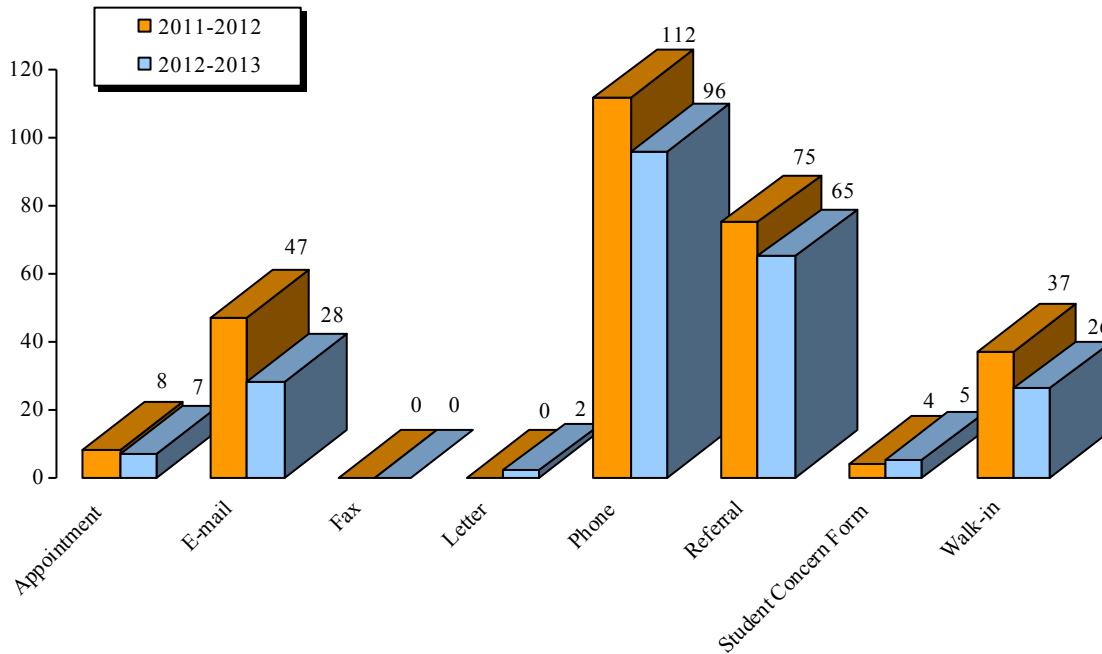
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- Probation Undergraduate in good standing whose overall UTSA grade point average fell below a 2.00 or a graduate who failed to achieve a grade point average of 3.00 in any term at UTSA, or who earned a grade of “D” in any course in a term, also includes 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.

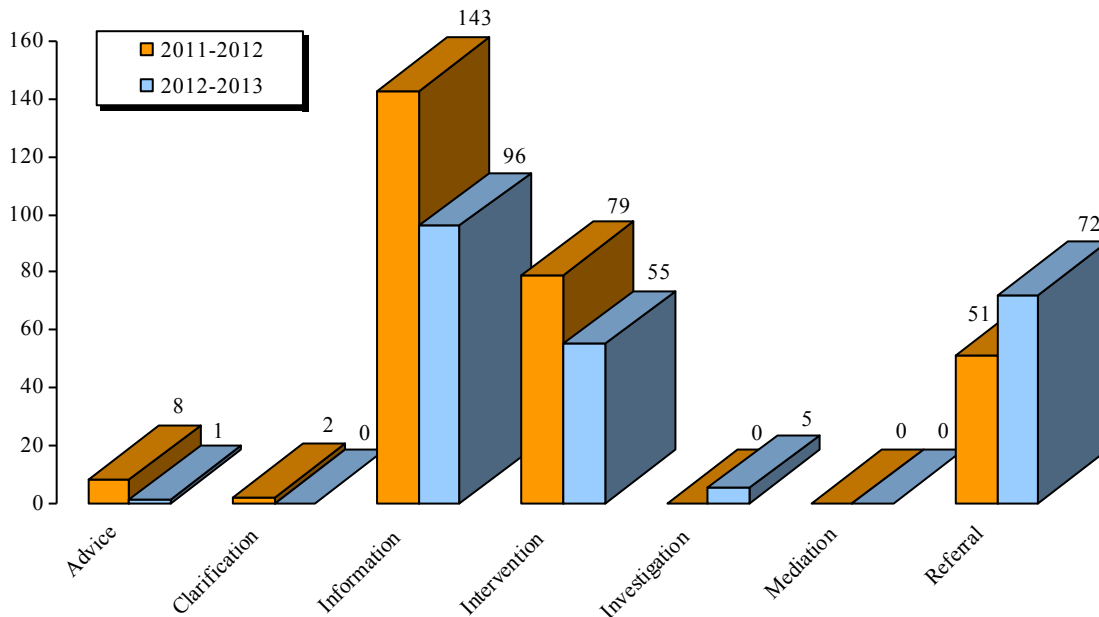
Contact Type



*Student Concern Form was created in 2006-2007

Phone (42% for 2012-2013 and 40% for 2011-2012) and referrals (28% for 2012-2013 and 27% for 2011-2012) were primarily used to communicate concerns for both years. Other methods that were utilized frequently included email (12% for 2012-2013 and 17% for 2011-2012) and walk-ins (11% for 2012-2013 and 13% for 2011-2012).

Action Taken



In 2012-2013, the actions used most often to aid individuals seeking assistance from the Student Ombudsperson included providing information (42%), referrals (31%) and intervention (24%). These actions, providing information (51%), referrals (18%) and intervention (28%), were also carried out most often in 2011-2012.

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 11-12	Total 12-13	Area of Concern	Total 11-12	Total 12-13
Accessibility	1	1	Grade Grievance	22	21
Admissions - Undergraduate	19	17	Grade Point Average	1	1
Admissions - Graduate	4	3	Grades	2	0
Advising – Undergraduate	25	14	Graduation	2	2
Advising - Graduate	0	1	Grant	0	0
ASAP	1	0	International Programs	6	6
Bookstore	2	1	Internship	1	2
CAP	1	1	Library	0	0
Card Office	0	0	Military Orders	0	0
Challenge Exam	0	0	myUTSA email	0	0
Change of Grade	0	2	Off-Campus Housing	2	0
Classification Change	0	0	On-Campus Housing	6	7
CLEP	0	0	Other	54	37
Computer Lab	0	0	Paisano	0	0
Core Curriculum	0	0	Parking	1	1
Course – Attendance	7	7	Registration	4	3
Course – Drop	6	1	Reinstatement	13	7
Course – Grading Process	2	2	Repeat Policy	0	0
Course – Instruction	5	4	Residency	1	2
Course – Make-up Exam	2	1	Safety	1	3
Course – Missed Quiz	0	0	Scholarship	1	1
Course – Schedule	10	4	Student Conduct and Community Standards*	5	3
Course load Reduction	0	0	Student Disability Services**	1	5
CPE	0	0	Student Health Services***	4	0
Dance Team	0	0	Student Organization	2	2
Diploma	0	0	Study Days	0	0
Dissertation	0	2	Testing Services	2	1
Enrollment Verification	0	0	Transcript Request	1	1
ExCET/TEExES	0	0	Texas Success Initiative	0	0
FCSA Evaluation	0	0	Tuition	0	1
Fees	1	0	University of Texas System Online Consortium****	0	0
FERPA	0	1	University Police	0	2
Field Placement	1	0	Veteran Affairs	1	0
Final Exams	1	2	Visa	0	1
Financial Aid	25	24	WebCT	0	0
Fiscal Services	21	14	Withdrawal	16	18
			Grand totals	283	229

Formerly – Student Judicial Affairs*

Formerly – Disability Services**

Formerly – Health Services***

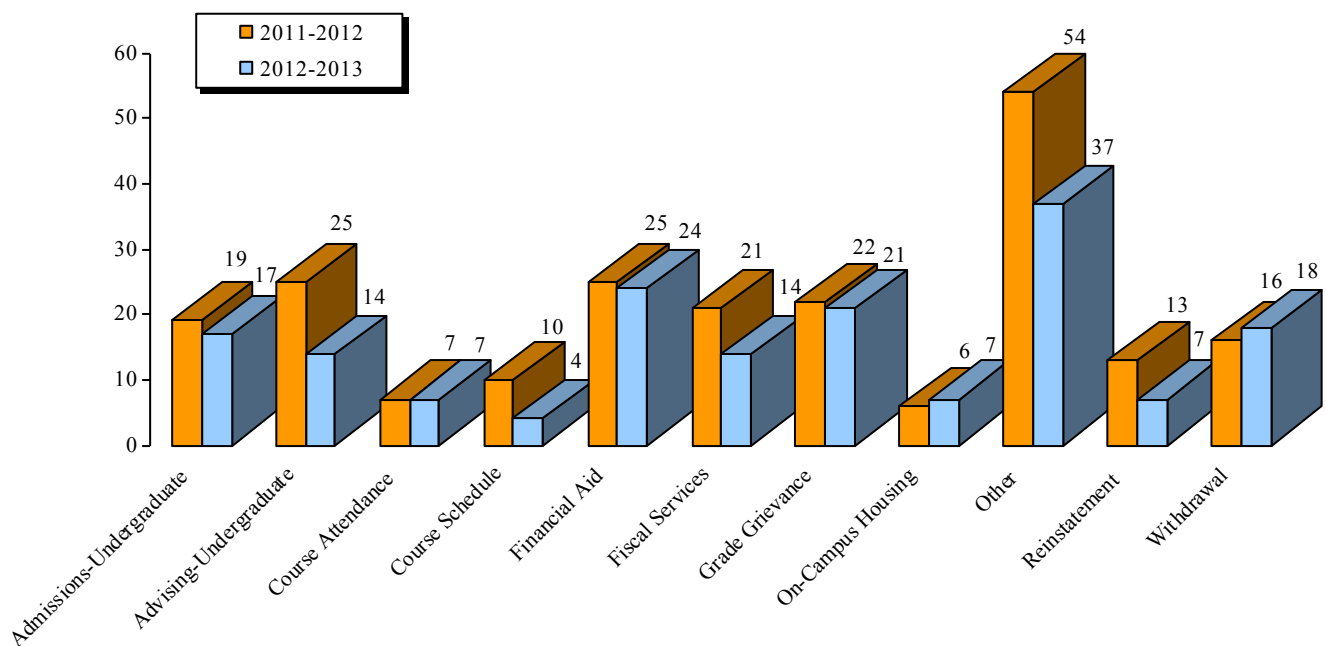
Formerly – The University of Texas System Telecampus****

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In 2012-2013, the areas of concern that were brought forward for assistance continued to apply to all components (academic, business, and student affairs) of the university. The areas of concern that were expressed most often were similar for both years except for course attendance, course schedule and on-campus housing. In 2012-2013, course attendance and on-campus housing were included in the areas that were expressed most often for a total of 10 areas of concern. Whereas in 2011-2012, a total of 9 areas were identified which included the course schedule category. The category of other also showed the greatest change in activity from one year to the next.



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

Admissions – Undergraduate

- Application submitted for incorrect term.
- Inquiry about admission to the Intensive English Program (IEP) and whether dual credit was included when determining a student's transfer grade point average (GPA).
- Request to waive the application fee in order to reapply for fall because course needed for degree program was not offered during the summer (e.g. student applied and was accepted for summer enrollment).
- Allegation of discrimination, miscommunication/misinformation.
- Questions about deferred admission, provisional admission and the Joint Undergraduate Matriculation Program (JUMP).*

* Similar for both years.

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Admissions – Undergraduate continued

- 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; monitoring admission status via the Automated Student Access Program (ASAP).*
- Admission hold which prevented registration due to outstanding final high school transcript, dual credit transcript and transcripts from previously attended colleges/universities.*
- Appeal process for those who missed the application deadline or were denied admission; checking on the status of appeals.*

Advising – Undergraduate

- Core class erroneously counted twice on degree plan.
- Students enrolled in a course(s) that they already received credit for via dual credit or from community college transfer credit.
- Questions about Public Health course descriptions and concentrations in Epidemiology and Disease Control and Health Promotion and Behavioral Science.
- Status of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeal (e.g. the academic advisor statement section needed to be completed) and petition for the Undergraduate Credit Limitation.
- Clearance from advisors in order to register for courses.*
- Concerns about advising experience/information received.*
- Questions about appeal, grievance and petition processes, advising holds, returning after medical withdrawal, etc.*

Course Attendance

- Notifications about car accidents, deaths in family, illnesses, hospitalizations and other extenuating circumstances.*
- Questions about funeral leave and course attendance.*
- Inquiries about attendance policy for the university - Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) 5.09 and filing a grievance/levels of appeal.*
- Available options (e.g. possible grade of incomplete, reduced course load reduction request, extra credit, complete assignments remotely, etc.)*
- Contact information for instructors; connecting with instructors.*
- Requests for administrative and/or retroactive drops due to extenuating circumstances.*

* Similar for both years.

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Course Schedule

- Questions about override permission for registration into various courses, independent study enrollment, etc.
- Transcript evaluation not completed which in turn affected a student's eligibility to register at an earlier time.
- Courses needed for degree program/graduation were full; lack of/limited course offerings.*
- Inquiries about registration dates, adding and dropping courses, switching sections and enrollment status.*

Financial Aid

- Options when aggregate loan limits have been reached.
- Eligibility requirements for/processing of the Hazelwood educational benefit.
- Inquiry about whether the SAP screening process could be changed to prevent premature financial aid termination for students seeking a second bachelor's degree.
- Administrative error involving SAP and the disbursement of financial aid.
- Allegation of discrimination based on denial of SAP appeal.
- Application process for the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) grant and how eligibility is determined.*
- Questions about alternative loans, College Access Loans (CAL), Federal Stafford Loans, Federal Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS), Perkins loans, Texas B-On-Time Loans; the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), reinstating and cancelling loans, deferment options and lender contact information.*
- Questions about book loans, part-time budgets, residency status, eligibility for financial aid under House Bill (HB) 1403, Pell grants, room and board grants, scholarships, etc.*
- Available funding options for international students (e.g. international student grant).*
- Understanding awarding, verification, unmet need and whether additional financial assistance was available.*
- Eligibility for work-study, availability of work-study jobs and 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 the disbursement of financial aid funds when transitioning from undergraduate to graduate school and when studying abroad, emergency tuition and fee loans, release of personal information via email, etc.*
- Inquiries about award cancellations and reinstating financial aid.*
- Adjustments to financial aid awards due to audits, changes in enrollment status, graduation, etc.*

* Similar for both years.

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Financial Aid continued

- Special circumstance and financial hardship requests.*
- Appeal process for those who did not meet SAP standards or missed the SAP deadline.*

Fiscal Services

- State vendor hold on account; prevented the release of refund until cleared.
- Questions about the processing of the Valedictorian of an Accredited High School exemption.
- Requests to waive non-sufficient funds (NSF) charges.
- Questions about paying online, installment payment options, posting of payments, payment deadlines and refund periods.*
- Fiscal services hold on account; unable to register, request transcript or obtain enrollment verification.*
- Account sent to collections, balance owed from previous terms, scheduling payment arrangements and signing a payment agreement.*
- Process for appealing to the University Bursar.*
- Status of appeals, refund checks and loan disbursements.*

Grade Grievance

- Concerns about switching of topics (e.g. received contradictory/conflicting information) for master's thesis.
- Blackboard Learn was not open to complete assignments.
- Inquiries about the administrative grade change policy - HOP 2.40.
- Disagreement with instructor's class attendance policy.
- Concerns about behavior of instructors and absences of instructors and/or teaching assistants.
- Allegations of discrimination.*
- 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/management of courses and accommodations.*

On-Campus Housing

- Questions about the application process and online housing portal.
- Allegation of bullying.

* Similar for both years.

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On-Campus Housing continued

- Understanding charges on bill and scheduling payment arrangements.
- Maintenance and security issues.
- Request for temporary housing.
- Concerns about cost of mailbox rental charge due to the discontinuance of accepting or distributing packages or letters received via the United States Postal Service.
- Process used to assign rooms; status of housing assignment.*
- Questions about cancellation fees, contract renewals/releases, housing deposits, move out procedures, pet fines and subleasing options.*

Other

- Process to audit a course.
- Questions about the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) fee reduction program, the Quantitative Scholarship requirement and training for Adobe Photoshop.
- Information about UTSA's Strategic Plan, Graduation Rate Improvement Plan (GRIP), Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Emergency Response Guide, campus alerts and the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC).
- Gaining access to football games with student identification card (e.g. student had restricted his/her directory information which apparently inactivated the student's identification card at the time of entry).
- Receiving promotional materials about football when directory information was restricted.
- Request for a private space to pump breast milk while on campus for students who were nursing mothers.
- Inquiry about filing a claim for a student injury that occurred during a neighborhood construction project (e.g. student signed a form to participate in the project and participation was factored into the course grade).
- Question about enrolling in a dual credit course through the P-20 program.
- Concerns about the approval process for conference abstracts submitted by students and the possible dissolution of the color guard.
- Applicability of Texas Education Code (TEC) 54.014 (formerly 54.068) to students pursuing double majors.
- Inquiry about obtaining a letter of support from a professor to support a student's reimbursement request.
- Blackboard Learn was down; not functioning.*
- Concerns about music performance requirements.*
- Questions about fitness to teach.*
- Student employee issues and questions (e.g. processing of name change in DEFINE, termination, etc.).*

* Similar for both years.

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Other continued

- Referral to United Way (e.g. homeless student).*
- Updates and/or corrections to student records (e.g. academic status).*
- 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.*

Reinstatement

- Questions about the petition for reinstatement process at the undergraduate and graduate levels including deadlines, fees, status of file, etc.*
- Appeal process for those who were denied reinstatement, missed the deadline or exited from a college; checking on status of appeals.*
- Inquiry about academic status (e.g. academic warning, probation, provisional and dismissal).*

Withdrawal

- Assisted with the withdrawal process (e.g. faxed form, took completed form to the Registrar's office, etc.) when students were unable to complete the process on their own due to hospitalizations, severe medical conditions, etc.*
- 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; contact numbers for Student Health Services and Counseling Services.*
- Status of requests and process for appeals.*
- Questions about deadlines, refund periods and the effective date for withdrawal.*
- 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 2011-2012 report, locations for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) doors and ramps were identified at the Main and Downtown campuses for the creation of an accessibility map (PDF format). Once the map is completed, it was recommended, through the ADA Accessibility Committee, to upload the map on the university's website where current campus maps are housed. In addition, information about grief-absence policies established at other colleges and universities was shared with the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School.

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Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AFROTC	Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps
ASAP	Automated Student Access Program
Blackboard Learn	Web-Based Learning Management System
CAL	College Access Loan
CAP	Coordinated Admissions Program
CLEP	College Level Examination Program
CPE	Center for Professional Excellence
DEFINE	Computer application used for certain administrative functions at UTSA
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
GPA	Grade Point Average
GRE	Graduate Record Exam
GRIP	Graduation Rate Improvement Plan
HB	House Bill
HOP	Handbook of Operating Procedures
IEP	Intensive English Program
JUMP	Joint Undergraduate Matriculation Program
NSF	Non-Sufficient Funds
NSLDS	National Student Loan Data System
P-20	An integrated educational system that extends from pre-school through higher education
PDF	Portable Document Format
PLUS	Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students
SAP	Satisfactory Academic Progress
TEACH	Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education
TEC	Texas Education Code
UTSA	University of Texas at San Antonio
VPSA	Vice President for Student Affairs
WebCT	World Wide Web Course Tools