



The University of Texas at San Antonio

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
Student Ombudsperson's 2011-2012 Annual Report

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I. Introduction

The 2011-2012 annual report includes the following:

- a description of the role of this position,
- promotion efforts,
- a summary of the individuals served,
- areas of concern, 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

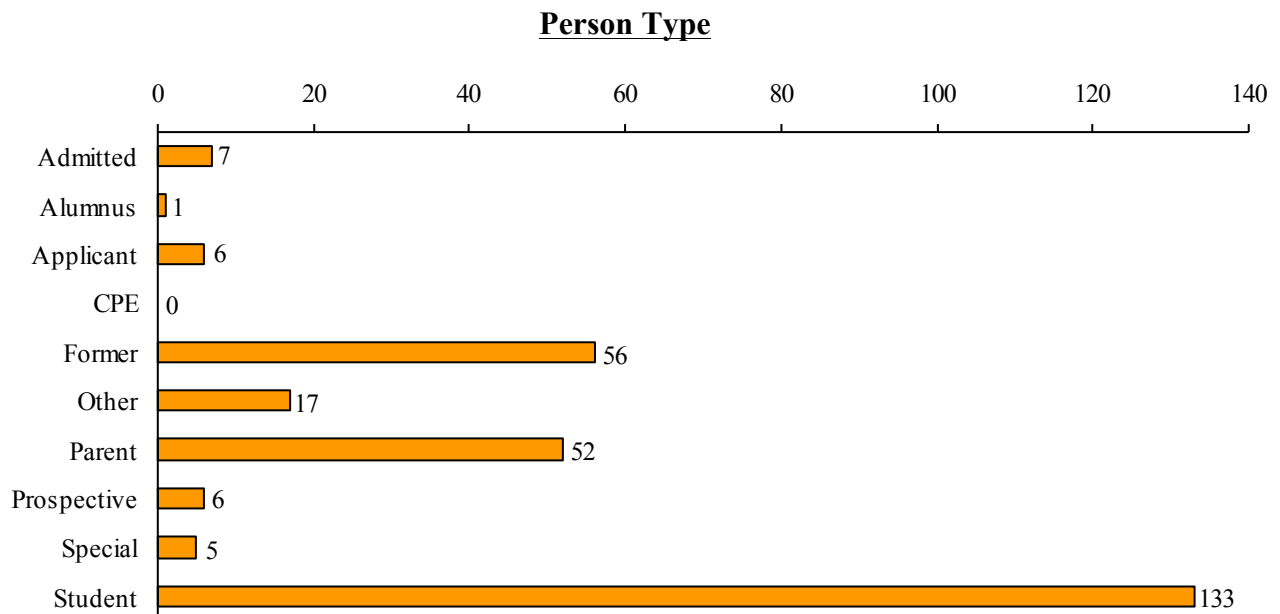
The Student Ombudsperson position was publicized on the welcome slide show at freshmen orientation programs and through co-presentations with the university's Executive Director of Advising. This position was also utilized as a referral resource for the listening booth initiative which is part of the division's UTSA Listens Program. Information about this position was also shared during a leadership fair at the Downtown Campus for faculty and staff who were participating in the Leadership UTSA program. The Student Ombudsperson web page – <http://www.utsa.edu/students/ombudsperson/> and online Information Bulletin also continue to serve as sources of information for this position.

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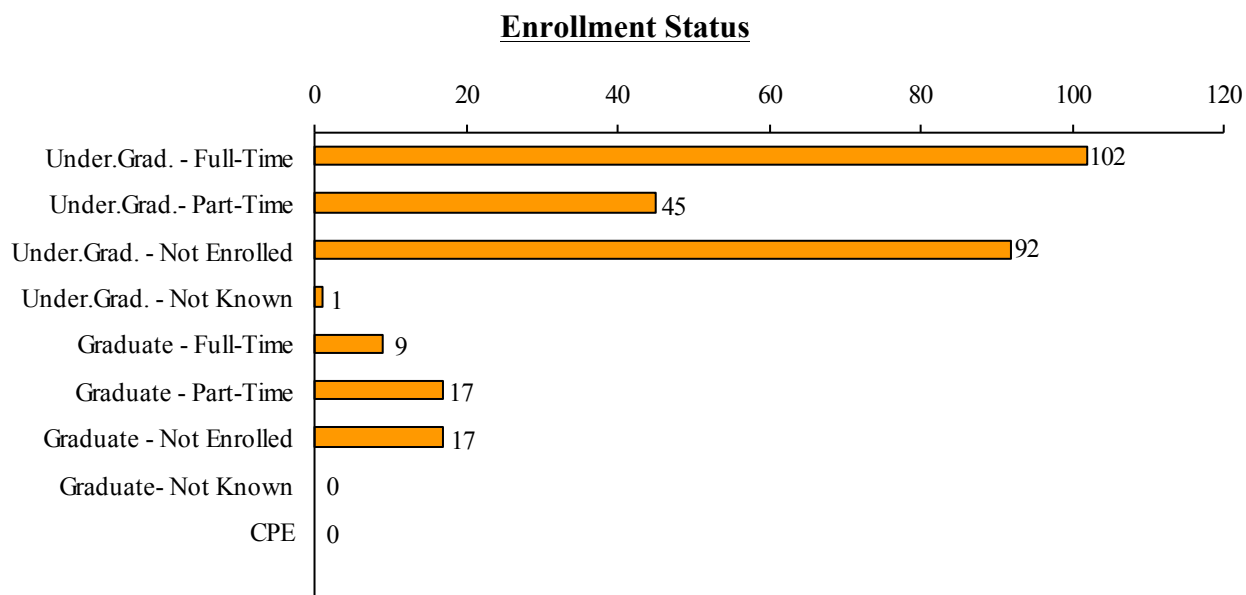
IV. Statistics



A total of 283 individuals were assisted by the Student Ombudsperson during 2011-2012. These individuals 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 were comprised of currently enrolled students (47%), former students (20%) and parents (18%).

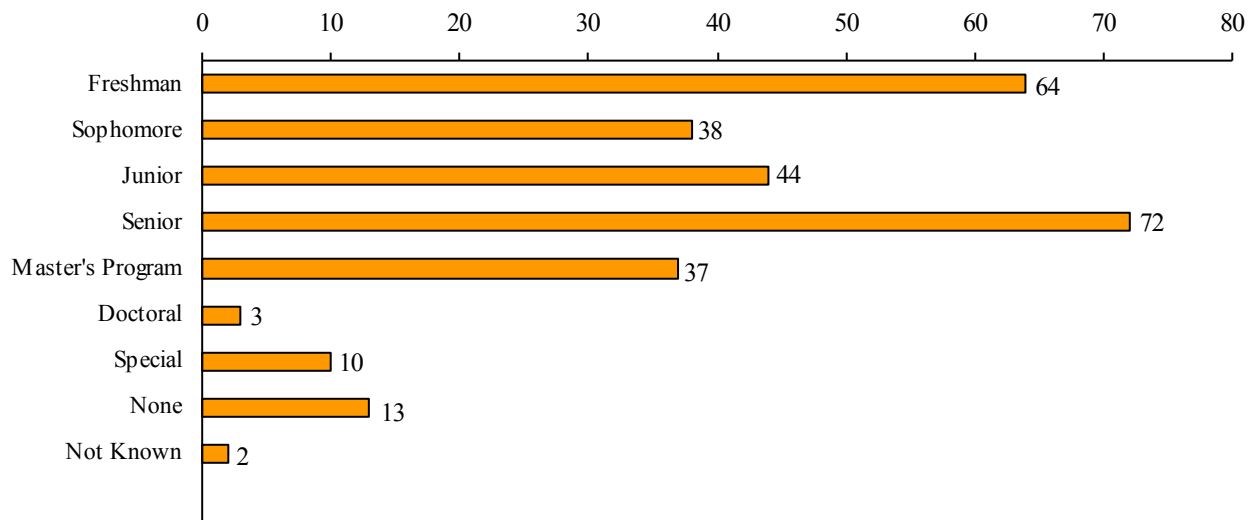


Undergraduates constituted 85% of the contacts. Most were categorized as full-time (36%), not enrolled (33%) and part-time (16%). Enrollment statuses included the following:

- 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

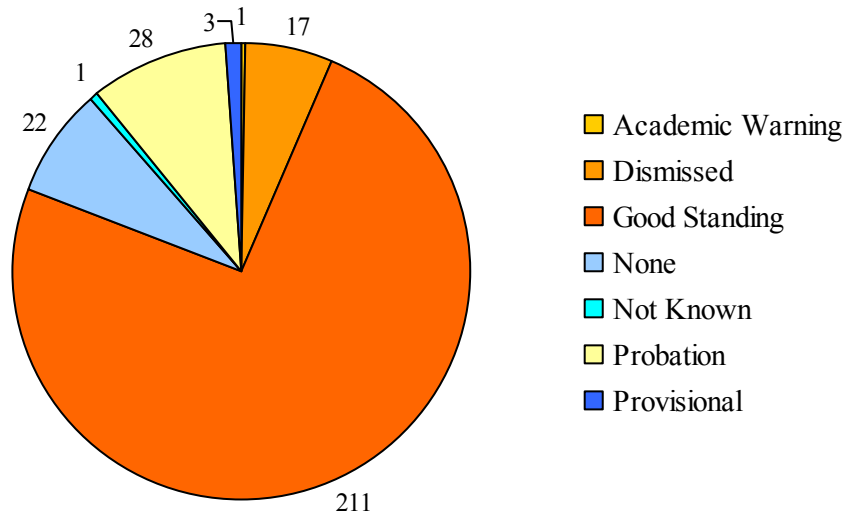


Undergraduate students: seniors (25%), freshmen (23%), juniors (16%) and sophomores (13%) made up the majority of the contacts. Classifications included:

- 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



While 17% of the students were experiencing academic difficulties, 75% were in good standing with the University. 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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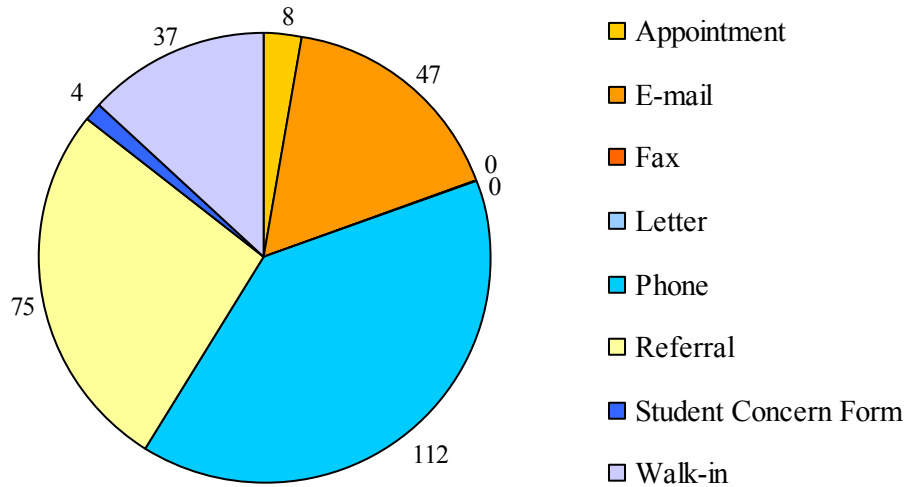
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- **Probation** Undergraduate in good standing whose overall UTSA grade point average fell below a 2.00 or a graduate who failed to achieve a grade point average of 3.00 in any term at UTSA, or who earned a grade of “D” in any course in a term, also 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.

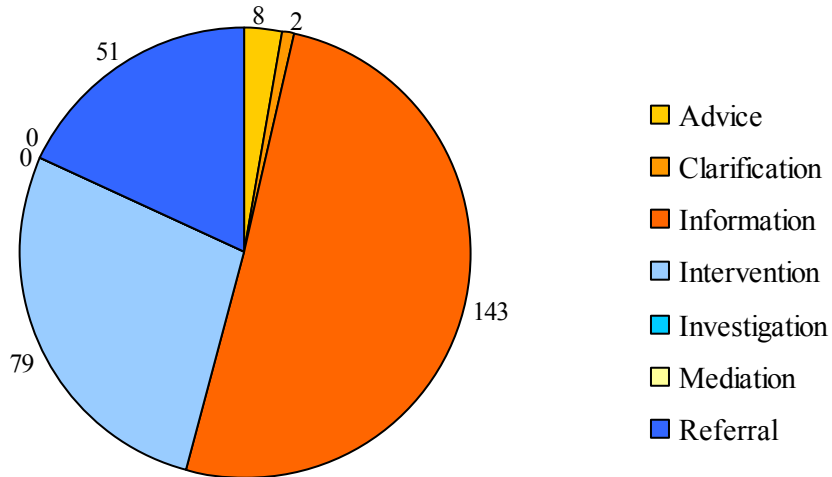
Note: If a parent or other (e.g. aunt, uncle, etc.) were assisted, academic status of the student was checked.

Contact Type



Contacts were primarily initiated by phone (40%), followed by referrals (27%), emails (17%) and walk-ins (13%).

Action Taken



The action used most often to help those seeking assistance from the Student Ombudsperson was providing information (51%). This was followed by intervention (28%) and referrals (18%). Investigation and mediation were not used as a primary means to address a particular situation.

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

*Formerly – Student Judicial Affairs

**Formerly – The University of Texas System Telecampus

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In 2011-2012, areas of concern continued to pertain to the three main operating functions of the university: academic, business and student affairs. Those expressed most often included the category of other, advising-undergraduate, financial aid, grade grievance and fiscal services. Topics such as admissions-undergraduate, withdrawing from the university, reinstatement and course schedules were also discussed frequently. Detailed information concerning these areas of concern is outlined below.

Other

- Questions about on-campus storage, creating more on-campus jobs (e.g. small business idea, database idea), UTSA Bluebook, etc.
- Orientation fee waiver request.
- Questions about Child Development Center (e.g. pick-up times, late pick-up, process to follow when child is ill, etc).
- Inquiry about Instructional Leadership Development and Professional Development and Appraisal System training programs.
- Coach concerns.
- Family Association donation.
- Difficulty accessing AirRowdy, Blackboard and the online orientation module.*
- Concerns about gateway process, foundation year requirements, piano performance recital requirements and portfolio assessment.*
- Assistance with completion of certification forms (e.g. Fire Science Exemption form, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education fellows program, security clearance request for Compliance and Investigations Office, etc.).*
- Questions about comprehensive exams, field experience/placement, fitness to teach, internships, master's thesis, practicums, research and publications, and appeal options.*
- Student employee issues and questions (e.g. certification of employment for resident tuition, disciplinary process, employment options and requirements, hiring practices, on-the-job training, proof of employment, supervision concerns, termination, work environment, etc.).*
- Referrals to Equal Opportunity Services and/or United Way.*
- Requests for information and/or support services (e.g. academic coaching, advising, Ambassadors Program, Audit Compliance and Risk Services, career services, counseling services, Institute for Law and Public Affairs, Law School Admission Test (LSAT), loan or rental of computers, proof of enrollment, rental options for motorized scooters, Rowdy Cents, student code of conduct, Summer Law School Preparation Academy, supplemental instruction, tutoring, VIA Express bus routes, etc.).*
- Allegations of differential treatment, discrimination, harassment, research violations, sexual harassment and stalking.*
- On-campus injuries (e.g. Campus Recreation Center, Kinesiology course, student athlete).*
- Inquiries about president's list, dean's list and honor roll designations.*

* Similar to previous years.

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Other continued

- Updates and/or corrections to student records (e.g. academic status, attributes, “core curriculum not complete” notation on graduate student transcripts, grade point averages, name change, repeat indicators, transfer courses, etc.).*
- Inquiries about making arrangements to close out affairs (e.g. move belongings out of dorm room, return books, appeal for posthumous degree, 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.*
- Inquiries about tuition and fees, online degree offerings, progress in courses, smoking policy, FERPA, student authorization to release education record information, etc.*

Advising – Undergraduate

- Questions about various degree programs, minors, etc.
- Delay in obtaining degree plan for veteran certification purposes.
- Request for letter of degree completion.
- Advisor availability during peak periods, walk-in times, etc.
- Inquires about course substitutions, independent study process, intervention programs, permission for enrolling in graduate course work as an undergraduate, teacher certification requirements, etc.*
- Clearance from advisors, department chair, etc. in order to register for courses.*
- Inquiries about changing majors, core complete, math placement, prerequisites, registration, Texas Success Initiative (TSI) and transfer courses.*
- Concerns about advising experience/information received.*
- Questions about appeal, grievance and petition processes, advising holds, degree audits, returning after medical withdrawal, etc.*

Financial Aid

- 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.*

* Similar to previous years.

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Financial Aid continued

- 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 the 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.*
- 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.*

Grade Grievance

- Inquiry about how to proceed with the grade grievance process when the professor no longer works at UTSA and when the professor serves in a dual role as Department Chair.
- 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, appeal decision, change of grades, change of academic status, etc.*
- Concerns about grading subjectivity, retention of tests, communicating with instructors, classroom environment, structure and management of courses.*

Fiscal Services

- International student thought he/she was not eligible to apply for an emergency tuition and fee loan.
- Questions about paying online, installment payment options, posting of payments, payment deadlines and refund periods.*
- Courses dropped due to non-payment.*
- Fiscal services hold on account; unable to register and/or request transcript.*
- 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.*

* Similar to previous years.

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Admissions – Undergraduate

- Concern about the evaluation of Advanced Placement (AP) scores; university only accepts official AP scores electronically from the College Board.
- Contact information for Transfer Specialists.
- Inquiry about Transfer Academy for Tomorrow's Engineers (TATE).
- Questions about deferred admission, early admission for high school students, provisional admission, reapplying to the university and the Joint Undergraduate Matriculation Program (JUMP).*
- Questions about the admissions process for various student types (e.g. freshmen, transfer, international, special and transient).*
- Status of incomplete/complete 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 status of appeals.*
- Questions about academic fresh start and transfer plans.*

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 (e.g. hospitalized, severe medical condition, etc.).*
- Questions about the online withdrawal process including where to find the withdrawal form.*
- Inquiries about medical and mental health withdrawals and reduced course load requests; contact numbers for Student Health Services and Counseling Services.*
- Questions about refund periods and deadlines.*
- Retroactive withdrawal requests due to extenuating circumstances.*

Reinstatement

- Questions about dismissal related holds.
- Questions about the petition for reinstatement process at the undergraduate and graduate levels including deadlines, fees, status of file, etc.*
- Requests for early reinstatement.*
- 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, dismissal).*

* Similar to previous years.

Course Schedule

- Appeals for adding courses after the census date, concurrent enrollment and waiver of prerequisite requirements.*
- Courses needed for degree program/graduation were full; lack of/limited course offerings.*
- Courses dropped due to non-payment, reversal of Pell grant, lack of prerequisites or teacher placement, portfolio assessment and academic dismissal.*
- Inquiries about registration dates, adding and dropping courses, switching sections and enrollment status.*

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

VI. Recommendations

As follow-up to the 2010-2011 report, the wayfinding project will include signage for disabled parking locations, however, the project does not include the identification of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) pathways. The university's ADA Accessibility Committee recommended that the wayfinding project be revised to include signage that would indicate and direct individuals to ADA paths. In addition, the committee recommended that an electronic map indicating these routes be made available on the UTSA Mobile Application.

* Similar to previous years.

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Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AirRowdy	Campus Wireless Network
AP	Advanced Placement
ASAP	Automated Student Access Program
Blackboard	Web-Based Learning Management System
CAL	College Access Loan
CAP	Coordinated Admissions Program
CLEP	College Level Examination Program
CPE	Center for Professional Excellence
ExCET/TEXES	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
JUMP	Joint Undergraduate Matriculation Program
LSAT	Law School Admission Test
NSLDS	National Student Loan Data System
PLUS	Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students
Rowdy Cents	Online Financial Literacy Program
SAP	Satisfactory Academic Progress
TATE	Transfer Academy for Tomorrow's Engineers
TEACH	Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education
TSI	Texas Success Initiative
UTSA	University of Texas at San Antonio
UTSA Bluebook	Public access to department, faculty, course information, etc.
VPSA	Vice President for Student Affairs
WebCT	World Wide Web Course Tools