



The University of Texas at San Antonio

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

2016-2017 Student Ombudsperson Annual Report

**The University of Texas at San Antonio – Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
2016-2017 Student Ombudsperson Annual Report**

I. Introduction

The 2016-2017 annual report includes the following:

- a description of the role of this position,
- outreach efforts,
- a summary of individuals served including areas of concern,
- recommendations for change and/or improvement, and
- a comparative analysis for the years 2014-2017.

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 provides assistance 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).

III. Outreach

The Student Ombudsperson conducted presentations about the role of the ombudsperson to graduate student orientation participants, student support services staff and new faculty orientation participants. A presentation about managing student behavior was also conducted for new undergraduate academic advisors as part of their training program.

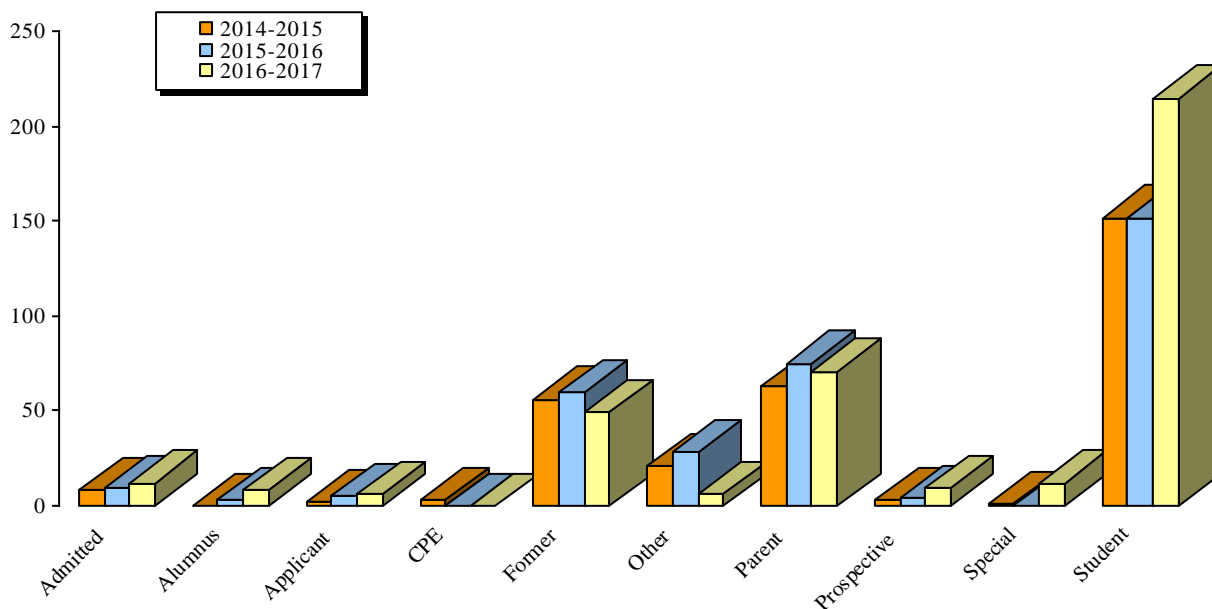
The Student Ombudsperson and Academic Affairs Ombudsperson hosted an information table for new freshman and family participants during the summer 2017 Freshman Orientation Resource Fairs (total of eight). The Student Ombudsperson position was also publicized in the Family Association Calendar and Guidebook, the online Information Bulletin and the Student Ombudsperson web page – <http://www.utsa.edu/students/ombudsperson/>.

Information about a student's rights and responsibilities, which included information about the Student Ombudsperson position, was also sent out to all currently enrolled students via email during the fall, spring and summer semesters. The Student Ombudsperson also conducted thirteen True Colors training sessions during 2016-2017.

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IV. Statistics

Person Type



Person Type	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	Total
Admitted	8	9	12	29
Alumnus	0	3	8	11
Applicant	2	5	6	13
CPE	3	0	0	3
Former	56	60	49	165
Other	21	28	6	55
Parent	63	75	71	209
Prospective	3	4	9	16
Special	1	0	12	13
Student	152	152	215	519
Total	309	336	388	1,033

The Student Ombudsperson assisted 388 individuals in 2016-2017 versus 336 in 2015-2016 and 309 in 2014-2015. The total number served during this three-year period was 1,033 with an average of 344 individuals per year.

Currently enrolled students, former students and parents were the types of individuals served most often in 2016-2017. Cumulatively, these same categories represented the majority of individuals assisted by the Student Ombudsperson from 2014-2017.

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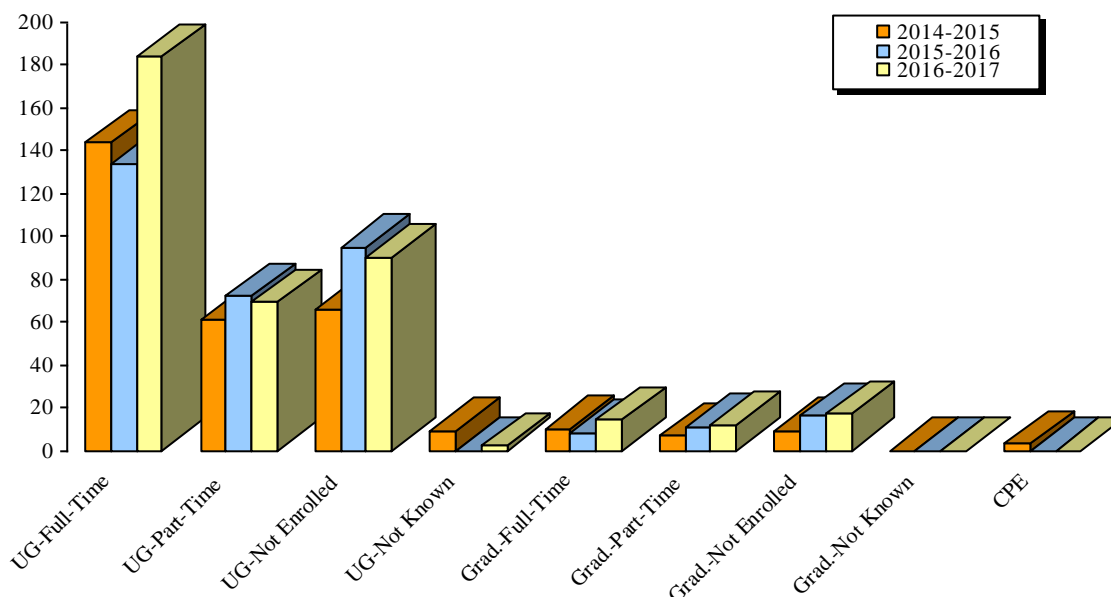
Person Type	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Former	56=18%	60=18%	49=13%
Parent	63=20%	75=22%	71=18%
Student	152=49%	152=45%	215=55%

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.

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Enrollment Status



* UG = undergraduate students and Grad. = graduate students

Enrollment Status	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	Total
Undergraduate (Full-time)	144	134	184	462
Undergraduate (Part-time)	61	72	69	202
Undergraduate (Not enrolled)	66	95	90	251
Undergraduate (Not known)	9	0	2	11
Graduate (Full-time)	10	8	14	32
Graduate (Part-time)	7	11	12	30
Graduate (Not enrolled)	9	16	17	42
Graduate (Not known)	0	0	0	0
CPE Student (Center for Professional Excellence)	3	0	0	3
Total	309	336	388	1,033

In 2016-2017, undergraduates continued to constitute a majority of the contacts. This trend remained the same for all three years.

Enrollment Status	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Undergraduate (Full-time)	144=47%	134=40%	184=47%
Undergraduate (Part-time)	61=20%	72=21%	69=18%
Undergraduate (Not enrolled)	66=21%	95=28%	90=23%

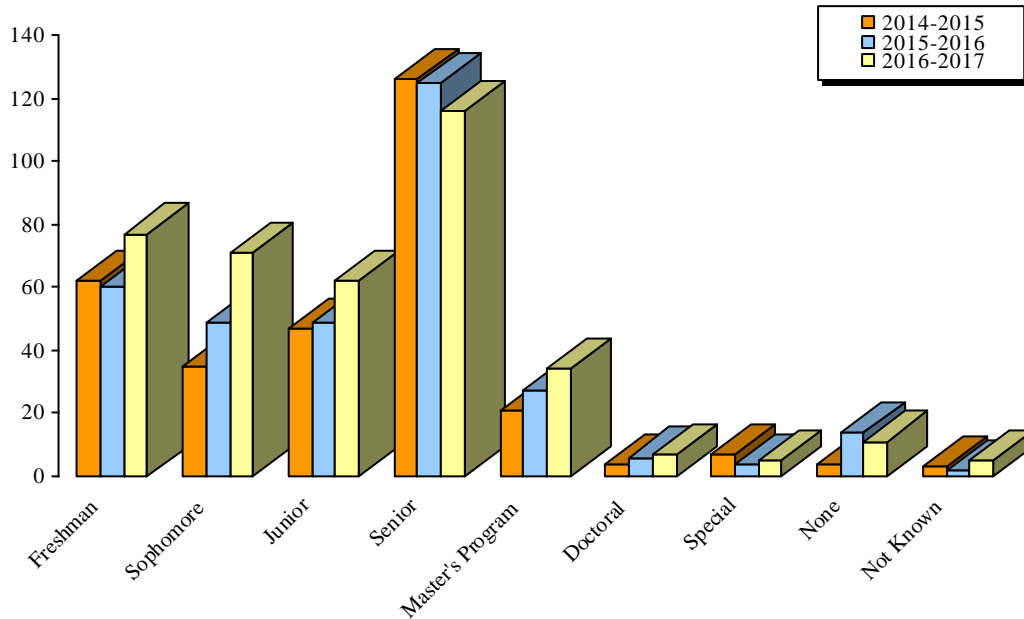
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Enrollment statuses included the following:

- 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



Classification	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	Total
Freshman	62	60	77	199
Sophomore	35	49	71	155
Junior	47	49	62	158
Senior	126	125	116	367
Master's Program	21	27	34	82
Doctoral	4	6	7	17
Special	7	4	5	16
None	4	14	11	29
Not Known	3	2	5	10
Total	309	336	388	1,033

In 2016-2017, seniors were assisted most frequently followed by freshmen, sophomores and juniors. Collectively, senior students were also served most often from 2014-2017 followed by freshmen, juniors, sophomores and students pursuing a master's degree.

Classification	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Freshman	62=20%	60=18%	77=20%
Sophomore	35=11%	49=15%	71=18%
Junior	47=15%	49=15%	62=16%
Senior	126=41%	125=37%	116=30%
Master's Program	21=7%	27=8%	34=9%

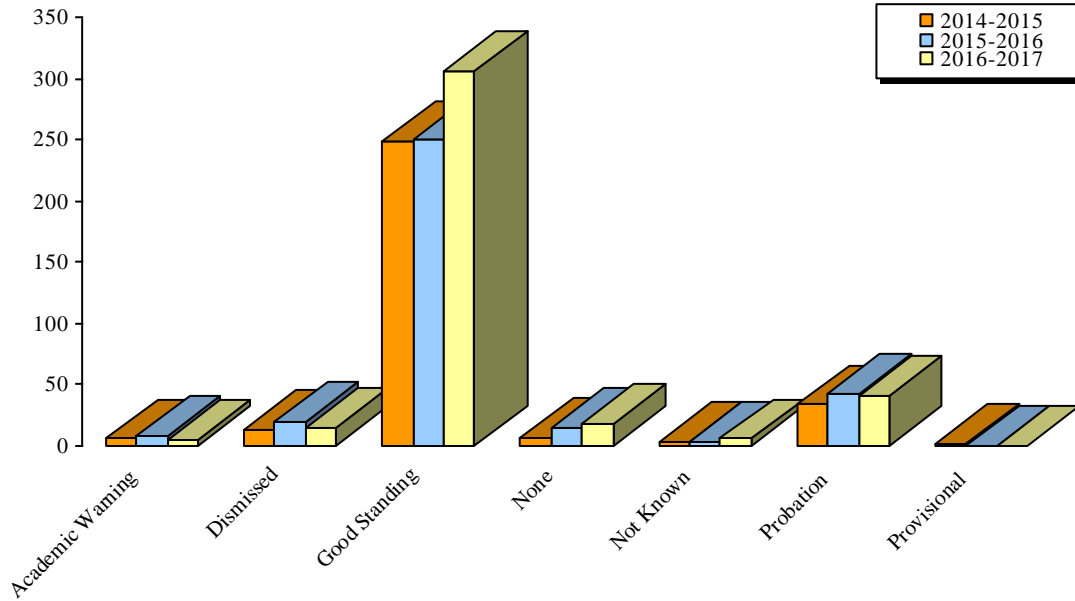
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Classifications included:

- 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



Academic Status	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	Total
Academic Warning	5	7	4	16
Dismissed	13	19	14	46
Good Standing	249	251	307	807
None	6	14	17	37
Not Known	2	3	5	10
Probation	33	42	41	116
Provisional	1	0	0	1
Total	309	336	388	1,033

Most of the individuals assisted in 2016-2017 were in good academic standing with the university. This outcome was the same for all three years followed by those on academic probation.

Academic Status	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Good Standing	249=81%	251=75%	307=79%
Probation	33=11%	42=13%	41=11%

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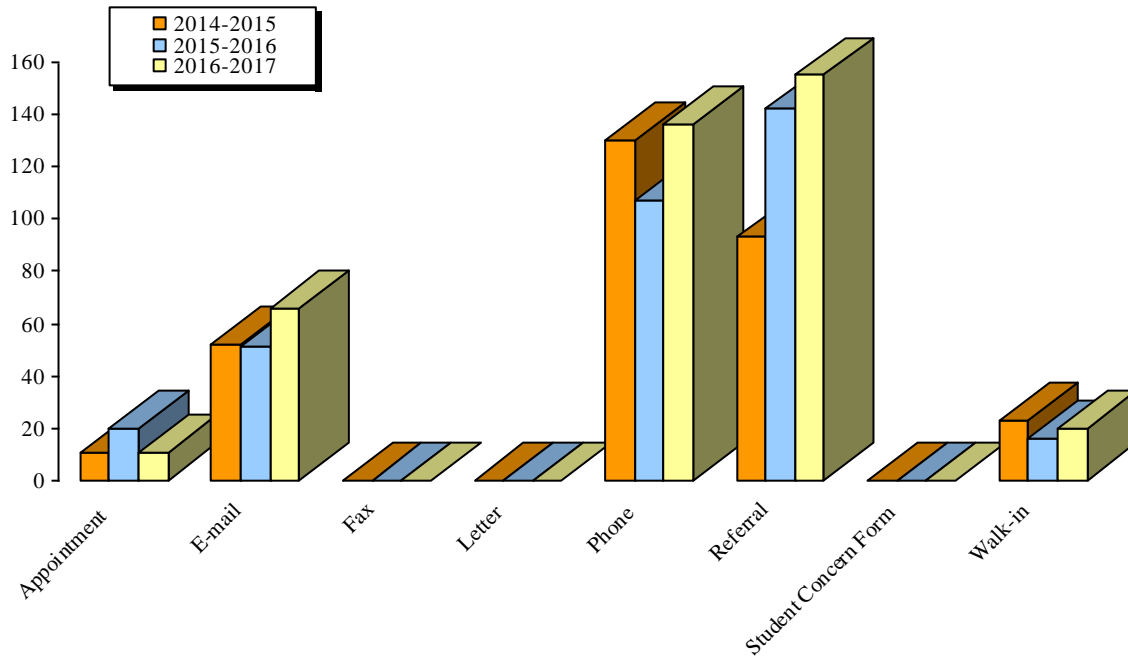
The academic statuses consisted of:

- **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.
- **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.

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Contact Type



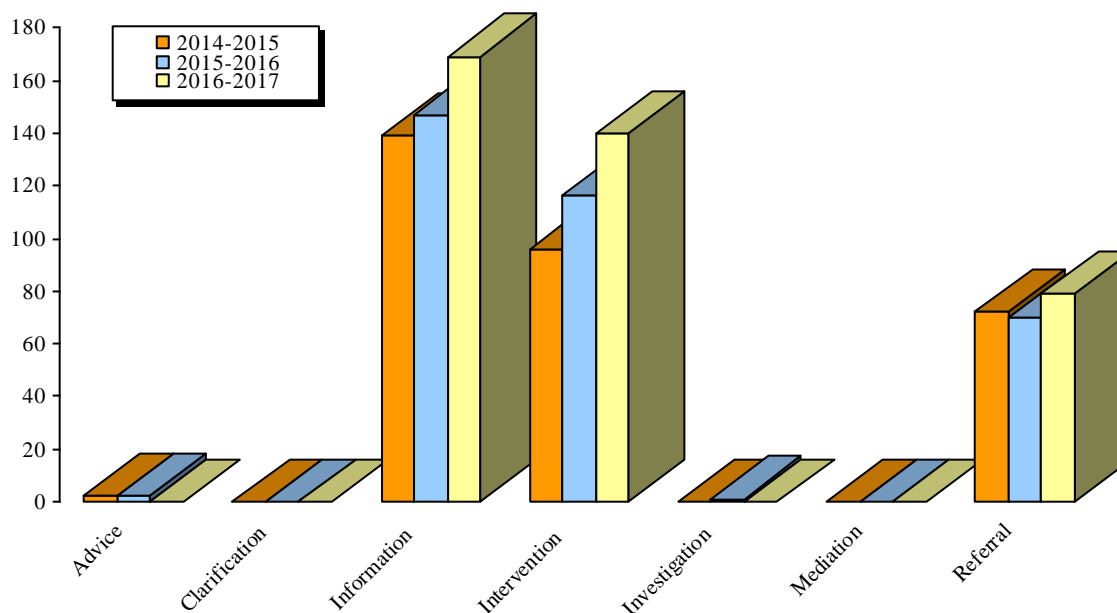
*Student Concern Form was created in 2006-2007

Contact Type	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	Total
Appointment	11	20	11	42
E-mail	52	51	66	169
Fax	0	0	0	0
Letter	0	0	0	0
Phone	130	107	136	373
Referral to Ombudsperson	93	142	155	390
Student Concern Form	0	0	0	0
Walk-in	23	16	20	59
Total	309	336	388	1,033

In 2016-2017, referrals to the Student Ombudsperson were used most often followed by phone and email contacts. From 2014-2017, these contact methods were used most frequently to express concerns.

Contact Type	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
E-mail	52=17%	51=15%	66=17%
Phone	130=42%	107=32%	136=35%
Referral to Ombudsperson	93=30%	142=42%	155=40%

Action Taken



Action Taken	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	Total
Advice	2	2	0	4
Clarification	0	0	0	0
Information	139	147	169	455
Intervention	96	116	140	352
Investigation	0	1	0	1
Mediation	0	0	0	0
Referral to other office, department, community resource	72	70	79	221
Total	309	336	388	1,033

Providing information, followed by intervention and referrals were utilized most often by the Student Ombudsperson when assisting individuals in 2016-2017. These same actions were consistently used most often from 2014-2017.

Action Taken	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Information	139=45%	147=44%	169=44%
Intervention	96=31%	116=35%	140=36%
Referral to other office, department, community resource	72=23%	70=21%	79=20%

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 14-15	Total 15-16	Total 16-17	Area of Concern	Total 14-15	Total 15-16	Total 16-17
Academic and Grade Grievance	27	33	28	Fiscal Services	13	24	26
Accessibility	0	1	0	Grade Point Average	0	0	0
Admissions - Undergraduate	14	25	26	Grades	0	0	4
Admissions - Graduate	1	3	6	Graduation	9	10	2
Advising – Undergraduate	38	45	22	Grant	0	0	0
Advising - Graduate	0	1	0	International Programs	0	2	5
ASAP	0	0	0	Internship	0	1	2
Bookstore	0	0	2	Library	1	0	0
CAP	0	1	0	Military Orders	0	0	3
Card Office	0	0	0	myUTSA email	0	0	0
Challenge Exam	0	0	0	Off-Campus Housing	4	2	1
Change of Grade	0	4	2	On-Campus Housing	8	7	7
Classification Change	0	0	0	Other	29	40	91
CLEP	0	0	0	Paisano	0	0	0
Computer Lab	0	0	0	Parking	5	5	6
Core Curriculum	0	0	0	Registration	8	9	5
Course – Attendance	22	23	41	Reinstatement	12	6	2
Course – Drop	6	3	9	Repeat Policy	3	0	0
Course – Grading Process	2	0	1	Residency	1	2	2
Course – Instruction	21	3	3	Safety	2	1	5
Course – Make-up Exam	2	0	0	Scholarship	3	3	3
Course – Missed Quiz	0	1	0	Student Conduct and Community Standards	8	13	2
Course – Schedule	3	4	1	Student Disability Services	1	0	3
Course load Reduction	0	0	0	Student Health Services	2	3	2
CPE	1	0	0	Student Organization	1	2	1
Dance Team	0	0	0	Study Days	0	0	0
Diploma	0	0	0	Testing Services	1	1	1
Dissertation	1	1	0	Transcript Request	5	1	1
Enrollment Verification	0	0	0	Texas Success Initiative	0	1	0
ExCET/TEExES	0	0	0	Tuition	0	0	0
FCSA Evaluation	0	0	0	University of Texas System Online Consortium	0	0	0
Fees	9	2	2	University Police	0	2	2
FERPA	0	0	2	Veteran Affairs	1	1	4
Field Placement	0	1	0	Visa	0	0	0
Final Exams	4	2	0	WebCT	0	0	0
Financial Aid	21	25	40	Withdrawal	20	22	23
Total by year					309	336	388
Grand total (2014-2017)					1,033		

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

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The areas of concern that were expressed most often in 2016-2017 consisted of the following (in descending order by total):

Area of Concern	2016-2017
Other	91
Course-Attendance	41
Financial Aid	40
Academic and Grade Grievance	28
Admissions-Undergraduate	26
Fiscal Services	26
Withdrawal	23
Advising-Undergraduate	22
Total	297=77%

These areas accounted for seventy-seven percent (77%) of the concerns brought forward for assistance during this year. Of the seventy-two (72) areas of concern, the following areas represent a majority of the concerns that were communicated to the Student Ombudsperson from 2014-2017 (in descending order by total):

Area of Concern	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	Total
Other	29	40	91	160
Advising-Undergraduate	38	45	22	105
Academic and Grade Grievance	27	33	28	88
Course-Attendance	22	23	41	86
Financial Aid	21	25	40	86
Admissions-Undergraduate	14	25	26	65
Withdrawal	20	22	23	65
Fiscal Services	13	24	26	63
Total	184	237	297	718=70%

Cumulatively, these areas represented seventy percent (70%) of the various circumstances that were brought forward for assistance during this three-year period. The collective summary below provides details about the subject areas communicated most often to the Student Ombudsperson from 2014-2017 (in descending order by total).

Other (160)

- Provided assistance to students impacted by Hurricane Harvey (i.e. course attendance concerns, students unable to return/travel to San Antonio, emergency funding requests, inquiries about extending payment deadlines and/or requests to waive late fees, requests to travel home to help family members with clean-up and salvaging efforts, active duty/emergency deployments, referrals to professors, financial aid, counseling services, academic advising, Roadrunner Pantry, etc., assistance with late registration, concerns about gas shortages, inquiries by students and student organizations to coordinate and support donation drives and volunteer efforts, inquiries from transfer students to apply and enroll at UTSA, etc.).

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Other continued (160)

- Requests for proof of enrollment (i.e. National Student Clearinghouse).
- Provided assistance to families of deceased or missing students who were making arrangements to withdraw their student from the university, close out their account, move out their belongings from the residence hall, return textbooks, etc.).
- Questions and concerns by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) students.
- Request for letter for Department of Defense regarding an individualized education plan.
- Inquiry about use of electronic cigarette.
- Concerns about executive order which temporarily suspended entry into the United States from certain countries.
- Complaints about noise level of drilling during a construction project; students unable to hear lecture.
- Question about new Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) and impact on Facilitated Acceptance to Medical Education (FAME) program requirements.
- Sleep pod idea and request for resources for a business plan.
- Concern about post presidential election forum held on campus.
- Request for university to construct a new performing arts building/center.
- Questions about completing the visitor application form for volunteer work at The University of Texas Health Science Center.
- Requests for tutoring (i.e. individualized, private tutor, etc.) and academic coaching information.
- Provided students with Rowdy Ready information.
- Inquiries about when President's List certificates/letters are mailed.
- Questions about manuscript publication requirement for doctoral program.
- Complaint about delay in opening of office.
- Inquiry about the possibility of establishing a partnership with UTSA to distribute excess food to homeless shelters in the San Antonio area.
- Questions about graduate assistantships.
- Information about open records/public information requests.
- Inquiry about Certificate in Oil and Gas.
- Request for assistance with creating/developing a resume.
- Concerns about committee chair and comprehensive exam process for graduate school.
- Concerns about entrepreneurial ideas, intellectual property and market research being shared with another department without consent.
- Question about alumni membership.
- Signing up for a meal plan and meal plan cancellation process due to non-enrollment.
- Concerns about email solicitations received from various apartment complexes and potential employers.
- Delay in reimbursement to Graduate Research Assistant for travel related expenses and student dismissed from work-study position; referrals to Academic Affairs Ombudsperson.
- Request to reverse election of credit/no credit option as student wished to receive a letter grade instead.

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Other continued (160)

- Concerns about job scam for position which was posted on RowdyJobs.
- Questions about Student Fitness for Professional Practice policy, Level III review and field placements/practicums.
- Concerns about suspension from one of the athletic programs.
- Questions about Campus Carry exclusion zones and student fees.
- On-campus accidents (i.e. collapse of chair).
- Referrals to the Child Development Center and Counseling Services.
- Referrals from Equal Opportunity Services (EOS) to assist with academic relief efforts.
- Inquiry about contact hours required for Independent Study Request.
- Request to participate in commencement without having met degree requirements due to failing health of family member.
- Questions about how the university holiday schedule is determined and requests for Good Friday and Veteran's Day to be designated as university holidays.
- Referrals to EOS (i.e. Title IX issues, pregnancy, nursing mothers, transgender student concern, discrimination and unfair treatment allegations, behavior of professor) and United Way (i.e. house fire, homeless students).

Advising-Undergraduate (105)

- Questions about utilizing the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) to meet degree program requirements.
- Reason for denial of petition.
- Minor requirements not completed; option to drop minor in order to graduate.
- Request for retroactive waiver of surcharges.
- Question about repeating courses/repeat policy.
- Inquiries about the possibility of adjusting the enrollment cap on courses to allow for registration.
- Concerns about lack of course offerings, waitlists and progression toward degree completion.
- Prerequisite override requests.
- Student lacking study abroad/signature experience.
- Questions about admission requirements for certain degree programs, pursuing two degrees from different colleges simultaneously and participating in commencement.
- Student with dual and transfer credit inquired about requesting a waiver of the University Peer Mentor (UPM) requirement.
- Confusion over pre-advising session and meeting with an academic advisor during scheduled advising session with a Texas Success Initiative (TSI) deficiency.
- Student wished to take more than 12 semester credit hours while on academic probation.
- Questions about next steps/onboarding process for newly admitted transfer student.
- Assistance with completing Curricular Practical Training (CPT) form.
- Requests for refund of duplicate course and removal of course from student record.

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Advising-Undergraduate (105)

- Questions about appeal, grievance and petition processes (i.e. course substitution, request for catalog extension, Petition for Exceeding 30/45 Semester Credit Hours (SCH) Above Degree Requirements, 30/45 SCH Fee Waiver Contract to Graduate, Limitation on Attempting Gateway Course, Six Drop Policy, Three-Attempt Rule, Undergraduate Credit Limitation, student denied admission to or exited from a college, waiver of core curriculum or university requirement, etc.).
- Lack of/delayed response from academic advisor and/or experienced difficulty in connecting with academic advisor.
- Inquiries about academic status, changing majors, core complete, evaluation of dual and transfer credit, math placement, prerequisites, registration, the Texas Common Course Numbering (TCCN) System and TSI.
- Questions about degree audit process, incorrect final degree audits/clearance for graduation, semester credit hours remaining to complete degree program did not match (i.e. DegreeWorks versus paper degree plan).
- Concerns about advising experience, miscommunication and/or allegations of being misadvised/receiving inconsistent or incorrect information.
- Advisor availability during peak periods, walk-in times, by appointment, etc.
- Questions about advising holds, auditing courses, Coordinated Admission Program (CAP), gateway courses, Quantitative Literacy Program (QLP) requirement, returning after a medical, mental health or regular withdrawal.

Academic and Grade Grievance (88)

- Request to take a restroom break during final exam was not permitted.
- Student was absent from class for observance of a religious holy day, but stated he/she was not allowed to make up an exam.
- Provided information about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Referrals to Institutional Compliance and Risk Services, Office of the Registrar, department chairs and deans.
- Provided information about grade of incomplete (IN), repeat policy and challenge examination process for undergraduate students.
- Complaint about study abroad.
- Student felt professor did not respect the opinions of students in his/her course.
- Student unable to participate in tour of outdoor research facility; expressed concern about how this would impact final grade in course.
- Concern that final grade in course did not accurately reflect homework assignments which had been completed and submitted.
- Professor arrives late or leaves course early.
- Professor not showing up for office hours.
- Concerns about implementation of approved accommodations.
- Lack of adequate instruction about how to use software required for course.

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Academic and Grade Grievance continued (88)

- Questions about course evaluation process and providing feedback anonymously versus through the online course evaluation process.
- Referrals to EOS as some students may have opted to engage in both grievance options (i.e. academic and grade grievance and EOS complaint processes) simultaneously due to nature of concerns.
- Access to online assignment in BlackBoard Learn was closed a day before the due date.
- Grades for assignments, quizzes, etc. were not posted to BlackBoard Learn in a timely manner.
- Allegations of discrimination, retaliation and/or unfair treatment.
- Allegation of scholastic dishonesty (i.e. cheating, plagiarism).
- Concerns about grading rubric and score distribution on exams.
- Concerns about behavior of professors, lack of professionalism, unfavorable comments, possible privacy violation and indifferent response to student impacted by Hurricane Harvey.
- Request to engage in the grade grievance process beyond the appeal timeframe.
- Concerns about classroom environment, management and structure of courses, teaching strategies, communicating with professors, former professors and academic departments.
- Provided students with information about the academic and grade grievance procedure.
- Requests for a copy of the Student Academic and Grade Grievance form.
- Contact information for levels of appeal: professor, department chair, dean, dean and vice provost of university college and/or the dean and vice provost of the graduate school.
- Questions about levels of appeal, status of grievance, time limit on submitting a grievance, appeal decision, change of grades, change of academic status, etc.
- Inquiries about Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) 2.40 – Administrative Grade Change policy.

Course-Attendance (86)

- Impact on course attendance due to Hurricane Harvey (i.e. students unable to return to San Antonio due to road closures, homes were flooded, clean up and salvaging efforts, relief efforts, active duty military service, etc.).
- Parent concerned about well-being of student due to no contact from student.
- Questions about instructor-initiated drop policy and impact to the Six Drop Policy, Three-Attempt Rule and Undergraduate Credit Limitation for dropped courses and/or withdrawals from the university.
- Provided information to parents about the Student Authorization to Release Education Records process, whereby students could complete a standing release form which would allow the university to disclose information to their designee(s).
- Provided information about the UTSA Bluebook.
- Process for appealing to the University Bursar.
- Inquiries about observance of religious holy days and place of worship.
- Questions about student status (i.e. active/inactive) due to uncertainty of when the student would be able to resume his/her studies.

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Course-Attendance continued (86)

- Student not permitted to complete/submit assignment early to attend an off-campus professional development conference related to his/her major.
- Referrals to the Financial Aid Office for questions about impact to financial aid award, Return of Title IV if student decided to drop a course(s) and/or withdraw from the university due to excessive absences and impact to Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) if student was issued a grade(s) of incomplete (IN).
- Referrals to Student Disability Services for information about registration process and possible academic accommodations based upon medical condition, recent diagnosis, return to school after accident/car accident, surgery, etc.
- Information about transitory/minor medical conditions.
- Referrals to Counseling Services and/or Student Health Services due to medical/mental health condition, personal and/or family issues, etc.
- Lack of or delayed response from professors once notified about reason for absences and extenuating circumstances; referrals to academic departments to request assistance with contacting professors.
- Contact information for professors; provided link to online directory.
- Inquiries about course attendance requirements and/or course participation grades as outlined in syllabi.
- Available options (i.e. drop course, possible grade of IN, reduced course load, extra credit, seeking approval to make-up missed assignments and/or complete assignments remotely, independent study request, medical, mental health or regular withdrawal, etc.).
- Assisted students with notifying professors about accidents/car accidents, death of a family member or relative, illnesses, hospitalizations and other extenuating circumstances (i.e. parent in hospice care, parent involved in a car accident, parent suffered a stroke).
- Provided assistance to parents when student was unable to contact the university himself/herself (i.e. student in coma, sedated/medicated due to accident, inpatient care).
- Inquiries about HOP 5.09 – Class Attendance policy, Excused Absence from Class Attendance Form and filing an academic and grade grievance/levels of appeal.

Financial Aid (86)

- Questions about projected budget, expected family contribution, end of term processing and disbursement of Pell grant.
- Inquiries about applying for and receiving financial aid during the summer (i.e. proration of grant, packaging block prevented student from being awarded).
- Request to expedite processing of Hazlewood application and impact to Hazlewood Legacy educational benefit due to medical, mental health or regular withdrawal.
- Request to increase subsidized loan funding due to change in classification.
- Questions about Return of Title IV guidelines due to dropped courses which resulted in a change in enrollment hours and withdrawing from the university and how the sixty-percent earned date is determined.
- Inquiry about placeholder on account for valedictorian exemption.

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Financial Aid continued (86)

- Questions about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and making corrections to the FAFSA.
- Concern that courses were dropped due to delay of processing SAP appeal.
- Questions about alternative/private loans, the College Access Loan (CAL), Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS), emergency loan application process, renewal requirements for the Texas B-On-Time Loan and applying for a book loan.
- Concern about processing of Student Cost of Attendance Adjustment form.
- Students selected for verification and questions about verification process (i.e. estimated processing time).
- Inquiry about Internal Revenue Service data retrieval tool and how to schedule a Skype appointment.
- Customer service concern.
- Questions about eligibility and maintenance requirements for the Texas Excellence Grant and selection criteria for the UTSAccess Program.
- Referrals to Financial Aid Ombudsperson.
- Adjustments to financial aid awards due to audits, changes in enrollment status, graduation, etc.
- Available funding options for international students (i.e. international student grant) and questions about eligibility requirements (i.e. valid F-1 Visa, I-20 form, etc.) for the international student grant.
- Funding options when aggregate loan limits have been reached.
- Special financial circumstances (i.e. dependency override, loss of income, seeking independent student status, etc.) and financial hardship requests (i.e. apartment fire, bankruptcy, currency devaluation, eviction, homeless students, Hurricane Harvey, etc.).
- Questions about outstanding documents and/or processes that needed to be submitted/completed for awarding and/or disbursement purposes (i.e. entrance and/or exit loan counseling requirements, submitting student information and/or I-94 forms, registering with selective service, processing of consortium agreement, letter from lender indicating student was no longer in default, etc.).
- Inquiry about SAP standards, appeal process for those who did not meet SAP standards or missed the SAP deadline and/or the impact on veteran educational benefits and status of SAP appeal.

Admissions-Undergraduate (65)

- Requests to transfer application fee to a future term and waive the application fee for application files which were too late to process.
- Request to change from special student status to degree seeking.
- Student unable to register; question about evaluation of community college course work and admissions hold.
- Questions about the holistic admissions review process and retaking the American College Test (ACT) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

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Admissions-Undergraduate continued (65)

- Requests to delay enrollment or cancel admission to the university due to extenuating circumstances.
- Appeal for extension to submit official transcript as computer system for transfer college/university was down.
- Request to update UTSA transcript as core complete.
- Request to visit campus; UTSA Day information.
- Applicants inadvertently applied for the incorrect term.
- Questions about onboarding process (i.e. orientation, testing, etc.) for newly admitted undergraduate students.
- Appeal process for those who missed the application or deferred admission deadline or were denied admission; checking on status of appeals/reason for denial.
- Inquiry about returning to UTSA and whether student status would still be active for future enrollment.
- Status of incomplete files during peak periods; checking if credentials had been received; monitoring admission status via the Automated Student Access Program (ASAP).
- Questions about application deadlines and admission requirements for various student types (e.g. freshmen, transfer, international, special, non-degree seeking and transient).
- Inquiries about admission policies (i.e. beyond initial admission/acceptance to the university) for various majors at UTSA.
- Questions about deferred admission, early admission for high school students, provisional admission, reapplying to the university including after first or subsequent dismissal and the Joint Undergraduate Matriculation Program (JUMP).
- Inquiries about academic fresh start, contact information for Transfer Specialists, transfer plans and the Transfer Academy for Tomorrow's Engineers (TATE).

Withdrawal (65)

- Appeal to update academic status after approval of mental health withdrawal request.
- Inquiries about financial appeal process and Student Petition to Waive Additional Charges for Enrolling in a Course for a Third Time after completion of a regular withdrawal.
- Questions about the impact to the Limitation on Attempting Gateway Courses, Six Drop Policy, Three-Attempt Rule and Undergraduate Credit Limitation for reduced course load requests and/or a withdrawal from the university.
- Inquiry about whether the submission of additional supporting medical documentation would change the effective date of withdrawal.
- Provided grade of incomplete information.
- Impact of withdrawal on university and outside scholarships, Texas Tomorrow Fund and expected date of graduation.
- Referrals to academic advising, the Financial Aid Office and One Stop Enrollment Center.
- Concerns about processing time of medical or mental health withdrawal requests.

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Withdrawal continued (65)

- Students initially withdrew under the regular withdrawal process and then pursued a retroactive medical and/or mental health withdrawal. This resulted in the return of additional financial aid funding because the withdrawal date changed to an earlier date due to the onset of the medical and/or mental health condition.
- Request for contact information for professors.
- Fiscal services hold due to previous withdrawal.
- Assisted with withdrawal process (i.e. faxed form, took completed form to the Office of the Registrar, etc.) when students were unable to complete the process on their own due to hospitalization, severe medical conditions, etc.
- Questions about the regular withdrawal process including instructions about how to withdraw via ASAP, where to find the withdrawal form online, etc.
- Inquiries about medical and mental health withdrawal processes, reduced course load requests, whether students could pursue a second medical and/or mental health withdrawal, appeal options and contact information for Counseling Services and Student Health Services.
- Questions about drop/withdrawal deadlines, refund timeframes, effective date of withdrawal and impact on Return of Title IV, veteran funding and/or third-party payments, cancellation of a student's financial aid award, meal plan and/or housing contract/lease and return of parking permit and textbooks.
- Retroactive withdrawal requests and emergency financial assistance requests due to extenuating circumstances.

Fiscal Services (63)

- Question about establishing an authorized user via Rowdy Pay.
- Statement of account indicating refunds received and itemized copy of bill.
- Course schedule dropped due to non-payment (i.e. payment notices had been sent, but student had not updated his/her preferred email address).
- Request to discontinue withdrawal of monthly payment due to change of bank account.
- Question about charges and payments for the Executive Master of Business Administration degree program.
- Request to expedite processing of refund after withdrawal (i.e. student paid for tuition and fees with a cashier's check) and checking on status of refund.
- Inquiries about accumulated interest charges, whether emergency loan repayment could be delayed and completing a transcript request form.
- Processing of valedictorian exemption and requests to delay use of valedictorian exemption.
- Requests for assistance by parents of deceased or missing students concerning their son's or daughter's account.
- Question about whether the Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Cyber Security would be an eligible degree program to pursue with regard to utilizing the peace officer exemption.
- Requests to waive interest charges and late payment fees.

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Fiscal Services continued (63)

- Student did not agree with denial of tuition rebate request.
- Partial payment requests to permit registration and/or release of transcript for educational or employment purposes.
- Providing supporting documentation from professors indicating non-attendance for financial appeals.
- Requests for assistance due to financial hardship.
- Questions about applying for an emergency tuition and fee loan, paying online, installment payment options, posting of payments, payment deadlines and refund periods.
- Fiscal services or Perkins loan hold on account; unable to register, receive diploma, request transcript, obtain enrollment verification or apply for a scholarship.
- Questions about outstanding balance due to medical, mental health or regular withdrawal, Return of Title IV and Undergraduate Credit Limitation surcharges,
- Account sent to collections, balance owed from previous terms, scheduling payment arrangements and signing a payment agreement.

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VI. Recommendations

A Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) review was conducted at the Main Campus. Information obtained from this review will be useful to future campus mapping and wayfinding initiatives.

For 2014-2017, the following suggestions were submitted to appropriate university stakeholders for consideration and/or actions were completed based upon inquiries or concerns received by the Student Ombudsperson:

- Update the *Academic and Grade Grievance Procedure* section of the Information Bulletin and Graduate Catalog to include procedural information for allegations of discrimination.
- Include a link to the *Student Academic and Grade Grievance Form* within the *Academic and Grade Grievance Procedure* (i.e. in the Information Bulletin, Graduate Catalog and under *Section XI. Forms and Tools/Online Processes* of HOP 2.40 – Administrative Grade Change Policy) and include additional procedural information about when to use the form for consistent application of the grievance process across all colleges.

The *Student Academic and Grade Grievance Form* was updated in March of 2015 to indicate that the form must be used when initiating a grievance at the department chair level. A link to the form was also added to the procedural information sections of the Information Bulletin and Graduate Catalog and to the Registrar Forms website.

- Include links to payment deadline information for housing and meal plans on the Fiscal Services *Payment Deadlines* website.
- Add a statement to the *Overall Bachelor Degree Requirements* section of the Undergraduate Catalog pertaining to the restriction on topics related course work when it pertains to free elective credit.
- Link to information regarding colleges/departments which have additional requirements which would need to be met in order to be accepted into a particular major/degree at UTSA (i.e. College of Business Undergraduate Admission Policy for the Bachelor of Business Administration Degree, Admission Policy for the Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology and the Bachelor of Science Degree in Microbiology and Immunology, etc.) on the main *Undergraduate Admissions* website.
- Add a priority seating sign for persons with disabilities to newer shuttle buses. Older shuttle buses were equipped with the sign.
- The Undergraduate Credit Limitation email message, which is sent to students who have exceeded the semester credit hour limitation, was updated to clarify available appeal options.

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VI. Recommendations continued

- Clarifying language was added to the Information Bulletin to explain that recognition of University Latin Hours at commencement is based upon the grade point average for the last semester completed and that courses in progress are not counted in the commencement honors grade point average calculation. University Latin Honors and the completion of a second or subsequent bachelor's degree was also addressed.
- A list of off-campus apartment complexes near the Downtown Campus was added to the Off-Campus Housing Options section of the Student Life webpage.
- The Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Cyber Security (formerly the Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in Infrastructure Assurance) was determined to be an eligible degree program with regard to the exemption for Peace Officers Enrolled in Certain Criminal Justice or Law Enforcement Courses. The list of eligible courses was updated on the Peace Officer Exemption Form.

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Abbreviations

ACT	American College Test used to determine academic readiness for college
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
CPT	Curricular Practical Training
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival
DegreeWorks	Online platform which allows undergraduate students and their advisors to create semester by semester course plans and run degree audits to monitor progress toward degree completion
ExCET/TEExES	Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas/Texas Examinations of Educator Standards
EOS	Equal Opportunity Services
F-1	Non-immigrant student visa which permits academic studies and/or language training programs in the United States
FAME	Facilitated Acceptance to Medical Education
FCSA	Foreign Credentials Service of America
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
HOP	Handbook of Operating Procedures
IN	Grade of incomplete
I-20	Certificate of eligibility for non-immigrant (F-1) student status for academic and language students
I-94	Initial nonimmigrant arrival-departure document
JUMP	Joint Undergraduate Matriculation Program
MCAT	Medical College Admission Test
Paisano	Independent Collegiate Student Newspaper
PLUS	Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students
QLP	Quantitative Literacy Program
Return of Title IV	Return of unearned financial aid
Roadrunner Pantry	Resource area which provides free food and toiletries to students
RowdyJobs	Online job database
Rowdy Pay	Online payment portal
Rowdy Ready	Onboarding/To-Do List Information for undergraduate students
SAP	Satisfactory Academic Progress
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test used to determine academic readiness for college
SCH	Semester Credit Hours
TAS	Texas Accessibility Standards
TATE	Transfer Academy for Tomorrow's Engineers
TCCN	Texas Common Course Numbering System
Title IX	Federal law that prohibits discrimination based on gender in educational institutions which receive federal financial assistance

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Abbreviations continued

TSI	Texas Success Initiative
UPM	University Peer Mentor
UTSA	University of Texas at San Antonio
UTSAAccess	Program provides grants and/or scholarships to cover tuition and mandatory fees for up to four years
UTSA Bluebook	Public access to department, faculty, course information, etc.
UTSA Day	Recruiting event for undergraduate prospective, applicant and admitted students and their families
Visa	Conditional authorization granted by a country to enter and temporarily remain within, or to leave that country
VPSA	Vice President for Student Affairs
WebCT	World Wide Web Course Tools

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