

# TRiO/Student Support Services

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## TRiO/Student Support Services Mission Statement

TRiO's Student Support Services offers support services to economically disadvantaged students, first generation college students and students with disabilities. Program participants receive tutoring in academic areas, career, personal and academic counseling, and attend cultural and leadership activities outside the university.

## Project Objectives and Accomplishments

The objectives of TRiO/Student Support Services Program at Texas A&M International University are: to increase the number of students that are retained at the university, increase the number of students who are in good academic standing and increase the number of students that graduate.

### Accomplishments:

#### Retention

Student Support Services served 163 students during its first year-second cycle, 2005-2006. Of these students, 24 were first time freshmen, 14 sophomores, 46 juniors, 78 seniors, 1 transfer student.

**Benchmark:** 65% of all SSS participants will persist toward the completion of their academic program.

2001-2002: 72.00%  
2002-2003: 82.14%  
2003-2004: 80.00%  
2004-2005: 87.50%  
2005-2006: 93.75%  
**Fall 2006: 98.40%**

**This objective was met.** The benchmark is to have 65% of all TRiO SSS participants persist towards the completion of their academic program. Research shows that retention improves when students are integrated into the University community and build relationships with University faculty, staff, and other students. In 2005-06 the retention rate was 93.75 %, in Fall 06 the retention rate was 98.40% exceeding the 65% benchmark rate. Several activities contributed to the retention of our students:

- 1) Events: Many program participants attended the University's Distinguished Lecture Series and had the opportunity to hear nationally known speakers on a diverse set of topics. The program staff provided participants with numerous opportunities to attend cultural and academic activities both on and off campus. These activities introduced TRiO/SSS participants to academic and cultural life beyond the classroom.

- 2) Workshops: The program staff conducted individual workshops based on student need that promoted learning skills, time management, stress reduction, memory enhancement, research techniques and technology. Through these workshops, TRiO/SSS participants received additional support and established closer ties with program staff.
  
- 3) Career, Academic and Personal Advising: TRiO/SSS participants were assessed using the TRiO Needs assessment and were provided assistance accordingly. The program staff mandated students to set appointments with Director and Academic Coordinator to discuss their individual needs.

## Graduation

**Benchmark:** 29 % of all TRiO SSS participants classified as seniors will persist to graduate on or before their sixth year of studies.

2001-2002: 100.00%  
2002-2003: 91.00%  
2003-2004: 50.00%  
2004-2005: 87.50%  
**2005-2006: 85.71%**

**This objective was met.** The benchmark is to have 29% of all TRiO SSS participants classified as seniors persist and graduate on or before their sixth year of study. In academic year 2005-2006, 85.71% of all TRiO SSS participants classified as seniors graduated on or before their sixth year of studies, far exceeding the 29% benchmark.

## Good Academic Standing

**Benchmark:** 80% of all TRiO SSS participants will earn a minimum GPA of at least 2.0, thus achieving the necessary academic performance levels to remain in good academic standing.

2001-2002: 80.86%  
2002-2003: 96.93%  
2003-2004: 94.77%  
2004-2005: 97.39%  
**2005-2006: 91.25%**

**This objective was met.** The benchmark is to have 80% of all TRiO SSS participants earn a minimum GPA of at least 2.0, thus achieving the necessary academic performance levels to remain in good academic standing at the university. In academic year 2005-2006, 91.25% of TRiO SSS participants achieved a 2.0 or better, exceeding the 80% benchmark.

## Tutoring for College Level Courses

2001-2002: 71.06%  
2002-2003: 60.00%  
2003-2004: 73.00%  
2004-2005: 81.75%  
**2005-2006: 87.39%**

The objective was to have 65% of TRiO/SSS participants being tutored in college level courses earn a "C" or better in the course. **This objective was met.** One hundred three students were tutored for a total of 1413 hours. Thirty-three of those students received tutoring in more than one area. The rate of TRiO/SSS students earning a "C" or better on the college level course was 87.39%. It should be noted that of the 4 students that earned "F's", 1 student earned an "F's" in Math 1314, 2 earned an "F" in English 1301 and 1 earned an "F" in History 1301. There were 11 students who received tutoring for college level course(s) who withdrew from the course; those students were included in the cohort. Those students withdrew from the following courses: Math 1314, English 2327 and 2328, Chemistry 2423 and 2425 and Accounting 3350.

## Academic, Career and Personal Advising

2001-2002: 89.00%  
2002-2003: 83.75%  
2003-2004: 100.00%  
2004-2005: 100.00%  
2005-2006: 91.88%

The objective was to have 90% or (144) of TRiO/SSS students attend an average of six hours of individualized academic and career advising, personal counseling and related activities annually. A total of 2927 hours was clocked in by 147 students. This objective was met.

## Student Grant Aid

Student Support Services awarded \$16,909 in Grant Aid to program students. Eighty-two program participants qualified to receive monies based on their **unmet** need and **good academic standing**. Funds that were left over were equitably distributed among students whose family income fell between \$0 and \$25,000. Student scholarships were awarded during the Fall and both summer semesters.

Number of Students	Scholarship Amount	Total Amount Awarded
65	\$ 100.00	\$ 6500.00
1	\$ 213.00	\$ 213.00
1	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
1	\$ 313.00	\$ 313.00
3	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00
1	\$ 385.00	\$ 385.00
1	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
3	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00
1	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00
1	\$ 711.00	\$ 711.00
1	\$ 755.00	\$ 755.00
1	\$ 830.00	\$ 830.00
1	\$ 1238.00	\$ 1238.00
1	\$ 1664.00	\$ 1664.00

## Activities

Program year 2005-2006 proved to be a very successful year for the TRiO SSS Program at Texas A&M International University. The first SSS event was in early September, orientation for all program participants. Presentations were given by Lisa Ramirez, Student Records Specialist; Lisa Valdez, Student Employment Specialist and Stan Pearson II, Associate Director of Student Activities. An overview of the program's objectives and services was given by the SSS director and academic coordinator. Program students had the opportunity to mingle and meet fellow program participants through icebreakers. STAR Club officers gave a brief presentation about club goals and community service projects. Following the event all students were invited to a dinner attended by most of the orientation attendees.

In April 2006, forty students attended Disney's production of "The Lion King" at the Majestic Theater in San Antonio, Texas. Students were mesmerized by the live action of the onstage performance. This day trip included a visit to the theater presentation and a delightful dinner at Sea Island.

Three technology workshops and one research workshop were held to impart much needed information about computer systems, software/programs and research that is necessary to succeed in university studies and experiences. These workshops were presented by SSS tutors on an individual and group basis throughout the year to accommodate student schedules.

The STAR Club is an integral part of the SSS Program. All program participants automatically become club members but participation is the student's choice. Approximately 65 students are active club members. The club's primary goal is to perform community service. Club members garnered many hours of community service throughout the Laredo area such as: at the Santa Maria Adult Daycare Center, Macdonell Elementary School, TAMIU's Autmus Fest and have adopted a 2 mile section of Highway 359 that they must clean at least three times a year. Club members also held several fundraisers to help pay for community service activities and to raise funds to award scholarships to active club members. This year the STAR club gave thirteen one hundred dollar scholarships to thirteen of its most active members.

In July 2006, eight TRiO students, along with their sponsors, Mrs. Valle and Mrs. Garza, visited Los Angeles to attend a conference organized by the National Council of La Raza. This gathering exposed students to the impact the growing Hispanic community is having on this country. Bill Clinton and Arnold Schwarzenegger were speakers at the event and praise, cheered, and encouraged the expansion of the Hispanic population. This trip was also a chance for TRiO students to interact with Hispanic students from all over the country and taught them that even though they live in different parts of the country and have never met each other, they were bonded through their unique lives and experiences as Hispanics.

Academic success and participation were recognized in August 2006 with a banquet honoring all TRiO/SSS students and their parents. Students were presented with certificates of participation, leadership and academic achievement awards. Gold lapel pins and Highest Academic Achievement certificates were awarded to students achieving GPA's of 3.50 to 4.00. Silver lapel pins and Outstanding Academic Achievement certificates were given to students achieving GPA's of 3.00 to 3.49. STAR Club officers were recognized and given a token of appreciation by the out going president on behalf of the SSS Program. Some of the most rewarding moments of the evening were provided by students who gave testimonies about the positive experiences and enriching contributions that the program has made to their educational and career goals.