



TRIO

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

TRIO Student Support Services
ANNUAL REPORT 2016



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO
University Teaching Center

AY15 REPORT TO UT COMMUNITY

TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) is one of the oldest retention programs at The University of Toledo. Since 2001, it has been exclusively dedicated to students who are the most academically vulnerable for attrition: low-income, first-generation and students with disabilities. SSS improves academic outcomes and fosters strong, independent learners by understanding the unique needs of this population. For the past four years, 80 percent or more of SSS students achieved “good academic standing” at the end of the year, and their persistence rates averaged 76 percent.

SSS exists because Congress recognizes that financial aid alone is insufficient to ensure college success. Overall, students at The University of Toledo who receive the Federal Pell Grant or Federal student loans have lower 6-year graduation rates than students who do not¹. The students who SSS serves arrive at The University of Toledo underprepared for the required level and amount of work they need to reach their goal; this results in significantly lower persistence and graduation rates. In light of this, SSS’s proactive advising services and retention programming resulted in 81 percent of SSS students (130) persisting to the next academic year or achieving graduation in AY15².

In AY15

56 students (35%) achieved
a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

99 Students (62%) earned
a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher.

¹Office of Institutional Research. (2016, January 14). Institutional Research - Retention and Graduation Reports. Retrieved from <http://oir.utoledo.edu/rg.shtml>

²SSS operates on a calendar year of 9/1/14 to 8/31/2015. All information presented in this report is based on Fall 2014, Spring 2015, and Summer 2015. Persistence is based on enrollment for Fall 2015.

PURPOSE

Participation in SSS is a multi-year commitment between a student and program staff. Due to its intensive program structure, TRIO SSS served 160 eligible students in AY15.

69%

Sixty-nine percent of SSS participants comes from families where neither parent graduated from college. First generation families generally do not understand the post-secondary process and cannot provide adequate support or guidance on navigating college policies.

77%

Seventy-seven percent of students were identified as low income. Attrition is especially damaging to low income students, who will generally struggle to overcome educational debt if they are unable to complete their degrees.

30%

Thirty percent of students are registered with the Office of Student Disability Services. In addition to typical reasons for dropping out of college (financial problems, personal problems, work), students with disabilities are impacted by the stress of the college environment, difficulty with required courses, medical conditions and problems with medications.

SNAPSHOT

The University of Toledo has a significant population of students who could benefit from participating in SSS. UT reported an undergraduate enrollment of 16,090 students in fall 2014. Forty-eight percent (7,700) were eligible for TRIO Student Support Services. That semester welcomed 4,230 new, direct-from-high school, adult and transfer students. Fifty-eight percent (2,446) of new students were eligible for SSS.

The TRIO SSS project employs three professional staff members, two graduate assistants, 10 student mentors and tutor mentors. Staff share similar college and family experiences as the students served; because of this, they can better relate to students and mentor them throughout their post-secondary experiences at UT.

BREAKDOWN OF CLASS STANDING OF STUDENTS FOR AY15

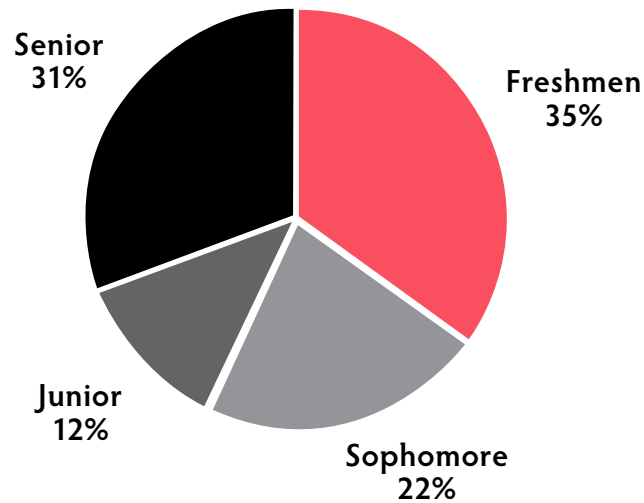


Figure 1 Class Standing All Students

Twenty-six percent were non-traditional-aged; 74 percent were between 19-24 years.

NEW STUDENTS

Of the 78 UT students who applied to SSS in 2015, 75 were eligible and 70 became participants. At the time of admission to the TRIO SSS program:

- 53% (37) were New Freshmen with zero credit hours
- 12% (8) were Returning Freshmen
- 19% (14) were Sophomores
- 3% (2) were Juniors
- 13% (9) were Seniors

More than half (57 percent) of the new SSS students received the Pell Grant, and 85 percent (60) were enrolled for fall 2016.

PERFORMANCE

SSS impacts students by targeting three standard, measurable objectives: increase good academic-standing rates; increase graduation rates (as measured by six years); and increase persistence rates of students who join the SSS project.

Objective	Goal	Attained AY15	Attained AY14	Attained AY13
Persistence	65%	81%	74%	76%
Good Academic Standing	80%	84%	83%	80%
Bachelor's Degree (6-yr)	35%	50%	56%	44%

Figure 2 Standard Objectives

SSS achieves these objectives through initial, comprehensive, academic assessments, ongoing needs assessments, and academic monitoring focusing on matriculation and GPA. SSS offers a detailed plan of services to each student which are evaluated each year—SSS implements an outcomes-based evaluation plan to ensure that, in addition to achieving its objectives, the SSS project also implements its programming effectively, has a positive impact on students, and identifies opportunities for improvement.

Objective	Activity	Performance Measures	Data Source	Outcome
Persistence	All Activities and Services	75% of students will rate the overall program with a rating of 3 or higher out of 4	28 Year end Evaluations	92% Positive
Good Academic Standing	Tutoring Referrals to LEC, WC, SI Academic Monitoring	40% of students who received 5 or more tutoring sessions in same course without dropping will earn a C or better in that course	Sign in-sheets, attendance logs, transcripts Fall: 35 courses Spring:32 Courses	78% in 67 courses, 46 students earned C or better
6 Year Graduation Rates	Advising Career Planning	20% of active students will receive career counseling	Sign-sheets and staff contacts as recorded in the student database	30% Positive

Figure 3 Example Outcomes from the AY15 Evaluation Plan

PROGRAMMING

Academic services administered through the SSS program are comprehensive, extending beyond traditional services offered by college advisors. Throughout students' enrollment, SSS staff establish regular meeting schedules and encourage interaction with their professors and advising staff of their individual colleges. While SSS' primary focus is ensuring students' academic success, it is important to assist students in their personal and professional development as well. Fifty-five percent (88) of students received four or more direct services (non-referral) during AY15.

During student meetings, SSS advisors address issues related to academics (securing tutoring support, course selection and registration and degree audit requirements), as well as non-academic issues (understanding financial aid, getting involved in student life and becoming familiar with on-campus processes). Additionally, each student is encouraged to hone his or her skills to achieve success, to acquire leadership opportunities, and to take advantage of resources that best target career goals. The average time spent per student engaged in a student meeting was 41 minutes during AY15.

CALENDAR

Every year, TRIO SSS provides a schedule of activities and events for students to ensure both academic success and access to leadership opportunities.

Rocketing to Success - workshops and individual sessions aid SSS students into becoming more effective in college and introducing college success skills. SSS hosted 17 group workshops in AY15.

Welcome Back Celebration – open house to meet mentors, tutors, staff and new students

Financial Aid 101 – information forum presented by Rocket Solution Central

Spring Into Summer – lecture to highlight lifelong learning, followed by a reception to recognize achievement

The Cost of Oversharing – financial literacy program in partnership with Directions Credit Union

Career series – major and career exploration, and résumé writing and interview skills presented by the Center for Experiential Learning and Career Services

In AY15, 65 students were surveyed the following question:

What is the maximum amount of federal aid that you can borrow as an undergraduate student?

Eighty-nine percent incorrectly responded, "There is no limit as long as you are earning a degree."

Lacking a basic understanding of borrowing limits increases attrition for students who have no other method for financing their degrees.

By the end of the year, one-third of SSS students received basic financial aid advising, including 57 percent of new students.

As a result of these long-term efforts, 93 percent of students who received financial aid (130/140) persisted to fall 2015 or graduated.

Figure 4 Financial Aid Advising

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC NEEDS

Each new student is given an intake assessment to review SSS services and gain knowledge of a student's current major, semester goals and previous semester achievements or concerns. This intake includes a study skills assessment to determine a student's current inventory of study skills and evaluates the student's understanding of academic policies and the financial aid process.

Each semester, students complete self-assessment plans that detail strategies for successfully completing the semester, and reviewing their current academic plans of study and graduation goals.

EARLY ALERT SYSTEM

Progress reports are completed by faculty and instructors to provide early alert systems for struggling students and to provide positive feedback to students performing well. Feedback empowers students to monitor their own class performances, revise their current academic strategies, and plan for the next semester.

RESOURCES

TRIO SSS is located in Suite 0300 of William S. Carlson Library, Main Campus. Carlson Library also hosts the Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) and the Writing Center (WC). Being centrally located near other success offices benefits all participants by making it easier to access resources.

The SSS study area is designed to provide easy access to SSS and library resources. The location is Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant, with a floor plan conducive to learning for all types of students. It is a quiet area, with movable walls to reduce multi-sensory distractions for hyper-sensitive students, and includes power outlets for electronic devices.

With the support of UT Libraries and Information Technologies, SSS features a Technology Lab equipped with eight computers and a network printer. Through the support of UT's colleges, SSS has been able to maintain a selection of lower-level math and science textbooks that have been superseded by new editions. These texts are housed in the Resource Lab.

COORDINATION

All program activities are designed to improve the quality of student life and learning for program participants. The cooperation and support of the University community is vital in ensuring student retention in both the SSS program and at the University.

Over the years, our program has built relationships with offices across campus in order to best advocate for the needs of our students.

TRIO programs were instituted by the federal government in 1965 to ensure equal educational opportunity for all Americans, regardless of race, ethnic background or economic circumstance. As the recipient of a five-year federal grant from the Department of Education, TRIO Student Support Services will continue to offer targeted and consistent retention services in a supportive environment for students who traditionally have lower degree attainment rates.

During the 2014-2015 fiscal year, The University of Toledo's TRIO Student Support Services received \$231,103 in grant monies to fund services for 160 or more eligible students. Although not required, The University of Toledo contributed resources and funding toward the project, which included matching dollars for student grants and other program costs associated with the primary SSS budget.

Robin Stone
Director

AY15 REPORT TO UT COMMUNITY ADDENDA

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

With the support of the College of Graduate Studies, SSS provided professional advising and programming experience for graduate students. These students acquire interpersonal effectiveness and leadership experience for future careers in higher-education, counseling, and nonprofit organizations.

As members of the staff, graduate assistants receive an extensive training prior to meeting with students. Additionally, graduate interns receive the same training.

This comprehensive advisor training includes:

- » Student development theories and characteristics of first-generation students
- » Confidentiality and privacy
- » Basic UT policies, regulations, and procedures

Throughout the academic year, graduate staff receive additional training during staff meetings and whenever possible are offered opportunities to attend training seminars and conferences.

SNAPSHOT OF IMPACT

In AY15, two graduate assistants met with a total of 125 students for a recorded 265 hours.

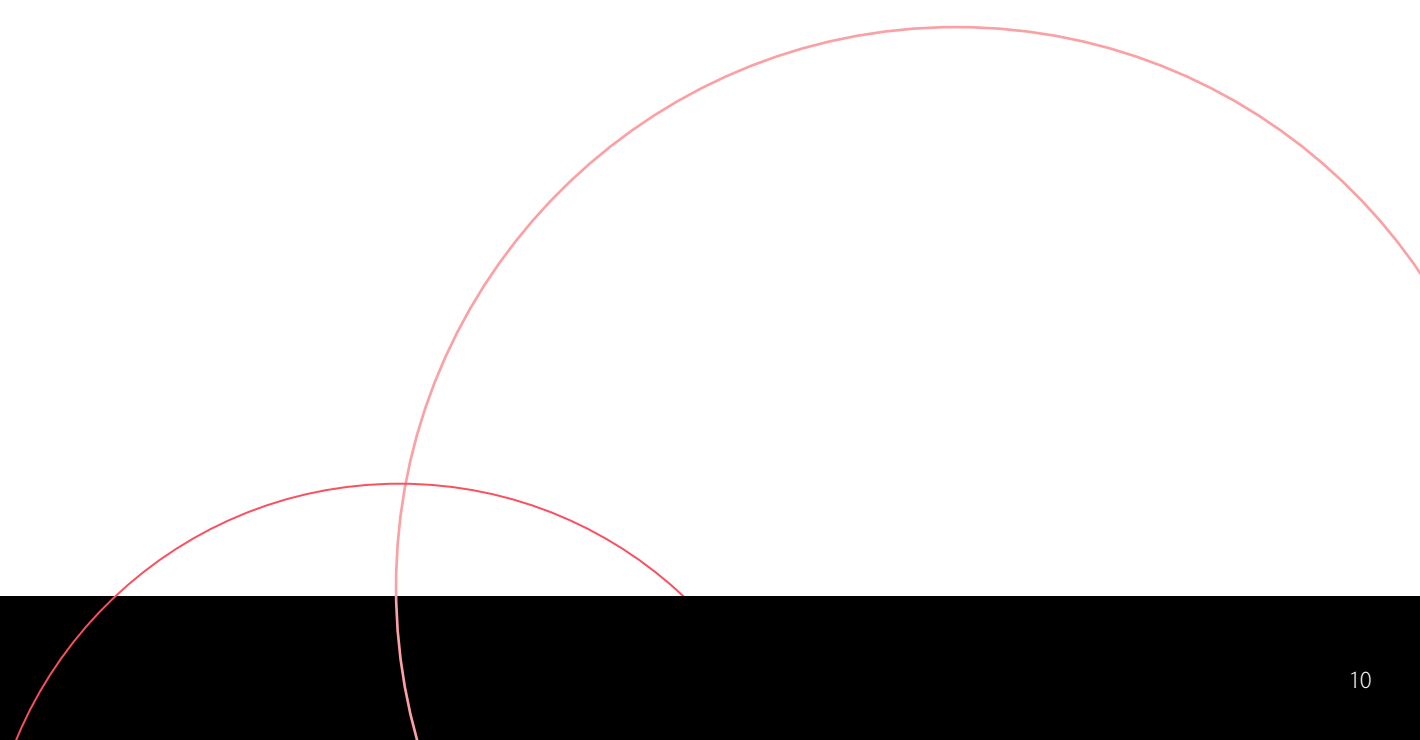
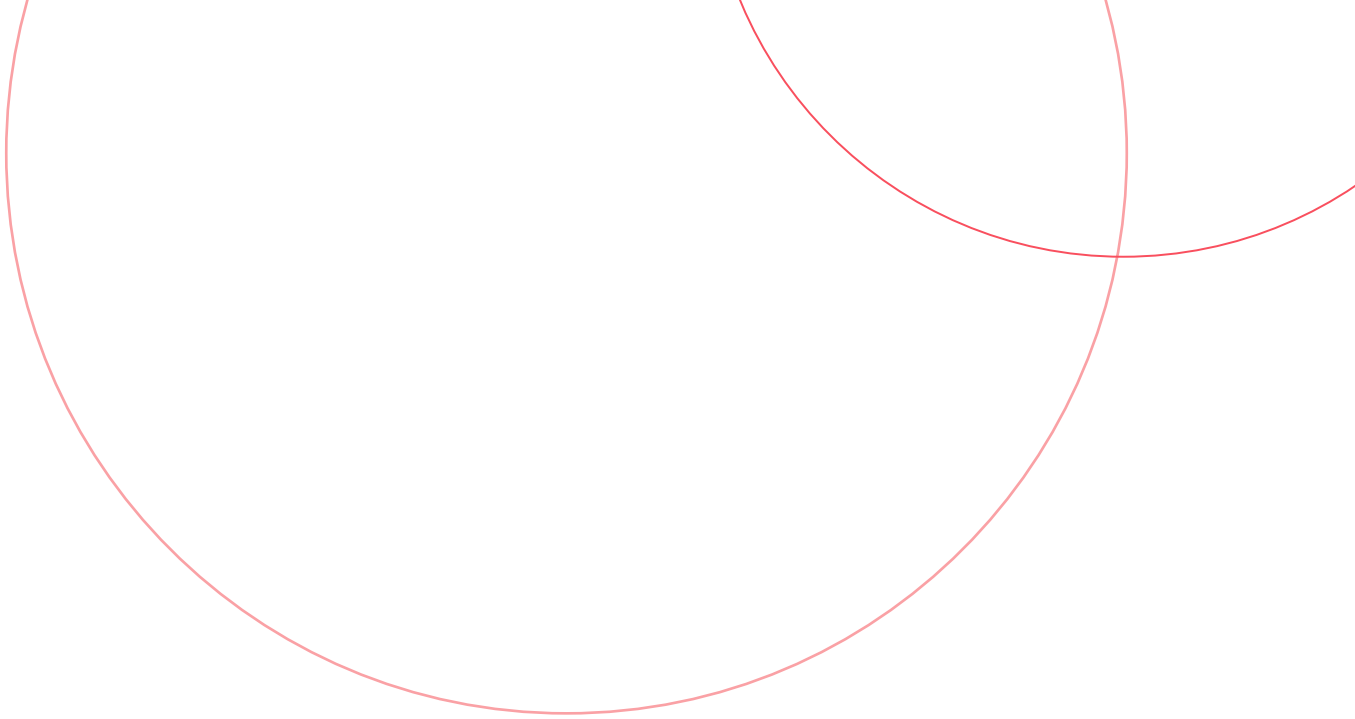
The complete impact of the graduate assistant to the SSS program is immeasurable.

However, we are confident that the experience benefits the student. A review of LinkedIn profiles of six recent GAs and interns who worked in SSS between AY13 and AY15 found that four are working in fields related to their graduate program, one is employed in a different industry, and the sixth is completing an internship program.

Detailed breakdown of services:

- Academic Advising**
- 125 Students, 119 hours
- Academic Tutoring**
- 43 Students, 73 hours
- Career Counseling**
- 43 Students, 10 hours
- Personal Counseling**
- 74 Students, 22 hours

Figure 5 Breakdown of Key Services Provided by Graduate Students





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