# How First-Generation College and Underrepresented Students Can Overcome Obstacles to Attaining a College Education: Handbook for a New Family Tradition

By

Ismael Amaya

An Applied Research Project
(Political Science 5397)
Submitted to the Department of Political Science
Texas State University
In Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Public Administration
February 2010

Faculty Approval:

_____
Patricia M. Shields, Ph.D.

_____
Ron Brown, Ph.D.

_____
Nancy Warren, M.A.

Abstract

In research and in practice, two similar but significantly different definitions arise for the term *First Generation College Student (FGCS)*. The difference is whether it refers to students neither of whose parents attended vs. graduated from a four-year college. Using the completion standard, 25-50% of all college students are First Generation; in community colleges, that numbers is estimated to be 75%. These percentages are significant and would seem encouraging when thinking that so many students in college are taking a different educational path than their parents did (or were able to), however, enrollment does not equate to completion.

Unfortunately, FGCSs do not graduate at the same rates as student's who have at least one parent who completed a college education. The discrepancy exists even when accounting for factors such as academic preparation, achievement scores, and high school grades. Being First Generation does not only impact the student who may have little guidance when making the decision to pursue a college education; it impacts the families who may wish to help but do not have the knowledge or experience to offer guidance and may themselves encounter anxiety as their student ventures into unfamiliar territory. Narrowing the college experience knowledge gap between FGCSs and Continuing Generation College Students can help universities narrow the achievement gap between the two groups.

The purpose of this descriptive project is three-fold, (1) To identify factors that may impede FGCSs and underrepresented students from successfully transitioning to and completing college, (2) to determine and describe the structure of a handbook that informs current/potential Texas State students and their families about the college experience and identifies available resources to overcome college challenges, and (3) to develop a handbook that Texas State can use as a recruitment tool and that students and parents can use as a guide through the student's selection of and transition to college.

About the Author

Ismael Amaya, a First Generation College Student himself, was born and raised in Brownsville, TX. He was first exposed to college the summer after his high school freshman year when he participated in a work/educational program funded by the Job Training Partnership Act and hosted at Texas State University-San Marcos, then Southwest Texas State University. The two-month residential program provided motivation and a one-time scholarship of $1,000 (it seemed like a golden ticket then!) to pursue a college degree; his family provided the support and encouragement.

Upon graduation from high school, Mr. Amaya enrolled at Texas State. There, the support of staff in offices such as Multicultural Student Affairs and Campus Activities & Student Organizations allowed him to be engaged in leadership activities and student organizations (with the Association of Mexican American Students being his home and family away from home). After completing his Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Mr. Amaya worked for five years in the community surrounding Texas State (3 ½ of those years with at-risk, mostly first generation college, and many first generation high school students) before returning to Texas State in a professional capacity. He has worked in the Dean of Students Office since 2002.

This Applied Research Project and accompanying handbook mark Mr. Amaya's completion of the Texas State Masters in Public Administration (MPA) program. In addition to his work, studies, and family, he served on the MPA Advisory Board and on the board of the CenTex Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. Mr. Amaya now looks forward to spending more time with his family in San Marcos and Brownsville.

*Dedication:*

*To my family, thank you for your support. With most special appreciation, to my girls, for your patience and understanding during the many hours I spent away while you were growing. Jessica, let's read! Cassandra, let's play! ¡Que siga la tradición!*

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH PURPOSE ..... 1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ..... 8
CHAPTER 3: SETTING ..... 39
CHAPTER 4: REASON FOR A HANDBOOK & IT'S CONTENT ..... 42
Reason for a Handbook ..... 42
Components of a Handbook (Conceptual Framework) ..... 44
4.1 PRE-COLLEGE ACTIVITIES ..... 45
4.2 TRANSITION PROGRAMS ..... 49
4.3 FINANCING AN EDUCATION ..... 51
4.4 BUILDING COMMUNITY AND CONNECTIONS ..... 53
4.5 MAINTAINING FAMILY CONNECTIONS ..... 58
4.6 EARLY INTERVENTION AND CRISES SERVICES ..... 61
4.7 ACADEMIC ADVISING AND SUPPORT ..... 63
4.8 SPECIAL NEEDS AND POPULATIONS ..... 67
4.9 GLOSSARY/CONCEPTS ..... 69
Summary ..... 69
Table 4.1 – Conceptual Framework Table ..... 70
CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY ..... 73
Table 5.1 – Operationalization Table ..... 73
Table 5.2 – Interviewees ..... 84
Table 5.3 – Interviewees & Categories Reviewed ..... 86
Table 5.4 – Site Visits ..... 88
Table 5.5 – Websites Reviewed ..... 90
Human Subjects Protection ..... 92
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION ..... 94
6.1 PRE-COLLEGE ACTIVITIES ..... 96
6.2 TRANSITION PROGRAMS ..... 101
6.3 FINANCING AN EDUCATION ..... 103
6.4 BUILDING COMMUNITY AND CONNECTIONS ..... 105
6.5 MAINTAINING FAMILY CONNECTIONS ..... 108
6.6 EARLY INTERVENTION AND CRISES SERVICES ..... 111
6.7 ACADEMIC ADVISING AND SUPPORT ..... 114
6.8 SPECIAL NEEDS AND POPULATIONS ..... 116
6.9 GLOSSARY/CONCEPTS ..... 118
CLOSING ..... 120
BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 122
Appendix A: Interview Guide ..... 127
Appendix B: Texas State Univ. Inst. Review Board (IRB) Exemption Approval ..... 128
Appendix C: Handbook ..... 129

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & RESEARCH PURPOSE

## Introduction

In 2000, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) "cautioned that there was a looming crisis in higher education in Texas" (THECB 2009, ii). This was due, in part, to the decline in "the proportion of Texans enrolled in higher education" (THECB 2009, ii). In response, the THECB adopted *Closing the Gaps by 2015: The Texas Higher Education Plan*.

The long range goal (2015) was to have 5.7 percent of Texans enrolled in higher education. To reach this goal, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board assigned public colleges and universities institutional targets and, by 2009, progress had been made on the plan. Overall, Texans' participation in higher education increased. African American participation increased above its then targets (and surpassed the targets of all other groups and of Texas as a whole). Hispanic participation, as a raw number, increased by over 50% in the first eight years. But, in various areas, participation targets were below target levels. Lagging the most, proportionately, are Hispanics. As of 2008, the participation rate for Hispanics had only increased to 4% (from 3.7% in 2000), "well below target" for 2008 and the trend continued in 2009 (THECB 2009, iii).

*Closing the Gaps (CTG)* was and continues to be an ambitious plan to help the state as a whole and the contributions of individual colleges and universities will help reach the overall goals. In order to more readily reach their CTG goals, institutions of higher education must pay particular attention to certain student populations and stakeholders. These populations are underrepresented students, primarily First-Generation College Students, members of lower socio-economic status families, and ethnic minorities, who are at higher risk of not persevering through graduation. First Generation College Students, when compared to Continuing College

Generation Students, have lower graduation rates, 44.9 % vs. 59% in four-year colleges (Glenn 2008). Overall, First Generation College Students did poorer than Continuing Generation College Students even when accounting for factors such as attending high schools with "highly rigorous course work" (58.6% vs. 69.3%), achieving SAT scores of 1500 or higher (65.1% vs. 72.7%), and achieving a 4.0 high school gpa (63.6% vs. 71.6%) (Glenn 2008). Because parents play such an important role in students' decisions to attend and select a college (NPEC 2007), parents are the other stakeholders who should be considered. This is especially the case for parents of First Generation College Students who, even if they have a desire to encourage their children to attend college, have little knowledge about selecting and succeeding in college (NPEC 2007).

Over the last two decades, the opportunities for and representation of First Generation College Students (FGCSs) have steadily increased. Today FGCSs make up between 25% and 50% of all college students and almost 75% at two year institutions (Bradbury & Mather 2009). Despite this, "first generation students are less likely to succeed academically and to persist to graduation than are their nonfirst-generation counterparts" (Bradbury & Mather 2009, 259). Because parents who have not attended college are unlikely to have the knowledge, or social capital, necessary to navigate through higher education systems (Paredes 2009), FGCSs "are at greater risk for a difficult transition from high school to college" (Smith & Zhang 2009, 643). Consequently, FGCSs are less likely to return to school after their first year in college (Smith & Zhang 2009; Bradbury & Mather 2009). Other challenges common to FGCSs and their success are "the pull of home, academic adjustment, belonging, and financial realities" (Bradbury & Mather 2009, 264). Wolf, Sax & Harper (2009) acknowledge the disadvantages faced by

underrepresented groups but point out that several studies suggest that these families nonetheless value education and provide emotional and moral support for their children.

As already stated, parents who have not attended college are less able to help their children adjust to and succeed in college. Nonetheless, these parents can play an important role in supporting (or otherwise holding back) their offspring. In fact, some of the factors identified as having the potential to inhibit a student – ex., strong family bonds and commitments which can take time away from academic work – can also be the inspiration to pursue a college education and do well (Smith & Zhang 2009; Bradbury & Mather 2009), particularly for women (Wolf, Sax & Harper 2009). For example, "worries and concerns for ailing grandparents adversely affected students' focus on college" while at the same time “relationships with grandparents positively affected [students], motivating them to strive to reach their goals," (Bradbury & Mather 2009, 265). It is important that there be a balance between the “pull from home” and the home support to pursue an education.

While institutions may not be able to change students’ First-Generation status, they can help equip the parents with information that will allow them better opportunities to support their children and become involved in ways similar to those of parents of Continuing Generation students. For their part, parents who did complete college tend to be heavily invested, "emotionally or financially," in "their children's educational experiences" (Wolf, Sax, & Harper 2009, 329). For these parents, information on resources available to students can help them encourage their children to self-advocate.

Universities offer many services that support students in their academic and social pursuits; however, these services are not available to individuals until they enroll at a college. High school students whose parents did not attend college may not know to seek the services

once they arrive on campus, especially if they are not encouraged by their parents, who generally have played a major role in most previous school-related activities. Often, campuses disseminate information on these services through websites or e-mail blasts. But, relying exclusively on digital media can result in important information not reaching the parents who need it most (parents that are not highly educated and with limited knowledge of and access to e-mail and online resources). While most campuses provide students with a student handbook that includes policies and services, the handbook is generally provided after a student is admitted or enrolled. And, due to the cost of printing, hard copy student handbooks are generally not distributed to parents.

## Creating a Handbook

A hard copy handbook is a way to provide potential students and their families information that will guide them through the transition from home to college. Such a resource is helpful to students and their families because they will be better informed of available services, and thus, increase the likelihood of a successful transition. When students are successful (generally measured in terms of retention and graduation rates), the school is successful. In Texas, student success can help schools reach their internal and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board-assigned goals. The use of a handbook for students and their families, especially one that can easily be used by first-generation families and Hispanics, will be beneficial to the state. THECB Commissioner, Dr. Raymund A. Paredes (2009), stressed this recently when he stated that in terms of education, "Latinos are key to the future of the well-being of Texas." "If Texas is to maintain a robust economy, it will need to increase the number of college graduates, especially among Hispanic students (TSUEAC 2006, 1)."

Unfortunately, the role of parents in the college education of their child is not always clearly defined and the ambiguity can be much more challenging for families who are unfamiliar with the college experience. While the handbook would mainly be a resource for families, it could also serve as a tool for Texas State since it can include guidance to parents on how they can (and should not) be involved when trying to support their students. This tool would be particularly helpful since Texas State does not currently have such a handbook. Further, as Hispanics become a greater portion of the Texas population, Texas State is "attracting more Hispanic students" (TSUEAC 2006, 1). "A large percentage of these students are first-generation to college and do not have a good understanding of a four-year degree or seeking that degree in a residential setting (TSUEAC 2006, 3)."

The handbook could also respond to the demands of the oft-talked about helicopter parents – parents who have taken active roles in, even directing, their children's activities and educational pursuits. For these families, even if they are familiar with the college experience, this handbook could serve as a reference tool to find resources they seek. The Texas State University Parents Association, charged with *providing support to parents and students*[1], could find this tool useful and could potentially fund its printing.[2]

## Research Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive project is three-fold, (1) To identify factors that may impede FGCSs and underrepresented students from successfully transitioning to and completing college, (2) to determine and describe the structure of a handbook that informs current/potential Texas

[1] http://www.txstate.edu/parents/About-Us.html

[2] Many university accounts are restricted to funding materials provided directly to students or focus on more traditional and more generic recruitment materials.

State students and their families about the college experience and identifies available resources to overcome college challenges, and (3) to develop a handbook that Texas State can use as a recruitment tool and that students and parents can use as a guide through the student's selection of and transition to college.

## Chapter Summaries

Chapter one established the need for this project and the research purpose. It explained why this project includes, as one of its intended goals, to create a handbook for FGCSs – a topic that is revisited in other chapters.

Chapter two introduces academic literature on FGCSs, Non-Traditional students, and the challenges they and their families face in pursuing a college education. The chapter includes information on these students' cultural shock and lack of cultural capital as well as a summary of the history and trends in parental involvement and student development theories. Examples of the ways colleges and universities have addressed the changing roles of and relationships between students, parents and institutions.

Chapter three provides a brief introduction to Texas State University-San Marcos. This Applied Research Project was completed at this university with the handbook intended to primarily serve students wishing to pursue a university degree at Texas State and their families. The conceptual framework of this study and the intended handbook is outlined and justified in chapter four. Chapter five presents the methodology – case study – used for this project with a summary of the data collection methods and steps taken to address the weaknesses of the methodology. An operationalization table is included to connect the literature review and conceptual framework to the data collection process and ultimately the findings.

The findings of the study are summarized in chapter six. The findings are presented following the conceptual framework which is used to organize the handbook. Special attention was given to highlight student services and outreach efforts to FGCSs and their families. This chapter includes observations and suggestions for future research.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature on parental involvement, student development, and factors and associated services that can contribute to the successful transition to and completion of college by new and prospective college students. Special attention is given to challenges faced by students who are considered First Generation College (FGC) and underrepresented students. This review will lead to the development of the structure of a handbook that informs families of current and prospective students about the college experience, identifies resources available to students who choose to attend Texas State University-San Marcos, and educates parents on ways to support their student's success and development.

## Introduction

As students go from high school to college, they have the opportunity to further explore and define their identity and values with newfound independence. This is also a transition time for their families. "For parents, day-to-day involvement with and perceived control over their child ends and a new phase of their lives as parents and partners begins" (Ullom and Faulkner 2005, 23). However, the "going away" to college experience is particularly difficult for FGCSs and their families, especially in families where the student's contribution to the household (as provider of income or care) was expected once the student finished school-high school. Even when the family is supportive, the lack of experience makes the process difficult for both the student and the family (Terenzini et al. 1994, 66). FGCSs "cannot easily get advice about how to succeed, what pitfalls to avoid, or how to plan their pathway through college. These students are left to navigate college on their own" (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003, 127).

Among expressions on ignorance, two are popular, 1) Ignorance is bliss and 2) Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance. There can be little bliss in the struggle of students and their families who are in pursuit of a college education with little knowledge of the many resources available to

them. Institutions of higher education are in the business (for profit or not) of providing degrees. For their part, students must meet the requirements established for each course. Attainment of a degree, however, is not so simplistic and students may encounter many challenges in their endeavors. Institutions often provide students services, information and resources intended to help them complete their academic requirements. Unfortunately, some students do not learn of these services or fail to realize the benefits of utilizing the services. When institutions create awareness of these services, even if the student is currently not in need of them, the students gain knowledge and are better prepared to overcome potential obstacles to completion of their degree. Preparing students and their families for the transition to college can result in more than just a smoother transition, it can help students and the institutions achieve their mutual goals- retention and graduation of students.

## Terminology

***First Generation College Student*** (FGCS, plural FGCSs)- FGCS refers to a student neither of whose parents enrolled in college (Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin 1998; Pratt and Skaggs 1989). ***Continuing-Generation College Student*** (CGCS, plural CGCSs) refers to students who have at least one parent that enrolled in a postsecondary education institution (Pratt and Skaggs 1989). ***Underrepresented students*** and ***Non-Traditional students***, in this work, will be used interchangeably to refer to students of ethnic minorities traditionally underrepresented in higher education relative to their representation in the general population (Native Americans, Hispanics, Blacks), of low socioeconomic status, disabled, married, parents, not 18-22 years of age, or FGCSs.

## The Challenges for FGCSs and Other Non-Traditional Students

### FGCSs

In the past, universities were attentive to their legacy students – the children of alumni. Legacy applicants were often granted additional points towards their admission scores. As universities have taken steps to diversify their campuses, legacy status has become less significant (since most students in

days of old were predominantly White) and the number of FGCS and non-traditional students on campuses has increased. Of all students entering four-year institutions in the U.S. in 1995-96, 34% were FGCSs; for two-year colleges, the number is 53% (Pascarella et al. 2004). While the aspirations of FGCS parents may be similar for their kids as those of more educated parents, parents of FGCS are not able to provide the same level of support because they are unfamiliar with many higher education processes. This puts two types of strain on the FGCS; 1) The student does not have a parent or anyone within the household with the necessary knowledge to provide guidance, and 2) The student needs to learn the process on their own and teach it to their parent(s) who may have difficulty comprehending the choices, processes, and their relevance (Wartman and Savage 2008). Even before the student enrolls in a higher education institution, the choices a student makes differ based on whether they are a FGCS or CGCS. FGCSs are more likely to attend a community or junior college than CGCSs, and, CGCSs are more likely to attend a four-year college than FGCSs (Aronson 2008). While enrolling in a community college is often promoted as a way to start college and a step towards enrolling in a four-year college, the student is less likely to persevere and complete the degree.

The odds really are stacked against the FGCSs. Compared to CGCSs, FGCSs "tend to be less academically and psychologically prepared for college and tend to have lower SAT scores and grade point averages; lower math, reading, and critical thinking skills; and lower self-images." (Giancola, Munz, and Trares 2008, 216) They also "receive less family and peer support, choose colleges based on proximity and cost, focus on attaining technical job skills, and experience less social and academic integration". FGCSs also have "less overall college knowledge, and greater concerns regarding financial aid…and have higher attrition" (Giancola, Munz, and Trares, 2008, 217-218)[3]. Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum (2003, 133) attribute the attrition of FGCSs, partially, to their "poor handling of conflicting demands." Non-traditional students often find themselves dealing with the same challenges as other students plus more (Aronson 2008; Longwell-Grice and Longwell-Grice 2008). The additional challenges may be employment (in which supervisors see the student as a worker first and a student

[3] Ishanti 2006 and Orbe 2008 express similar notions.

second *if* time allows), child care demands, elder care demands, and a general lack of economic resources. In short, FGCSs "are disadvantaged in parental assistance" (Aronson 2008, 45; McGlynn 2008).

**Low Socioeconomic Status (SES) Students**

Students who are of low SES have many of the same challenges as FGCSs. Further, FGCSs are often of low SES, and vice versa. And while high school academic performance "is a stronger determinant of four-year college enrollment than socioeconomic background, students from more advantaged backgrounds are more likely to complete college preparatory courses and enroll in four-year institutions." (Aronson 2008, 45) FGCSs are more likely to have lower grades in coursework and aptitude tests and complete a less challenging high school curriculum, factors predicative of college success and persistence (Aronson 2008; Ishanti 2006). Both FGCSs and students of low SES are disadvantaged from an early age by their school systems. Poor public education systems (overcrowded and underfunded urban schools) are graduating more academically unprepared FGCSs today than just one decade ago (Horwedel 2008). In addition, some school systems track students into vocational or academic degree plans and mentalities. Families of FGCSs and lower SES students are less likely to value their student's experience than those from educated, middle-class families. Thus, these students are more likely to feel alienated (Aronson 2008).

Much of the literature on "class differences in postsecondary education has focused on objective patterns of enrollment and attainment," leaving a void in the study of "subjective processes" (Aronson 2008, 50). Subjective processes, such as decision making and experiences of opportunities and obstacles, compete with the students' ability to successfully pursue an education. For example, FGCSs and low SES students are more likely to enroll in fewer credit hours and on a part-time basis in order to accommodate more work hours. This lower credit hour enrollment, combined with required remedial courses increases the time needed to achieve a degree and increases the probability that these students will feel discouraged and discontinue their education altogether.[4] As mentioned earlier, FGCSs and students of low SES are more likely to enroll in community colleges. While this may be a necessary step for

[4] See Aronson 2008; Ishanti 2006; Pascarella et al. 2004.

students who cannot afford the four years of tuition, fees, and other expenses of a 4-year institution, this alternative comes with its own challenges. Low SES community college students work more hours "than students at other types of institutions" (Aronson 2008, 47) and are more likely to see themselves as employees first compared to students at four-year institutions who see themselves primarily as students. Low-income community college students experience a higher dropout rate “relative to four-year colleges (due to lower academic selectivity and lack of dorms), difficulty transferring to four-year institutions (due to a vocational orientation at community colleges, lack of financial aid, and unfamiliar surroundings), and higher attrition after transferring to four-year institutions (due to loss of credits, lack of social integration and financial aid, and poorer preparation)" (Aronson 2008, 46).

While students of low SES are able to access federal financial aid, state-level aid has shifted from need-based to merit-based. Aid expansion is generally targeted to help middle-class families, not poor families. Combined with the rising tuition costs, higher education is increasingly financially inaccessible to disadvantaged families (Aronson 2008). Among disadvantaged students, “women are more likely to drop out because of financial difficulties” (Giancola, Munz, and Trares 2008, 225). In short, parental wealth is a predictor of “both college enrollment and attainment” (Aronson 2008, 45; Ishanti 2006).

**Minorities**

Not all ethnic minorities are poor or FGCSs, but there are some groups that have historically been underrepresented in higher education and therefore are more likely to be FGCSs. That is the case for Blacks (Herndon and Hirt 2004) and Hispanics (Horwedel 2008). When they do go to college, minority FGCSs are likely to require available campus resources but are less likely to access them. “Traditionally, [for] African Americans... a heightened sense of distrust, suspicion, and stigma are attached to seeking assistance from trained professionals” (Herndon and Hirt 2004, 493). Certainly this factor contributes to “the median institutional graduation rategap (sic) between white and black students [of] nearly 10

percentage points" (Carey 2008, 2)[5]. For Hispanics, the percent of freshmen that are FGCSs is larger than the percent of freshmen of most other backgrounds. These Hispanic FGCSs often need additional academic assistance in core subjects. Of all Hispanics that enroll in a 4-year college, only 47% complete their degree in six years or less (Horwedel 2008). This attrition is not just attributed to academic issues. Lack of integration into the university community, a sense of belonging, institutional affinity, and personal-emotional adjustment all contribute to Hispanic student attrition (Hurtado & Carter 1997, 329).

## Cultural Shock and Cultural Capital

Students' vocational and educational aspirations are strongly shaped by their family's background and experiences. When FGCSs and students of low SES families enter four-year institutions, they may experience a shock of values and culture and therefore encounter challenges to their integration and conflict with their family, old acquaintances, and new peers.[6] Cortez (2008) compares the challenges of FGCSs to the challenges that children of immigrant or first generation families face when entering the U.S. educational system. These immigrant families typically have limited English skills and carry values and beliefs "often not valued" (Cortez 2008, 97) in the U.S. educational system. In an effort to assist their children, parents may attempt to shed their language and home culture. Unfortunately, this is not always easy and can have negative effects. Students are denied cultural knowledge, family ties, and communication skills that parents could use to assist in their student's development and educational success. This creates "a social dissonance" between students and their families (Cortez 2008, 99). Because of the differences in values, beliefs and experiences between FGCSs and those of CGCSs and many university faculty and staff, some FGCSs become convinced, their success is contingent on severing familial, environmental, or cultural ties (Orbe 2008). For some FGCSs, going to college is an

[5] Institutional rategap (difference in graduation rates) is for "public and private nonprofit degree-granting four-year institutions that reported GRS [graduation rates] data to the U.S. Department of Education in every year from 2002 to 2006," Carey 2008, 16, endnote 5.
[6] See Aronson 2008; London 1989; Longwell-Grice and Longwell-Grice 2008.

escape from an environment that, at best, is not supportive of social and educational mobility and, at worst, downright dangerous. The transition to college can literally be life-changing (and life-saving).

While studies refer to the subpar education that minority and low SES students receive, in order to be admitted to a 4-year institutions, generally, these students must meet the same qualifications as all other students.[7] If students can meet these requirements, thereby demonstrating the capacity and potential to meet the requirements for attaining a degree, why is there an achievement disparity between FGCSs/underrepresented students and CGCSs/traditional students? The answer may be what has been referred to as "cultural capital" (Pascarella et. al 2004). Aschaffenburg and Mass (1997, 573) define cultural capital as "proficiency in and familiarity with dominant cultural codes and practices." Hence, while a student may have the academic capacity- comprehending course content- the student may still have difficulty understanding faculty expectations on how to demonstrate content mastery. Studies have demonstrated that FGCSs are at a disadvantage when it comes to this because they are cast in a role in which they have few models to turn to for guidance as they acclimate to this new role- interpretation: they lack the cultural capital (Collier & Morgan 2008; Pascarella et al. 2004).

Retention studies typically focus on the factors that contribute to or make up social capital. But, once the student is enrolled, little attention is paid to mitigating these factors. This practice puts FGCSs at a disadvantage, even when their academic abilities are on par with traditional students. Despite their content comprehension, academic success for these students will depend on their ability to acquire cultural capital (Collier and Morgan 2008; Pascarella et al. 2004). Choices as basic as selecting an educational program (institution and major) can be daunting and confusing (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003).

[7] The more common exceptions are special talent and conditional admission programs.

**A Need for Improvement**

FGCSs and underrepresented students have the odds of entering and persevering in college stacked against them. They "are likelier than others to need remedial math and English, to struggle in their courses, and to lack awareness of campus support services that could improve their chances of graduating" (Ashburn 2007, A40). While for traditional students college is an opportunity to explore and develop themselves, "[f]or some nontraditional students…the transition [can require] a redefinition of self and values" (Terenzini et al. 1994, 68). This is likely to be the case for many first generation students who don't have parents encouraging them to continue with their pursuit of a higher education (Ashburn 2007). For these students, parents can be a "liability" (Terenzini et al. 1994, 66). But even when parents are supportive, the FGCS's connections with other family and friends who chose not to pursue a college education can act as anchors to a high school and home environment that devalues education or upward mobility (Terenzini et al. 1994). Or, the family may be very supportive of their student pursuing a college degree but not have the economic means to support this endeavor. "Low-income parents are typically pessimistic about their children's educational futures and do not act proactively…[and]… are less likely than affluent parents to financially support their children during young adulthood and offer less assistance when they do provide it" (Aronson 2008, 45). Well intended counselors, advisors, and other higher education advocates and personnel are fond of stating that financial aid is readily available – it is there, just for the asking. In the last 20 years, however, need-based aid has decreased. Thus, needy students are spending more time in the workforce and are less likely to persevere with their education (Carey 2008).

Providing financial support is not the only role parents play in their children's pursuit of a higher education. Most students, when asked, indicated that their parents' level of involvement was ideal. FGCSs, however, were more likely to indicate that their parents were not sufficiently involved, especially through the process of applying to colleges and selecting a college, courses, and activities (Wartman and Savage 2008). Even when FGCSs manage to select a college and enroll, they still face an uphill transition. These students and their families are likely to experience more separation anxiety and this separation anxiety combined with the challenge of venturing into something that no one in the family has

done before can lead to internal conflict. The student is leaving family and the status quo, which at best may cause anxiety, fear, or concern but, at worst, resentment and rejection. At the same time, these fish-out-of-water students may find some of these new environments not entirely comfortable with or ready for them (Wartman and Savage 2008).

As bleak as the scenario may seem, some colleges have learned, or at least hope, that they can help the students and their families. If the institution reaches out to families and empowers the parents to help their student succeed, the parents will be better able to support their students (Ashburn 2007). Institutions can provide students with cultural capital directly through information and programs. They can also provide cultural capital indirectly through extracurricular activities. In these activities, parents can interact with and learn from students, faculty and staff who are more familiar with higher education institutions. Happily, the benefit of participating in in-class and extracurricular activities for FGCSs is proportionately greater than for their peers (Pascarella et al. 2004).

## Parental Involvement

To understand how institutions may be able to help FGCSs by reaching out to their families, the history of parental involvement before and after enrollment in higher education institutions is reviewed. Surely, parenting styles during a child's youth and adolescence will have an impact on the role a parent plays during a young adult's college life. Not just the role that the parent wishes to play, but also the role the student may expect the parent to play. University personnel also use student development theories to help them deal with parents. While much of the literature on parental involvement and millennials focuses on traditional college students, middle-class families, and selective universities, the limited literature indicates the millennial college experience is not the same for all families and students. Millenial parents are best understood as members of "segments and subcultures" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 11) and not in generational terms.

**Evolution of Parental Involvement**

The term “parental involvement” was “previously reserved for the K-12 lexicon” (Wartman and Savage 2008, 1). Even today, searching for library material on parental involvement or parent participation will result in scores of titles related to early childhood education. Titles regarding parents and higher education often are related to the college selection process – primarily, how to present a competitive application and how to pay for college. There are is little material on the role parents should play in the student’s college life. For the most part, the K-12 literature promotes parental involvement, in stark theoretical contrast to the literature promoting individuation, development, and self-reliance of students in college (Wartman and Savage 2008). According to the more abundant K-12 literature, "high levels of parental involvement make a significant positive difference in personal and academic growth" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 22). The positive differences include, "higher grades, success in school, higher standardized test scores, higher self-esteem, more social competence, reduced substance use, aspirations for college, enrollment in college, and participation in out-of-school programs" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 22).

Parental involvement has been positively linked to other indicators of student achievement and success, including teacher ratings of student competence, grade promotion and graduation rates, higher on-time graduation, advanced course participation rates and "psychological processes and attributes that support student achievement” (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005, 105-6). Because of this evidence, K-12 schools strongly encourage parental participation- some even expect it. The schools make invitations for parents to become involved and present opportunities such as tips on engaging their children as students, school events, parent-teacher conferences, PTA/PTO, and the requisite parental permissions. Even the U.S. Department of Education, on its No Child Left Behind literature, presents information to parents on how to be involved (Wartman and Savage 2008). While most early elementary children are expected to need their parents’ assistance and support when completing their homework, administrators and educators have found ways to involve parents in the educational experience of high school students with projects

such as a writing project that required the participation of both the student and the parent(s) (Davis 1991)[8].

The advice to parents, 30-40 years ago, was to allow their teenagers the freedom to develop into adults (Brooks 2001). A 1967 U.S. Supreme Court finding[9] gave students "the same due-process rights as adults" and pushed back on schools' "paternalistic authority" (Brooks 2001, 46). Literature and case law supported the concept of child independence and responsibility through the early 1980s, giving the concept of youth independence a life of about 20 years. But things began to change in the early 1980s. Brooks (2001) states that perhaps the *Nation at Risk* report of Terrel Bell, Secretary of Education, swung the educational pendulum toward greater parental involvement. The report criticized the educational system and experience as too relaxed, lacking structure, substance, coherence, and accountability. Immediately, students saw increases in their assigned homework, longer school days and school years, more demanding curriculums, stricter school cultures, and an increase in psychotropic medications that helped teachers manage the classroom experience. The latter being particularly the case "in upper-middle-class suburban districts-where, one suspects, the achievement ethos is strongest" (Brooks 2001, 44). "The end result of these shifts in pedagogy and in pharmacology is that schools are much more efficient and productive, geared more than ever toward projecting children into the stratosphere of success" (Brooks 2001, 45).

As a result, parents became more involved in their children's lives, and not just on educational matters. Studies in the 1990s began to show the change in parenting approaches. In spite of contrary trends like greater labor force participation of mothers and more single-parent households between 1981-1997, "in general, children's time with parents did not decrease…; in two-parent families it increased substantially" (Sandberg and Hofferth 2001, 423). Studies indicate that any decline in the time parents spend with their children due to the presence of single or working mothers is negligible and is equalized, even outweighed by parents spending "more time with children because of cultural changes in child-

[8] The project was optional for students.
[9] 387 U.S. 1

rearing values, which emphasize the importance of child development" (Sandberg and Hofferth 2001, 424). Single mothers may select employment that overlaps with their children's time in school. In addition, parents may change "their behavior to compensate for perceived deficits" resulting from their employment or single-parent status (Sandberg and Hofferth 2001, 424). For example, parents may alternate their work schedules so that one parent is always available to the children. And, for dual-parents or unemployed single-parents, being at home while the children are present does not necessarily equate to time spent interacting with the children. "The most powerful factor in determining the well-being of young people is the presence of parents and adults who are actively engaged in supervising and setting goals for teenagers' lives (Brooks 2001, 46)".[10] For teenagers to develop and explore beyond their home through any age, they "need continuing security and support" (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde & Whalen 1997, 154). Now, instead of being told to allow their teenagers more freedom, parents "are advised to serve as chaperones at all-night graduation parties" (Brooks 2001, 46). Writings chastise parents for giving teenagers "too much space" and "it is now pretty widely believed that the killings at Columbine and similar tragedies teach us that parents have a duty to be highly involved in the lives of their kids" (Brooks 2001, 46).

During the last 30 years, the amount of time children spend watching TV and playing indoors has decreased while the time spent studying or participating in organized sports has increased (Brooks 2001). During the last 15-25 years, parents have been very involved in this generation's day to day activities- with "activities" referring to organized programs and interactions of children rather than the spontaneous initiatives and interactions of children. Of course, this trend persists into the teen and early adulthood years (Ullom and Faulkner 2005; Brooks 2001). Parents have higher expectations for, and interest in, what educational institutions are doing to protect their students – especially after high-profile events such as the Columbine High School and Virginia Tech shootings.

Wartman & Savage (2008, 91) included various components into their definition of parental involvement. These included parent's demonstrating interest in their child's college experience,

[10] Results were based on The 1997 National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health.

becoming more informed about and connected with the institution, and "knowing when and how to appropriately provide encouragement and guidance to their students". The institutional connection may be during and after the student's enrollment. Wartman and Savage, however, also acknowledge that for students in college, like in early education, parental involvement is "based on middle-class behaviors" (2008, 24). These middle-class values result in parents spending significant amounts of time, money, and effort in ensuring their kids' success. This time, money, and effort can be seen as an investment and like any savvy investor, parents like to know the status of their investments. Increased investment costs have resulted in families wanting to see and feel a more immediate return on their investment. [11] This evolution in parental involvement and the generational cycling of Americans have given us the latest categorized generation- the millennials.

**Millennials**

As the label implies, this generation came of age, or graduated high school, after 1999. Millennials are described as "sheltered" (Howe & Strauss 2003) and possibly over-protected (Wartman and Savage 2008, 8-9). These students are maintaining closer relationship with their parents than previous generations and find it easy to talk about topics that previous generations might have found difficult, for example, "sex, drugs, and alcohol" (Wartman and Savage, 9; McGlynn 2008). From 1974 to 1997, teenagers indicated a major shift in the positive relationships with their parents and their comfort with living with them; less than 50% and 60% respectively in 1974 compared to 96% and 82% in 1997 (Brooks 2001).

Brooks describes millennials as "the most honed and supervised generation in human history" (2001, 43). Their parents have been consumers of a market that peddles products for early[12] stimulation and development, from music for children-in-womb to preschool laptops and learning aids (Brooks 2001). In return, these "super-accomplished" students want to please parents, are unlikely to challenge authority, and are willing to work and play in groups (McGlynn 2008). Comfortable talking to their parents,

[11] See Wartman and Savage; Coburn 2006; Hoover 2008.
[12] "Early" refers to the stages of toddler, infant, and even fetus.

millennials exploit commonly available (and affordable) technology not available to previous generations. The technology includes cellular phones, e-mail, instant messages, and text messages that allow students to communicate with their parents daily, and sometimes multiple times per day, for as little as pennies per day. (Wartman and Savage 2008; McGlynn 2008)

But the millennial experience has not been without its adverse side effects. Millennials "experience exceptionally high stress and anxiety", "are arriving with serious psychological issues, misusing prescription drugs, and feeling pressured to excel" (Terry et al. 2005, 11). Their parents have high expectations for their child's college experience. These parents headed the call to become involved with their children's education and worked with teachers from preschool through high school to help their students succeed. As their children go off to college, these parents find it difficult to disengage. (Terry et al. 2005) Parents, on their own or with assistance, are able to disengage their children or continue their involvement without disruption to the student or the institution. Unfortunately, other parents, in their efforts to remain involved hover over their students and have earned the label "helicopter parents."[13] [14]

**Parental Involvement in Higher Education: Historical Trends**

"[T]he label of 'helicopters,' the emerging emphasis on generational characteristics, and the charge of intrusiveness" appear to point to a new phenomenon in higher education. These, however, are really only an illustration of changes in "attitude and response toward college-parent relations". (Wartman and Savage 2008, 75) Parental involvement and programming in higher education is not new. Universities have documented parent organizations for over 80 years. Historically, these organizations and their programs were geared towards supporting the university's mission and fundraising for such things as campus beautification, extra-curricular student activities, and scholarships. University programming was often structured into specific events such as fundraisers and campus visits. The parent organizations were often gender based (mothers/fathers), as were their campus visiting events – for

[13] More on helicopter parents later.
[14] See Terry et al. 2005; Coburn 2006; Wartman and Savage 2008; Hoover 2008; Farrell 2007.

example, "Dads Weekend," "Moms Day," and “Happy Pappy Weekend, a father-daughter tradition" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 76-77).

The supervisory relationships of parents and institutions with students have a long history. The concept that universities play a parental role and assume some authority over pupils while the students are under their tutelage was referred to in English laws as early as 1770 as *in loco parentis* (Wartman and Savage 2008, 33). The concept was cited even earlier in colonial colleges' missions. In the 1913 ruling of *Gott v. Berrea*, the court validated the college’s ability to regulate its students in the same manner a parent could in order to promote students' civility and development (Wartman and Savage 2008, 34). From mid-twentieth century to date, parents and judicial expectations of institutions’ parental role have mirrored the expectations of educators and courts have had of parents and their role in their children’s development and education. Administrators and universities played the parental role through the 1960s and 1970s. From the late 1960’s through early 1980’s, student independence was encouraged. In the early 1980, parents became more involved with their students and many of the students’ activities.

**Evolution of Institutional Role in Student Oversight and Regulation**

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of turmoil in America. Part of this turmoil came from students challenging universities' *in loco parentis* role. Also during this time, college students challenged the authority of their parents, resulting in increased independence and rights for students. These rights are codified in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, "also known as the Buckley amendment” (Wartman and Savage 2008, 34). FERPA gave college students control over who was allowed access to their student records, including parents, and "applies to any school that receives federal funds from a U.S. Department of Education program” (Wartman and Savage 2008, 35). Universities adapted to this change in their role and, for about a decade, colleges and universities not only increased the communication and interaction gap between them and students' parents, they also decreased the oversight and regulation of students. Also during this time, some universities merged their gender-specific parent associations and others eliminated them altogether (Wartman and Savage 2008). Institutions further asserted their abdication of parental roles from 1979 to 1987 when several significant

legal cases sided with them and established that "the newly empowered students were beyond the control of the university, and the university had 'no duty' for the behavior of these students and their safety" (Wartman & Savage 2008, 36). This legal premise, however, did not stand unchallenged or unqualified for long. As early as 1983, a number of cases were decided against universities in which the courts stated that under certain conditions, universities remain liable, even when injuries or damages are the consequence of the injured party's actions. Institutions are particularly liable for injuries and damages resulting from foreseeable acts occurring on campus or involving university property. In some cases, where institutions tried to mitigate risks, the courts ruled that the institutions did not do enough (Wartman and Savage 2008).

**Student Expectations of Institutions**

Student attitudes also changed. In the 1980s, students began demanding more services to complement their education and expecting increased safety and protection from harm (whether the threat came from third parties or the student's own actions) (Wartman and Savage 2008). In order to provide this safety and protection, institutions had to return to more intrusive programs and services such as monitoring and controlling access to residential facilities. While it is unclear how far the pendulum has swung back toward institutions' assumption of *in loco parentis* roles, courts have sided with students and parents when determining liability for injuries and transgressions resulting from students' behavior. As a result, institutions increased oversight of student activities on campuses (Wartman and Savage 2008). University efforts to keep students safe have included controlling alcohol consumption, "cracking down on fraternity hazing rites," and prohibiting "Dionysian rituals"[15] – this has been done with little to no student objections (Brooks 2001, 48).

To accommodate the increased institutional liability[16], the federal government has made accommodations such as allowing institutions to share personally identifiable information with parents of students listed as dependents and to notify parents when their student has violated drug or alcohol policy.

[15] Referring to behavior characterized by recklessness, revelry or debauchery.
[16] Which more recently has extended to off-campus activities, especially when involving the death of a student.

The FERPA amendments led to the re-opening of the lines of communication with parents and re-institution of parent programs, sometimes at the behest of students, sometimes parents. As parents began to renew calls for involvement opportunities, universities began to re-institute parent offices and to expand their parent programs and services (Wartman and Savage 2008).

**Exceptions in Parental Involvement**

The unprecedented parental involvement of the college bound millennials may make the cultural divide between CGCSs and FGCSs even greater and therefore make FGCSs feel even more alienated. In addition to FGCS status, other factors determine the involvement level of a student's family.

**FGCSs and low SES students** – Wartman and Savage discovered that parent experience seemed to be impacted by the families' SES. Upper-middle class parents may see the student leaving home as "a major rite of passage for children" and themselves (2008, 62). These families tend to have more opportunities to become involved (and do so). Their values and parental involvement are accepted and promoted by school systems, especially "during pre-college preparation" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 55). "The most involved parents on college campuses tend to be white, affluent college graduates" (Hoover 2008, A22).

On the other hand, the families of the FGCSs, in part due to their lack of understanding of the college selection and admission process, may become distrustful of the entire institution and see the transition to college as a discombobulating experience. As a result, families of FGCSs and low SES are less likely to become involved anywhere near the level of families of CGCSs. Unlike students from more affluent and higher educated families, FGCSs are unlikely to take preparatory courses and retake aptitude tests when not needed, simply to attempt to achieve a higher score. They are also much less likely to hire private college advisors to guide them through the college selection and admission process. Other factors that impact parents' level of involvement are level of education and number of children; less education and more children are both common characteristics of lower SES families. Less education and more children typically translate to less time spent with the children overall and with each child individually (Sandberg and Hofferth 2001). Clearly the experience and parental involvement of lower-class, FGCS

families is different from that of upper-middle-class families. Therefore, these groups cannot be treated or expected to participate in the same manner. One-size-fits-all assumptions cannot be made across the board regarding students, their parents, or the student-parent relationship; factors other than age and generation of a student need to be considered (Wartman and Savage 2008).

**Minorities** – Literature on the impact "of race in parent-college student relationships is relatively lacking" and it is necessary "because certain cultures, especially Asian, African, and Latino, emphasize collectivism and interdependence" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 51-52).[17] In addition, when comparing demographics, many studies distinguish only between white and non-white students and, when they separate the different ethnicities, summarize by making conclusions about minorities as a whole (Terry et al. 2005). The limited literature, however, indicates parental support and encouragement has a positive effect on students' success across race lines. One particular study of Mexican American college students found that "the love of parents in combination with practical support from educational sources, especially in the area of scholarships and financial aid, is what made them successful" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 52). Though one study of black students found that having strong relationships on campus was more central to their success than encouragement from their families, the difference may have been attributable to the differences in the educational attainment of the parents of the different study groups (Mallinckrodt 1988).

According to Terry et al. (2005), groups with the lowest levels of education place the highest value on higher education. Hispanics have the lowest higher education participation rates, therefore, the assumption is that they would value a higher education the most[18]. While the Hispanic community is very diverse, one characteristic that can be generalized is that they "are family-oriented or collectivistic with a commitment to the group" relative to other groups (Terry et al. 2005, 12). Therefore, Hispanic students

[17] This lack of literature may be a reflection of the fact that families of FGCSs and other underrepresented students, as in general, are not equally reached by universities' parent programs (Lum 2006).

[18] It is important to understand the difference between valuing and committing resources. While minorities with lesser education may value higher education most, it is likely that they will not have the resources that educated, upper-middle class families will be able to commit towards their child's education during the college selection process and enrollment.

are likely to seek and get the approval of their family in deciding to go to college. Alternatively, if their family needs them, they are most likely to put familial obligation ahead of their own desire to participate in higher education. When these students go to college, especially if away from home, it is important for them to establish relationships that mimic or substitute those of their family. In addition, parents may worry about their children going away from home and therefore can benefit from institutions' reassurances that the child will be cared for – "Unlike some other groups, Latino parents may embrace the *in loco parentis* philosophy" (Terry et al. 2005, 13). And while surveys demonstrate, overall, students welcome increased parental participation, Hispanic students are the most likely to report a desire for more parental involvement (Hoover 2008).

While African American students are similar to Hispanics along some dimensions (valuing higher education as a way of breaking cycles of poverty and providing better opportunities), the experience and challenges of the two groups are dissimilar. African-American parents "believe that the high price of a college education should not keep qualified students from pursuing higher education" (Terry et al. 2005, 12). As greater numbers of African-Americans, compared to Hispanics, attend college, their experience in higher education becomes similar to the overall millennial generation. This successful experience is likely the result of involved, supportive parents with high expectations and students enrolled in exploratory activities, and who look up to their parents (Terry et al 2005). According to Terry et al. (2005, 12), the African-American students' experience is also influenced by a "desire to imitate parents' altruistic behavior and role as community contributors."

While certain ethnic groups' values and circumstances may impact the dynamics of family relationships (e.g., Latinos and Native Americans are family oriented), administrators should not assume too much about these individuals and their parents just on the basis of their ethnicity or culture (Wartman and Savage 2008). The study by Barnett (2004) and the writing by Brooks (2001) are good examples of where the experience of the students was dominated by their SES and CGCS status more so than their ethnicity. Colleges and universities commonly put resources into recruiting ethnically diverse student bodies and then like to highlight these diversity accomplishments. Therefore, it is important that

administrators understand that factors, other than ethnicity or race, can influence a student's college selection. Examples of other factors follow below.

**Mental Disorders** – "Thanks to the enhancement in psychopharmaceuticals, students who are being treated for depression and bipolar disorders and learning disabilities are now able to thrive in even the most selective of colleges" (Coburn 2006, 11). It is estimated that 10% of students entering college are taking medications for mental disorders. Their parents are more likely to have been involved in their education and extra-curricular activities than other parents, and may have difficulty in the students' transition away from their close watch. Of particular concern to parents (and institutions) is the students' failure to continue with a prescribed mental health care plan as a result of no longer being under the watchful eye of parents or as a way "to assert their independence" (Coburn 2006, 11).

**Gender Identity/Sexual Orientation** – Although nowadays more students identify themselves as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transsexual (GLBT), and the millennials are described as more open to non-traditional sexual identities, the close quarters of campus residence halls can result in challenges for all students. These challenges can include tension among students. GLBT students may face hostile environments, psychological and adjustment challenges, and fear of discrimination and harassment (Terry et al. 2005).

**Helicopter Parents** – As mentioned earlier, there is a label attached to some parents – helicopter parents. The rapid proliferation of the label and the misguided impression that they are representative of all college student parents is credited to the popular media (Wartman & Savage 2008; Coburn 2006). But, like underrepresented populations, this segment is real and cannot be ignored. While there is not one formal definition of what is a helicopter parent, there are general descriptions. One is that they are "the baby boomer generation of parents who hover" (Coburn 2006, 9). Another refers to parents who are "highly involved and intrusive" (Wartman & Savage 2008, 83). Sometimes university personnel may not distinguish between "inappropriately involved" and "helpfully involved as needed" and unfairly label the parents as helicopter parents simply for expressing interest in or concern about their child.

The categorization of a parent as a helicopter or overly involved parent may depend on the person responding to the parent and the nature of that person's role at the university. Certainly there is a difference between parents requesting a report from a university police department for an incident resulting in their child's arrest (likely seen as appropriately involved) and parents calling a faculty member to request every grade their child has received in a class (likely seen as inappropriate and intrusive). A truer representation of parents is that when they make contact with an institution, it is generally about issues that are natural to this stage in their and their student's lives – concerns of "college finances, their student's health and safety, and their student's academic success" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 83).

Parents, generally, do not engage with the intention to impede the work of university administrators or hinder their child but rather "want the best for their children. They want them to grow up – to learn to solve problems, to become successful and independent. Parents who intervene inappropriately usually do so out of their own anxiety, with little or no awareness that they might be impeding their child's development" (Coburn 2006, 10). Because of this, parents of all backgrounds have the potential to become helicopter parents. Even top academic administrators armed with extensive knowledge of student development, years of telling parents to allow their students to make decisions for themselves and battle stories of over-involved parents can become helicopter parents themselves (Farrell 2007).

While it is difficult to make generalizations about the family involvement and needs of all students based on demographic characteristics, there is one that cuts across all of these – parents want acknowledgement of their families' sacrifices and validation of their institutional selection choice (Wartman and Savage 2008). And of all the subgroups, families of FGCSs and students of low SES are likely to be making the largest sacrifice, relative to their means, and therefore would benefit the most from invitations and direction on how to become involved (Hoover 2008).

**Student Development Theories**

Another important factor that is likely to impact parental involvement is the institution's adopted student development theory and the families' understanding of the theory. There are two primary theories, separation-individuation and attachment theories. The first focuses on the transition of a person from a young, dependent person to an independent adult. The latter focuses on the young person going from a young dependent to an adult who is an interdependent member in the relationship with the parental figures.

In the 1970s and 1980s, "the prevailing theory about college students' development was that acquiring autonomy and individuation were necessary components of emotional adjustment to college" – separation-individuation (Wartman and Savage 2008, 24). Essentially, as part of developing, students need to define themselves and quickly transition to self-reliance and independence in order to adjust to college and meet their new "adult" responsibilities. The first step "toward this state begins with separation from parents" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 24). The process of reaching independence requires that students master various stages, or vectors. The vectors include: "Developing competence," "Moving through autonomy toward independence," "Managing emotions," "Establishing identity," "Developing mature interpersonal relationships," "Developing purpose," and "Developing integrity" (Ullom and Faulkner 2005, 21). While the model acknowledges that students may move back and forth on these vectors, the students' developmental progress is significantly defined by the students' level of independence (separation) from their parents (Ashburn 2007).

Separation-Individuation theory may seem appropriate as students become of age and move away from under their parents' roof. Unfortunately, changes in norms among millennial families (extensive parental involvement) have made it difficult for universities to use a pure separation-individuation model as the basis for their policies and interaction with parents and students. In the 1990s, another model emerged – attachment theory. Although new in application to young adults, the theory is an evolution of

J. Bowlby's theory[19], commonly referred to as "separation anxiety". Bowlby's theory developed when referring to the distress that infants encounter and exhibit when separated from the arm's length security of their parents, caregiver, or other "attachment figure" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 26). Attachment theory was evolved by others to explain how college students, like young children, can benefit and function more successfully when they know there is a safety net or a safe base they can return to when needed.

The knowledge that there is a safety net or safe base spurs a sense of confidence while the lack of it may create insecurity. The attachment model of student development explains that parent-child relationships, overtime, can change from "need-based" parent-child relationships to more "non-need-based" reciprocal relationships (Wartman and Savage 2008, 26). According to Wartman and Savage (2008) and Hurtado and Carter (1997), these relationships have positive correlations with student success, identity development, and college adjustment. For colleges and universities, this meant opening lines of communication with parents to share with them information on programs and university life and adopting programs and services for them (Wartman and Savage 2008).

Unfortunately, implementing one model exclusively is likely to create challenges for students, educational institutions, and parents. While college administrators may wish to work exclusively with students, many students and their parents have come to accept parental involvement as a norm. On the other hand, incorporating parents into every aspect of a student's educational experience is likely an undue burden and a potential obstacle to student development. In addition, not all students want their parents involved.

Fortunately, according to Wartman and Savage (2008) and Orbe (2008), separation-individuation and attachment theories are not necessarily diametrically opposed. Instead, some have combined the two to explain that students who have stable relationships (attachment) with their family are better able to

[19] Books by Bowlby, published from 1950's-1980's include *Attachment and Loss; Child Care and the Growth of Love; The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds;* and *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development.*

adjust when moving away (separation), in this case, to college. Simply, having strong family connections provides a support network that can help students succeed (Wartman and Savage 2008; Orbe 2008).

The complementarity of separation-individuation and attachment theories was examined in a study that compared the relationships between parents and residential students and the relationships between parents and stay at home students. The relationships between parents and residential students were more harmonious, independent and supportive; relationships between parents and stay at home students resembled those between parents and teenagers- "avoidant communication, rejection of parents as role models, and a greater tendency of parents to underestimate their sons and daughters' levels of maturity" (Wartman and Savage, 30)[20]. Around the same time, a different study showed that the attachment of residential students to their parents decreased over the course of the first semester in college while the attachment of stay-at-home students remained high. This further supports the theory that strong student-parent relationships can empower the student to adjust to new environments, eventually graduating from immediate family relationships to broader social relationships (Wartman and Savage 2008).

Students' development and success is not just about the quality or intensity of their relationships with their parents. The "transition to adulthood represents a unique phase of the life course that is especially formative for later life course trajectories" (Aronson 2008, 50). This development can be impacted by the role models and mentoring that the student has and the encouragement the student receives (Abi-Nader 1990). "Early validation appears to be a central element in students' successful transition to college" (Terenzini et al. 1994, 70). New students need reassurance "that they can do college-level work, that their ideas and opinions have value, that they are worthy of the attention and respect of faculty, staff, and peers alike" (Terenzini et al. 1994, 70). When FGCSs hear from their faculty that their contributions are important and that they can succeed academically, the student also hears that his/her decision to go to college was the right one and that they can be successful. Students need to hear and speak of what is possible. In the most basic of explanations, students tend to become self-fulfilling

[20] Possibly a case of the cliché, "Don't know what you've got until it's gone."

prophecies- set the bar low and achievements will be low, talk about them going to college and they will. Students may not have the knowledge of how to break free from past expectations and historical roles, but they have the potential and they can learn and model it if they are trained or given examples of how others have done so.

The most supportive community is one that has the positive attributes of a family, including "acceptance, mutual support, and self-preservation or regeneration" (Abi-Nader 1990, 54). When families cannot provide the knowledge or support necessary for students to develop and succeed, institutions have the opportunity to supplement with "interventions and supports… adapted to the student's other roles and life phase" (Aronson 2008, 50). In the absence of this knowledge and support, even after settling on a school and degree program, FGCSs may feel overwhelmed by the complexities of the financial aid application, registration process, and degree requirements – and, just as important, non-requirements. Students who do not understand how to read and fulfill degree requirements may take unnecessary courses that delay their completion of the program and reduce their available capital, compromising their ability to persevere until the completion of their degree (Deil-Amen 2003).

*Are 18-21 year old students adults?* It is appropriate to note that while development theories focus on cognitive milestones, there is one milestone seldom discussed in development theory – when does a person become an adult? The answer to this question significantly influences the relationships between students, institutions, and parents. While states may grant certain rights at varying ages, the general definition of an adult, in America, is someone who is 18 years old. Students, parents and institutions, however, get mixed messages from society. For example, generally, college students can be granted a credit card though the student may have no income and be entirely dependent on parental support, an 18 year old can get a driver's license, vote, smoke, serve in the military, and buy lottery tickets but must be 21 years old to drink alcohol or enter casinos and must be 25 years old to rent a car (Wartman and Savage 2008). In most states, a person must be 18 years old to sign a binding contract, however, under California's Emancipation of Minors Act, passed in 1982, teenagers were enabled to "sign contracts, own property, and keep their earnings," transforming them "into quasi adults" (Brooks 2001,

46). Even in the minds of students 18 years of age and older, the definition of adulthood is unclear. When college students were asked if they felt they had reached adulthood and what were the measures or benchmarks needed to claim adulthood, only 23% felt they had reached adulthood and almost 66% felt they had not yet fully reached adulthood (Arnett 1994). As for what is necessary to reach adulthood (and the percent of students who agreed with that requirement), students indicated: full-time employment (27%), marriage (15%), offspring (12%) emotional independence from parents (14%), and establishing a peer rather than subordinate relationship with their parents (72%) (Arnett 1994). In addition, most students didn't believe completion of a college degree was a prerequisite to adulthood (Arnett 1994).

Because institutions cannot choose to consider and treat students exclusively as children (students wouldn't have it), nor exclusively as adults (the courts have established that by pinning liability on institutions for the actions of students), a new category connecting these two has been proposed. Arnett (2000 and 2006) refers to the stage covering individuals in their late teens through twenties "emerging adulthood" (Arnett 2000a and 2006). Pavela (1992) refers to individuals 18-21 years of age as 'postadolescent preadults' (PAPAs). Wartman and Savage (2008) suggest, instead of having distinct categories of adolescents, PAPAs or emerging adults, and adults, that adolescence and adulthood are the end points on a continuum, with a connection that includes the transitioning individuals as sliding along the scale and even sliding back at times. Where students are on this scale will very strongly influence the relationships between them, their parents, and their chosen educational institutions. This information could also help colleges in working with their students.

## Addressing the Challenges

### What Colleges and Universities are Doing

If colleges and universities are aware of trends in the millennial generation, including parental involvement and student development theories, can they use this information to reach out to FGCSs and underrepresented students? According to Carey (2008, 13), gaps in student success between minority and non-minority students are not a result of lack of knowledge of their roots but of the lack of "incentives for

institutional leaders to act on the knowledge that already exists." Hence, some institutions, armed with knowledge on the millennial generation and the role that parents can or cannot play, have decided to make intentional efforts to reach out to FGCS and underrepresented students and their families. Outreach programs available regionally such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and nationally, for example, Gear Up, Upward Bound, Talent Search and other TRIO programs, are typical. These programs teach students and their families about the college selection and enrollment process, how "to maneuver the system; to fight to get into honors English; to discover it was not necessary to take a fourth semester of typing; to have" a parent advocate for college bound course placement for his/her child; and the financial aid application process (Macy 2000, 38). Many of these college preparation programs "include a parental education component [and] help first-generation students and parents gain some of the cultural capital they lack" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 57). For participants of these types of outreach programs, "these programs were the main source of college information" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 57). But even with outreach programs, the information may come too late as "visiting college campuses, and attending financial aid workshops" usually must happen months prior to the estimated enrollment date and "saving money for college" takes years (Wartman and Savage 2008, 60). And, unfortunately, the availability and the resources of these programs are limited. For example, TRIO "reaches only 1 percent of its target population" and the popular AVID program "is active in just 13 states" (Macy 2000, 38).

Other initiatives tried by institutions to assist FGCSs include bridge programs; conditional admittance with required tutoring, advising and class attendance; team-building and other activities to facilitate acclimation; collaborative learning communities; and, self-exploratory classes. Some institutions stress to their students on-campus employment over off-campus alternatives (Horwedel 2008). Some colleges and universities take proactive approaches in providing information to and working with parents. At Skidmore College, the Dean of Students posted a letter in the parent website with a description of the college's values and referred to "emerging adults to describe entering college students." The website provides "typical information about campus resources such as the advising system, campus

safety, and health services, reinforces the basic principles of emerging adulthood and college student development; each entry illuminates how these principles set expectations for students and the changing student-parent relationship as well" (Coburn 2006, 11). Some universities go beyond offering parent programs by extending student programs to parents through the use of websites and e-mail. Not only does this increase the programming offered to parents, but it allows parents to support and encourage the intended goals of the student programs without having to set foot on campus (Wartman and Savage 2008). Others, in an effort to help parents of FGCSs understand the college experience, engage family members by exposing them to extracurricular activities, parent orientations, and even services traditionally reserved for enrolled students, such as allowing them to sit-in in their student's classes and participate in counseling sessions (Ashburn 2007).

**Sending a Coherent Message**

As the relationships "between parents and their traditional-age college students" has evolved, so have the relationships between colleges and parents, with the parents taking on the role of "a critical secondary audience" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 1). This may be especially true for middle- and upper-class families, however, it is important for institutions to connect and communicate with all types of parents, including parents of FGCSs and lower-class families.

Whether privileged and educated or disadvantaged and formally uneducated, parents can be assets and liabilities for students and their transition to college (Terenzini et al. 1994). The ways in which institutions engage parents are many and wide-ranged, from non-existent strategies (no institution initiated contact, only reactive responses) to comprehensive parent programs. If institutions are to be intentional and proactive in engaging parents, and especially if the intent is to provide cultural capital to FGCS families, there are some practices that will make the effort most effective. These practices also apply if the intent of the institutions is to promote the individuation of its students.

Because parents are paying more for their children's education, they see it as an investment and become involved in hopes of protecting the investment. Anderson (2006, B18) advises institutions to

work with parents – "instead of resisting them."[21] Areas of concern for students and their families, and therefore areas in which parents can coach and support their students, include the availability of the preferred program of study, the quality of the educational experience, college affordability, aid packages, the daily living experience (example, living arrangements, meal plans, employment, etc.), safety, health and wellness, and location (Ullom and Faulkner 2005, 25). By providing "accurate and complete information to new-students' families that is consistent with the reality of college life," institutions can pre-empt some of the parents' concerns (Ullom and Faulkner 2005, 23). Thus parents can focus on supporting students while staff tends to more substantial issues than fielding general information questions. In addition, institutions can provide parents with information on student development and the expectations and roles of the student, the family, and the institution (Ullom and Faulkner 2005). These practices are similar to faculty members establishing classroom expectations at the beginning of each semester as part of a syllabus. This opportunity to establish roles and expectations means that the institution has to make a deliberate and conscious decision regarding what type of relationship the institution wishes to have with parents- "a partnership, a clear separation, or something in between" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 79). This early delineation of roles can help parents understand the university's culture, goals and approach in light of students' cognitive development. This process alone, if undertaken during the time students are considering their college choices can help students and their families determine if the institutions would be a good fit – or not (Wartman and Savage 2008).

If colleges want to empower parents to become involved in positive ways, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) suggest, they should build parents' self- confidence. Parents need to know the expectations an institution has of them and that the institution welcomes their involvement. This can be communicated by sharing with parents information of the student's college experience, ways parents can contribute, expectations for what is appropriate involvement and explicit invitations to participate in their child's educational experience. Unfortunately, information alone is insufficient. Too much information at once can be overwhelming and poorly timed information is often overlooked and forgotten. Any information

[21] Also see Ullom and Faulkner 2005 and Labi 2006.

that institutions send should be timely- relevant to the student's developmental phase, upcoming deadlines, or other chronologies. This information, in whatever form, can encourage parents to be a resource or sounding board for their students rather than a problem-solver.

The relationship between institutions and students as well as institutions and parents is changing. If institutions don't take steps to define these, they may be defined for them by students, parents, or the courts. Because *in loco parentis* is unlikely, and probably undesired, to be the relationship of choice between students and universities, campuses can consider ideas that lie somewhere between *in loco parentis* and permissive independence. These ideas, or relationships, are *in loco avunculi* or *in loco amicis*, meaning "in place of the uncle" and a "wise friend", respectively (Wartman and Savage 2008, 40). Whatever the role institutions envision for parents in the student-institution-parent relationships, communicating the vision clearly and in a unified voice to students can result in parents quickly reinforcing the campus' messages. And, it can also lead to the parents seeing the institution as a partner with a similar goal- the success of their student. According to Coburn (2006, 10), "The more successful [higher education institutions] are in helping parents understand the normal stages of late adolescent development, the less anxious they are likely to be about their own child's behavior. The less anxious they are, the more likely they are to support their child's growth in appropriate and meaningful ways – and the less likely they are to intervene inappropriately. Students – and [university personnel] who work with students – reap the benefits when this happens."

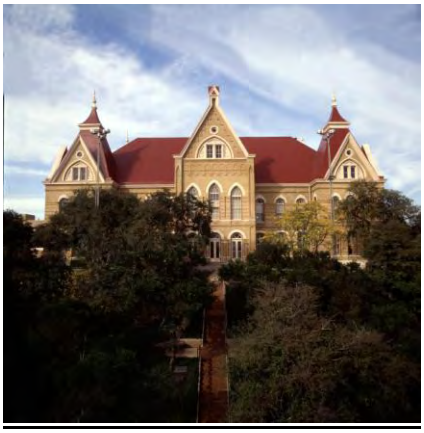
Whether campuses want more or less involved parents and promote separation-individuation or attachment theory, it is up to that campus to deliver a coherent and collective message to parents. According to Coburn (2006), it will be most beneficial if all stakeholders on that campus know the institution's philosophy on parental involvement and that the philosophy is supported by the upper administration.

The setting for this Applied Research Project is Texas State University-San Marcos. The following chapter gives a brief introduction to Texas State, both the institution and the student body. It is

in this setting that the literature will connect with a practical, or "real-life" area of public administration, specifically, public higher education.[22]

[22] Public education, secondary and post-secondary, can affect other areas of public administration. A poorly educated populace typically requires more social services and has higher poverty, unemployment and crime rates. On the other hand, a well-educated populace can more easily be self-sufficient and provide a state or other geographic entity with a strong economy.

# CHAPTER 3: SETTING



**Texas State University-San Marcos[23]**

Texas State[24] is a public, four-year university with its main campus[25] located in San Marcos[26], Texas, between Austin (the state capital) and San Antonio on the IH-35 corridor. The university, outlet malls, Aquarena Center[27], and San Marcos River make San Marcos a popular destination for tourists and students. With a student population of 30,816 [28], Texas State is the 5th largest public university in Texas and 49th in the country. While the university draws students from across the country and abroad, its student population is heavily a Texan population.

[23] Most information in this section is generally known information posted on the Texas State website. Unless otherwise noted, specific dates, locations, overall student population, and number of degrees cited is information posted at www.txstate.edu/about/index.html, enrollment trends data is from reports that can be found at http://www.emm.txstate.edu/marketing-resources/enrollment-reports.html.

[24] For more Texas State ARP's, visit Texas State's eCommons repository at http://ecommons.txstate.edu. Recent ARPs that examine higher education issues include Castleberry (2006), Cordero (2008), Escobar (2008), Gonzales (2009), Ilo (2005), Moore (2009), Stewart (2009), Vaden (2007), Varela (2007), and Villareal (2009).

[25] Texas State's other campus is the Round Rock Higher Education Center (RRHEC) – originally a partnership between Texas State, Austin Community College (ACC), and Temple College at Taylor (TCAT). TCAT no longer uses the RRHEC. ACC will vacate the RRHEC in the future as it moves into its own campus currently under construction in the same vicinity.

[26] Use zip code *78666* to find San Marcos using online maps and directions sites. To visit the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce website, go to www.sanmarcostexas.com.

[27] *Aquarena Springs Resort* until purchased by the university in 1994.

[28] The student body has grown steadily. There were approximately 22,500 in 2000. The growth from fall 2008 to fall 2009 was almost 6%.

Texas State's top 10 feeder high schools are within a sixty mile radius from the San Marcos campus as are the top two feeder community colleges districts[29]. The university currently offers 101 bachelors, 88 masters and nine doctoral degrees. Founded in 1899 as Southwest Texas State Normal School, over time the school has undergone five name changes. The latest, in 2003, changed the name from Southwest Texas State University to Texas State University.[30]

As part of its mission[31], two of the university's six goals address the expansion of access to higher education to a diverse state population, specifically:

> *Goal 2: Expand access to public university education and contribute to the economic and cultural development of Texas.*
> *Goal 5: Enrich our learning and working environment by attracting and supporting a more diverse faculty, staff, and student body.*

In her 2006 fall convocation speech[32], Texas State President Denise M. Trauth publicly announced that the university would seek to achieve Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)[33] status – a goal other faculty and staff had been pursuing for several years.

[29] Austin Community College District and Alamo Community College District.
[30] Many alumni and individuals who do not live close to the San Marcos area or do not maintain a close connection with the campus still refer to the university as Southwest Texas, Southwest or simply SWT. The reference to SWT, particularly from some alumni, is intentional – some opposed the name change.
[31] See www.txstate.edu/about/mission.html.
[32] The text of the speech is available at http://www.president.txstate.edu/about-president-trauth/select-presentations/our-star-is-rising.html.
[33] To attain HSI status, an institution of higher education must have "at least 25 percent Hispanic full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate enrollment; of which 50 percent are low-income – defined as 150 percent of the poverty level as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census." See http://www.txstate.edu/oea/diversity-initiative/Equity-and-Access-Committee/2007-Reports/student-goal/contentParagraph/0/document/Student+Goal+2007.pdf or http://www.ed.gov/programs/idueshsi/index.html.

As of the 12th class day figures for fall 2009, of the almost 31,000 students, 35% are ethnic minorities; 5.5 Black and 23.5% Hispanic. The university ranks 20th in the nation for the number of degrees awarded to Hispanics at the undergraduate level. While the demographics of Texas and the university's enrollment figures bode well for Texas State's goal of diversifying the student body and achieving HSI status[34], there are some challenges. As the literature review pointed out, minority students are more likely to be FGCSs, and, minorities and FGCSs are at higher risk of not pursuing a higher education or dropping out prior to graduation. As the minority population of Texas grows, more of the graduating high school students will be FGCSs. This means that colleges & universities, including Texas State, will see more and more students who may need additional services and care during their college careers. For colleges and universities to maintain their general retention and graduation rates[35] where they are or improve them, they will undoubtedly need to prepare for and work with students unfamiliar with the college experience. Texas State is generally described as a commuter school because approximately 80% of students live off-campus. But, 20% (almost 6,000) residential students and thousands others who live off-campus, but not with their families, may be far removed from their families and support networks.

[34] According to census data available using the *American FactFinder* feature at www.census.gov, the Texas Latino/Hispanic population is approximately 36%, compared to 15% nationally.

[35] For Texas State, the freshman retention rate has ranged from 75-79% for the last six years and the six-year graduation rate for students entering in fall 1999-2003 has ranged from 52-56% (see enrollment reports at http://www.emm.txstate.edu/marketing-resources/enrollment-reports.html)

# CHAPTER 4: REASON FOR A HANDBOOK & IT'S CONTENT

This chapter explains why a handbook is a good choice of a tool that can be used to inform current/potential Texas State students and their families about the university experience and resources available to overcome college challenges. The chapter also discusses the organization and content appropriate for a handbook. This chapter elaborates on the barriers faced by college students and how they may be overcome, establishing the conceptual framework of a manual to assist college-bound students and their families overcome those barriers and understand the college experience.

## *Reason for a Handbook*

Studies on student retention generally focus on the characteristics or differences between students that succeed and those that fail. Little attention is given to the reasons students succeed or ways in which they can overcome the factors that keep them from completing their education. There are many "psychosocial pressures" or factors that are "particularly detrimental to school success for minority" students (Abi-Nader 1990, 41). They include "lack of a vision for the future; poor self-concept; and alienation from the majority culture" (Abi-Nader 1990, 41-42). Other challenges, particularly for FGCSs and underrepresented students, is the lack of understanding of parents' roles, lack of home computers, lack of a connection between classroom learning and applications, and comfort with public speaking (Lum 2008). Yet, these deficiencies can be mitigated. Universities can, and often do, implement proactive programs to address these concerns. For FGCSs and other underrepresented students, alienation can be mitigated by empowering them and their and their families with cultural capital. In fact, programs to address retention challenges often exist, but, students may be unaware of them. There are numerous mediums through which institutions can share this information with students and their parents. One medium that may be particularly useful considering the circumstances faced by FGCSs and other underrepresented students and their families is a manual or handbook. This format can help bridge the cultural capital gap by providing knowledge and access to resources to the families who need it most, from the time they are considering college choices through the attainment of a degree by the student

(Macy 2000; Lum 2006). For families who don't have a tradition of participating in higher education, a manual could implicitly provide the necessary validation of their experiences (Terenzini et al. 1994) and explicitly provide some of that cultural capital and support necessary to succeed in higher education (Herndon and Hirt 2004; Aronson 2008).

Students at Texas State are not immune from these challenges and the university does not have a tool such as a manual to help students and their families overcome those challenges. Such a tool becomes even more important as the demographics of the state and the student body change. As the Hispanic population is growing disproportionately in Texas, Texas State is "attracting more Hispanic students" (TSUEAC 2006, 1). "A large percentage of these students are first-generation to college and do not have a good understanding of a four-year degree or seeking that degree in a residential setting (TSUEAC 2006, 3)."

A manual would serve and support the same purpose as an "intentional parent program" – to provide parents advice on how to support their college student, information on university resources, and encouragement for students and their parents to communicate with each other (Wartman and Savage 2008, 80). The benefits of educating family members on an appropriate level of involvement go far beyond the parent-student relationship. In the cases of groups that place a high value on familial relationships, as is the case with Blacks (Herndon and Hirt 2004) and Hispanics (Ashburn 2007), a handbook has the potential of providing "snowball effect" benefits to students by tapping into their extensive family networks.

Regardless of students' personal or family circumstances and background, a manual can help. The manual can be a source of information on processes and resources available to students and their families during the transition from potential student to enrolled student. As a tool, a manual, can be used by families regardless of their internet connectivity, though the same manual could be uploaded to provide broader accessibility to its content. And, with additional effort, the manual can be provided in languages other than English.

The role of parents in the college education of their child is not always clearly defined and this ambiguity can be much more challenging for families who are unfamiliar with the college experience. While the handbook would mainly be a resource for families, it could also serve as a tool for Texas State since it can include guidance to parents on how they can (and should not) be involved when trying to support their students. The pay-off of this type of communication is not limited to increased parental support for the student; it can lead to parental support for "the institution in the form of parents' goodwill, advocacy, and potential funding" (Wartman and Savage 2008, 80).

Ultimately, while created with FGCSs and their families in mind, the handbook can have a much broader use and applicability. It can be used by CGCSs as much as FGCSs and by Admissions as a recruitment tool as well as departments working with admitted students as a student success resource tool. Though not inclusive of all information or resources available at a campus, the components that form the framework of a manual for college-bound youths is outlined in the next section.

## *Components of a Handbook (Conceptual Framework[36])*

The conceptual framework is outlined below. Each category and subcategory is developed to provide a justification for its inclusion in the handbook.

**4.1 Pre-College Activities**
-College Preparatory Coursework
-Parental Support and Encouragement of Student Goals
-Tests/Practice Tests
-College Preparation/Information Programs
-Open Houses

**4.2 Transition Programs**
-New Student Orientation
-Meeting Faculty
-Bridge Programs

[36] Given that this is a descriptive project, and following Shields' (1998) recommendation of which conceptual framework best fit each type of research purpose, the conceptual framework that will be followed for this project will be "descriptive categories". Following this framework allowed the sorting of topics in the literature in order to determine what inquiries were made during the data collection phase. In addition, regarding the desired outcome, once the research phase is complete, the same descriptive categories are likely to provide the components (sections) that will make up the handbook. A clear benefit of using this framework is that as the project progresses, categories can be "revised" and the content "resorted" (Shields 1998, 214).

**4.3 Financing an Education**
-Savings
-Financial Aid
-Student Employment

**4.4 Building Community and Connections**
-Connecting with the Campus and Others
-Campus Activities and Student Organizations
-Mentoring
-Cultural Acclimation
-Spiritual
-Learning/Residential Communities

**4.5 Maintaining Family Connections**
-Student/Parent Communication
-Institutional/Parent Communication
-Technology

**4.6 Early Intervention and Crises Services**
-Intrusive Services
-First Year Seminar
-Early Alert

**4.7 Academic Advising and Support**
-Advising
-Support

**4.8 Special Needs and Populations**
-Disabilities
-Gender Identity

**4.9 Glossary/Concepts**

## 4.1 Pre-College Activities

Family influence plays an important role well before a student even decides to attend college – and which college to attend. This influence consists of constant encouragement, praise, support (financial, moral, and social), and supportive discussions about the child's educational and career aspirations. Even families that worry they may not have the resources to pay for a college education should instill confidence in their students that they can attend college (Herndon & Hirt 2004; Barnett 2004). Besides at home encouragement and support, there are activities parents can support or become involved in to better prepare their students for college.

***College Preparatory Coursework*** – One of the biggest challenges for students entering college is a lack of preparedness for the rigors of the academic curriculum. Some students handicap themselves during high school by selecting less demanding courses in order to earn easier credits and higher grades. When they do this, they are more likely to find themselves in shock and struggling in their college courses.

High school students should be encouraged to take on a challenging high school curriculum (Barnett 2004; Aronson 2008). It may be tempting for students to complete only the minimum requirements for graduation, however, this would be a mistake because recommended and distinguished achievement high school programs will better prepare them for college. Other classes students can take include honors level, dual credit, and Advanced Placement courses (AP). The dual enrollment and AP courses give students the opportunity to get a head start on earning college credits while acclimating themselves to the rigors and expectations of college. In his empirical study, McCauley (2007) found that students who participated in dual enrollment or AP courses enrolled in college were twice as likely to graduate within six years as students who did not. McCauley acknowledged that these numbers may be skewed by the fact that over-achieving students are naturally more likely to enroll in these courses and would be expected to do well in college regardless of their enrollment in the courses. Nonetheless, these programs can help students of all academic backgrounds have a clearer understanding of the rigors of college courses and the expectations of faculty, giving them an informal assessment of their readiness for college.

A bigger step, if a student's school does not offer a challenging curriculum, is to consider another school (Aronson 2008). While not all families can afford private schools, a student may have the option to transfer out of a low-performing school or apply at a low- or no-cost magnet or charter school.

A handbook should guide students on what kind of courses the students should enroll during high school to be better prepared for college and where to go for assistance in enrolling in AP or dual enrollment classes. The benefits of these programs should be outlined, specifically, that they better

prepare students for the academic rigors of college and that these courses can give students a head start on completing their college degree.

***Parental Support & Encouragement of Student Goals*** – Once a student has decided to attend college, parents should encourage the student by discussing college options and helping students organize college and financial aid/scholarship applications (Barnett 2004). Students who do not talk about college and are not encouraged to pursue a higher education are unlikely to attend postsecondary institutions. Even when a student is the first in his/her family to go to college and may not be familiar with the admission and enrollment process, he/she can learn from others and seek assistance to fill the knowledge gap. When talking about educational attainment, students tend to live up, or down, to the expectations of those around them (Abi-Nader 1990). Therefore, the handbook should describe effective ways for parents to support and encourage students. It should also provide students and their parents with general guidelines of where they can go for questions about college so that they are not making decisions out of ignorance or fear of the unknown.

***Tests/Practice Tests*** – FGCSs are more likely to have lower grades in aptitude tests (Aronson 2008; Ishanti 2006). On the other hand, more traditional college students (upper-middle class) are likely to retake these tests in order to obtain higher scores and be more competitive (Wartman and Savage 2008). Helping FGSCs prepare for these tests can have a positive impact on students' enrollment and success in college (Carey 2008). The handbook should contain information on the specific tests required for admission and enrollment at the university along with information on test taking tips and resources available for potential students. The information should also specify how parents can help students, for example, putting money aside for test fees or providing the information necessary to qualify for fee waivers.

***College Preparation/Information Programs*** – Throughout the country, at the local, regional and national level, there are programs that help students prepare for college. Some of the programs offer students academic support to help them graduate from high school on a multi-year basis. Other programs offer brief programs or workshops to help students and their parents manage the admissions, financial aid

and admissions/aptitude test applications. The participation timeline will vary by program. Some programs reach out to students as early as 6th grade and others are available during students' junior or senior years in high school. Early intervention and education programs tend to be more effective since they allow families more lead time to adjust their course and prepare for the student's admission and transition to college (Carey 2008). When the programs are affiliated with a university, the host department can (and tends to) become a supportive and advocate office for the student and his/her family (Wartman and Savage 2008; Lum 2006).

The handbook should include information on programs commonly available in Texas communities or school districts and those offered by Texas State. For programs offered by the university, the handbook should clearly explain which programs require travel to the campus and which occur in collaboration with localities or school districts in various regions of the state. The information should include eligibility requirements, deadlines, and documentation required to participate so students and their parents can be prepared when the application process for these programs begins. Because it is unlikely that one university can host such a program in every school district, the handbook should contain contact information for students and families who may need to have information sent to them or are willing to travel to a program outside of their city or school district.

***Open Houses*** – Today, most universities have open-house-type programs. These programs give students interested in attending and their families an opportunity to learn more about the campus. Though they are generally designed to entice high school students to select the host institution, the programs provide information that can help applicants determine if the institution offers what they looking for. College selection is more than just being admitted, it involves assessing which institution is a good fit based on each student's goals and interests. In addition, institutions now also offer open-house programs for the families of enrolled students. These programs allow families to familiarize themselves with the university, its services and how these can help the student succeed. If necessary, the programs also provide families with information on financial assistance (Ashburn 2007). The handbook should include

information on Texas State's open house program, including scheduled programs and the cost of or requirements for participation in these programs or cite where to access this information.

For FGCSs in particular, it is likely that parents will not know which courses will better prepare their student for college and have no idea what documentation is needed to support an application for admission or aid. Providing such information in a handbook would better prepare students for the college admission, selection and financial aid processes and help parents prepare for and understand those processes. Having that information helps students make a decision about which institution is a better fit for them and informs them about resources available to help them succeed. Including information on special programs in a handbook, if offered by Texas State, can help potential students prepare for admission and enrolment at Texas State or to know to seek this type of program in their community or other university of choice.

## 4.2 Transition Programs

While attending college is a period of growth and development for students, that growth and development can occur at different rates. For example, some students may take longer to complete a degree if they enroll on a part-time basis. Even though the college experience may be different for all students, every student must make the transition from potential student to enrolled student. Below are some of the typical services offered by colleges and universities to help admitted students make that transition.

***New Student Orientation*** – For newly admitted students, institutions generally offer a new student orientation. Like the open-house programs, these orientations are filled with information for students and their families. And, an increasing number of institutions now offer parent orientations to accommodate and teach parents how they can best support their students (Ashburn 2007). While new student orientations are generally geared towards matriculating students and informing them of available resources (usually concentrated in student affairs), they do not have to be limited to these functions.

The handbook should describe the university's new student orientation program and include the dates and costs or cite how to access this information. It should also be clear on whether or not there is a role for or if a portion of the orientation is dedicated to parents.

***Meeting Faculty*** – Transition programs are great opportunities for helping students meet and connect with their future instructors. This is particularly important since faculty "are essential to student learning" (Terenzini et al. 1994, 71). Meeting various faculty members early can provide new students the opportunity to "recognize and respond to [different] professors' expectations" and to become comfortable with seeking faculty advice early rather than waiting "until crises start occurring" (Collier and Morgan 2008, 444). The handbook should describe to students the importance of meeting faculty members and encourage students to take advantage of opportunities available to them to meet instructors both in and outside of the classroom. Examples of these opportunities, such as meet-and-greet events during orientation programs and office hours when school is in session, should be specified in the handbook.

***Bridge Programs*** – Finally, while transition programs usually serve to bridge college admission to college enrollment, some transition programs bridge the gap between high school graduation and the fall semester by offering summer classes. Often referred to as, naturally, "bridge" programs, these summer programs allow students to take a limited number of courses when the level of campus activity is less hectic. These summer programs, which may be open to all new students or limited to special or conditional admission students, can be ideal for FGCSs (Carey 2008).

The handbook should include information on any bridge programs offered by Texas State and the requirements for participation. If the program includes a summer school component, the benefits of participation should be clearly outlined so that a student who anticipated a three month summer of relaxation prior to college may consider participation as a positive step rather than a hindrance to a long awaited respite.

The transition to college can be as stressful a time as it can be exciting for both students and their families, especially when the student is moving out of the parents' home. The farther away a student goes

from home, the more exciting and/or stressful the experience is likely to be. A handbook can help guide the excitement and alleviate the stress. A source of stress, and something that is also likely to increase the further a student goes away from home, is the cost of a college education. Unless a student's family has the means to pay for the cost of a college education up front, which is unlikely to be the case for FGCSs, or the student receives a full scholarship, how to finance an education will be an essential part of the handbook.

## 4.3 Financing An Education

College affordability and aid packages are common and major areas of concern for students and their families (Ullom and Faulkner 2005). "Low-income parents are typically pessimistic about their children's educational futures and do not act proactively…[and]… are less likely than affluent parents to financially support their children during young adulthood and offer less assistance when they do provide it" (Farrel 2008, 45). While parents may not always be able to financially support their children, an education is not necessarily out of reach. When families do not feel they have the financial means, it is important for them to understand the immediate costs should be viewed as an investment with a significant rate of return. At the individual level, a college degree generally results in increased wage potential. At the societal level, citizens with college degrees are more likely to pay significant taxes and less likely to need public assistance (Macy 2000). Unfortunately, the tools and aid to overcome financial obstacles are shrinking and are not as readily available to the families that need them most. For FGCSs and their families, access to information on financial aid sources and the process for accessing it can be the difference, even before graduating high school, in deciding to pursue a higher education.

***Savings*** – One of the ways parents support their children's college aspirations is by saving money (Wartman & Savage 2008). Unfortunately, parents of FGCSs may not think of doing this enough years in advance to have substantial capital saved, assuming that they are able to put aside funds at all. Students can add to their savings from their own after-school, weekend or summer employment, however, for FGCSs, their earnings are likely to be contributed to the household. And, focusing on employment can

result in students deferring or foregoing their educational aspirations (Aronson 2008). The handbook should include information on the costs of attending college, appropriate levels of savings, and ways families can maximize savings even when their resources are limited.

***Financial Aid*** – The accessibility of aid can be problematic because applying for financial aid and filing income taxes (the latter necessary for the former) are both complicated, even intimidating, processes. These processes are further complicated for "non-traditional" or "modern" families that may include divorced, remarried, and same-sex parents. Pre-nuptial agreements, new laws, and differing definitions between Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) forms further complicate the process (Farrell 2008; Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003).

Examples of financial support include grants, loans, and scholarships supported by the federal or state governments and the institution (Herndon and Hirt 2004). However, in the last 20 years, state and institutional aid has been shifted away from need-based awards to academic merit-based awards. This means that money previously awarded to those who need the money most now goes to students who are eligible for and likely to receive other merit awards. This shift has resulted in more money going to students of middle income and wealthy families. As a result, students of low means are now more likely to spend more time working and less studying or attending classes, deferring college attendance, or foregoing the option altogether (Carey 2008).

While loans may be readily available in the absence of non-repayment aid, students relying on loans are less likely than students receiving grants to persevere through graduation (Ishanti 2006). "[F]or low-income students, inadequate financial aid can interfere with students' academic and social integration which, in turn, has been shown to be related to persistence decisions" (Pascarella et al. 2004, 280; Giancola, Munz, and Trares 2008).

Information on financial aid and budgeting tools may help students overcome the challenge of financing their education when family resources are not sufficient. Therefore, this information should be included in a handbook.

***Student Employment*** – Students who desire a college education but do not have the sufficient means or financial aid to maintain their enrollment are likely to reduce their course load to minimize their semester expense or accommodate more work hours. When this employment is off-campus, the student is likely to see him/herself primarily as a worker who takes classes rather than a student who works. The former are more likely to delay or forego graduation than peers who fall in the latter category (Aronson 2008; Pascarella et al. 2004; Anderson 1981).

While not working may not be an option for some students, the negative impact regular employment has on performance and persistence can be mitigated. Students can take on work-study (on-campus) employment. This type of employment generally limits the hours students work, keeping them more focused on their student roles, and offering increased sensitivity to their academic demands. In addition, campus employment is more likely to facilitate integration into the campus community (Anderson 1981).

The handbook should include information about the benefits of on-campus employment. Contacts and the process for obtaining an on-campus student job should also be included.

The handbook's information on how to finance an education should give students and their parents the tools to establish a plan of what they will have to do to meet their financial obligations. Such a plan can help ensure that students are also able to meet their academic obligations. After all, it is of little use for a student to be able to pay for college if the effort expended in securing the funds leaves no time or energy to perform academically, resulting in loss of eligibility for enrollment. After students have established this plan, they should next put some thought into how they will connect to their chosen institution.

## 4.4 Building Community and Connections

Building community and connections can strongly influence how much students enjoy their college experience. These connections give students a sense of belonging and form their new support network. More importantly, community and connections can determine if a student perseveres through

graduation. Connecting with others and the campus and developing a sense of belonging can be achieved in a number of ways.

***Connecting with the Campus and Others*** – Developing a sense of community through student engagement and the development of a sense of belonging is broadly considered a key determinant of whether students will persevere through graduation. Orbe (2008, 86) asserts, "collegiate success is contingent on [students'] ability to connect with others: working collaboratively with other students, developing mentoring relationships with faculty and administrators, networking with alumni and other professionals in their chosen field, and seeking support from the larger community." McGlynn adds that "student engagement is the key to academic motivation, persistence, and degree completion" (2008, 20). It is particularly helpful for students to develop a sense of community with others of similar backgrounds on campus, providing a home away from home and giving them a "sense of affinity and connectedness between peers" (Herndon and Hirt 2004, 502). Institutions can contribute to the students' connectedness to the university and its community by providing: opportunities to develop fictive kinships[37] with more experienced peers, faculty and staff; mentoring from more experienced peers and academic role models; support groups; social networking opportunities; information on locally available spiritual support; campus activities and student organizations; recreational and intercollegiate sports; and, residential based learning communities (Herndon and Hirt 2004). Fostering a sense of community is not the exclusive responsibility of Student Affairs professionals. Academic Affairs can contribute since developing curriculums "that encourage extracurricular involvement or relationships with students of similar backgrounds may also enhance connection to the institution" (Aronson 2008, 50-51).

The handbook should describe the benefits of campus involvement, make reference to organizations that program campus activities for broad audiences, and encourage students to participate in these activities. The activities may be active (for example, competing in intramural sports or taking leadership roles in organizations) or passive (for example, attending intercollegiate sporting events or fine arts presentations). The handbook should also encourage activities that support students' academic

[37] Family-like relationships.

endeavors outside of the classroom (for example, informal study groups, formal supplemental instruction, and organized support groups).

***Campus Activities and Student Organizations*** – Developing a sense of community may be more challenging for FGCSs, low SES students, and minority students. Low SES students are more likely to feel out of place in the academic environment, resulting in lower grades and disengagement (Aronson 2008). For FGCSs, academic survival is often the primary concern, consequently, these students are likely to defer "involvement in the nonacademic activities and life of the campus until they [feel] they [have] their academic lives under control" (Terenzini et al. 1994, 64). For many FGCSs, their first social connections are based on academics, for example, study groups or in-class interactions with peers. FGCSs who opt to, or must, commute to school and/or work off-campus, are further disadvantaged. These students are handicapped by the increased likelihood that they spend more time in environments and with individuals that are not supportive of academic endeavors and student-institution engagement (Longwell-Grice and Longwell-Grice 2008; Terenzini et al. 1994). On most campuses there are extra-curricular activities, including student organizations. The student organizations can cater to a very broad range of interests. The programming offered by student development personnel, though on the surface may seem purely entertaining or social in nature, generally seeks to provide students with connections to the campus and to foster success inside and outside of the classroom.

The handbook should discuss how students can go about finding a student organization that may interest them. Because financial concerns may influence students' decision on their involvement in student organizations, the handbook should highlight opportunities that cost very little or are free. Highlights should also include opportunities for students to easily find peers with similar backgrounds or interests.

***Mentoring*** – While the most supportive community is one that has the positive attributes of a family, including "acceptance, mutual support, and self-preservation or regeneration" (Abi-Nader 1990, 54), relationships based on commonalities such as race, culture, gender-identity, religion, geographic area, or special interest can also be helpful. Students may naturally forge these relationships as they meet peers

and university personnel, however, institutions can take proactive steps to ensure students have opportunities to develop these relationships on a more formal and individualized basis through mentoring programs. If students don't become engaged and develop a sense of belonging, they miss out on a more enriching college experience and become susceptible to a contrary effect – disconnection and loneliness. Loneliness can be both a result of and a contributor to disengagement. Lonely students are less likely to seek engagement and needed services, may "find it harder to make friends", and may come to believe that emotional and social support can only be obtained from family members (Ponzetti 1990, 337-339). These beliefs place students at risk of leaving before graduation. A mentor could be the person that can ameliorate these feelings of loneliness and help connect the student with campus resources rather than allowing the student to 'slip through the cracks'.

The handbook should include information on campus mentoring programs and how to go about participating in such programs, including the best time to sign up to participate and any application requirements. The handbook should also discuss efforts to help connect students, formally or informally, with peers and mentors of similar backgrounds and who may help the students network with others and connect with needed resources.

***Cultural Acclimation*** – For some minority students, going to college may be the first time they are actually a minority in a majority environment. This, combined with the separation from close-knit or collectivist family environments, can lead to a sense of isolation. While integration generally refers to integration into the greater community, and full integration may not occur for all students, a sense of belonging can be achieved through membership and integration in one or various smaller campus communities (Hurtado and Carter 1997). Minorities can make up for the missing familial relationships and support by establishing relationships with peers and personnel of similar backgrounds; this can help facilitate the transition to and success in college (Terry et al. 2005; Wartman and Savage 2008).

The handbook should include information on offices that sponsor and support cultural activities and organizations. This should include any offices with specialized training or knowledge on how to deal with sensitive cultural issues and serve as a "safe place" for students who may feel isolated.

***Spiritual Support*** – For many students, especially African Americans, having spiritual support is important. The support institutions provide can be as simple as fostering a safe and comfortable environment in which to pray. More enhanced programs may provide opportunities to participate in informal peer groups or formal church groups that support spiritual expression and growth. Families can support their students by reminding them to pray and letting them know that prayers are being said for them. Because faith can be important for students in times of crises and celebration, campuses should not shy away from informing students that different spiritual groups are available on campus and locally (Herndon and Hirt 2004). Spiritual connections not only serve as an outlet for the expression of beliefs, they also provide opportunities for students to discuss course content with their peers outside of class and foster a sense of belonging (Hurtado and Carter 1997).

The handbook should include information on spiritual and religious centers, organizations, and support groups available on campus and locally. The handbook should also discuss how students can address religious conflicts or commitments. For example, how to handle class absences due to religious holidays or how to seek reasonable accommodations that allow a student to practice their religion in a safe, welcoming environment.

***Learning/Residential Communities*** – Students living on-campus are more likely to persevere. Students living off-campus and not with parents have higher attrition rates (Anderson 1981). Some of the reasons have already been mentioned- non-residential students are more likely to enroll in fewer hours, work more hours, and be engaged in activities that do not support, and even distract from, academic pursuits. On the other hand, residential students are more likely to succeed because their communities offer them more opportunities to connect in-class and out-of-class learning (Terenzini et al. 1994) and to discuss "course content with other students outside class" (Hurtado and Carter 1994, 334). Students living on-campus can also benefit from more individualized instruction by tapping in to learning communities, typically based on major, interest, cohort, or block enrollment (Carey 2008).

When students do not develop a sense of community, they may develop feelings of loneliness, homesickness, helplessness, "emptiness, hopelessness, restlessness, alienation, anxiety and being

unloved" (Ponzetti 1990, 337). If this occurs, the students may need professional counseling services[38] that families back at home may be unfamiliar with or unable to provide.

FGCS families, often concurrently minorities, lack important cultural capital [39] that can guide them through the college experience. Without it, choices as basic as selecting an educational program (institution and major) can be daunting and confusing (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003). A handbook can provide them with knowledge and resources about learning/residential communities to help ease and overcome the cultural and value shock they may experience. Without the cultural capital, the shock can create "a social dissonance" between students and their families (Cortez 2008, 99).

The handbook should highlight the university's housing policy, range of options for campus housing, and benefits of campus living. It should include information on the various learning communities and opportunities available to connect with others and become engaged on campus.

While the handbook can help students connect with the campus and a new set of peers, it is also important for students to maintain connections to their families. The next section focuses on just that.

## 4.5 Maintaining Family Connections

The support that families provide to their children doesn't, or shouldn't, end when the student leaves for college. Students are likely to establish relationships with peers and university personnel that will encourage them in their academic pursuits. However, support and validation (of their decision to attend college) from their family is just as important during the college years as in the years leading to college enrollment. Terenzini et al. (1994) and Hoover (2008) found that students who are encouraged develop more self-confidence and a desire to live up to these higher academic expectations than students who receive negative feedback regarding their abilities to succeed in college.

***Student/Parent Communication*** – Parental support is important to student success and when students "maintain warm relationships with their parents", they adjust better to college, perform better academically, develop better coping strategies, including reaching out for help, and are more likely to

[38] Some of these services are discussed later.
[39] (Pascarella et. al 2004; Aschaffenburg and Mass 1997; Collier & Morgan 2008)

reach out to family members in times of crisis (Barnett 2004, 54). Some challenges, however, may arise when the student leaves home to attend an out-of-town college. When this happens, parents (and students) may need to exert additional efforts in order to stay connected. Connections can be in the form of direct contact with the student and connections to the university.

The handbook should remind students that leaving home to attend college does not have to mean severing their relationships with important family members. It should encourage students to remain in touch with family members, especially parents, who support their decision to attend college. It should also provide parents with ways in which they can encourage their students to reach out for help on campus and reassure them that the family cares for and supports the student's decision to attend college. The handbook can also encourage students and their families to have a communication plan so that they all know the best ways and times to keep in touch.

***Institution/Parent Communication*** – Aside from staying in touch with students, families can support their student by staying in touch with the university in order to be apprised of important dates and events. The events may be geared towards parents and revolve around traditional campus events such as homecoming or transition periods (e.g., student move-in). Other programs may simply be an opportunity for parents to connect with students and the university, for example, parents' weekend (Wartman and Savage 2008). Campus should also have information centrally located and easily available for parents. The centralized contact person or office may be a Parents' Relations office within Student Affairs or University Development. An active and current web site can answer many general and incident-specific questions (Wartman and Savage 2008).

For critical incidents[40], campuses can use staff members (parent task forces) or other parents (associations or networks) to communicate with and respond to general inquiries by parents (Ullom and Faulkner 2005). In very recent years, universities have implemented "timely warnings" to notify students and staff of critical incidents. These warnings may be sent to all students and faculty via e-mail or reverse

[40] Critical incident refers to an incident that may potentially affect a large group or the university community at-large. Examples include safety hazards, criminal activity, natural/weather disasters, and disease outbreaks, all of which may catch the attention of media outlets.

phone messages (automated calls or voice messages to all land line extensions on campus) and/or to individuals who opt-in to receive the information via e-mail or text messages. While it is important for individuals on campus to be among the first to receive information on critical campus incidents, parents will also wish to know that their child is safe and what actions they or their child should take. Parents may resent learning about critical incidents through news media, their children, or third parties. If parents have access to this information, up to allowing them to opt-in to those distribution lists, frustrating calls to various offices are likely to decrease, allowing staff to dedicate more time and energy to addressing the critical incident.

A handbook should include information on the school's policy/process for responding to critical incidents and recommendations for parents on how to respond and where to access information during these crises. The handbook should also explain to parents the statutes and university polices that may restrain university-parent communication.

***Technology*** – Technology has clearly made it possible to make more contacts at lower costs. Most of today's traditional college students grew up with access to these technologies which include cellular phones, e-mail, and internet-based social sites (Ullom and Faulkner 2005; Wartman and Savage 2008). Not all parents, however, have equal familiarity with or access to these technologies. Hispanic, African-American, and lower income families have lower rates of access and use of communication technologies. Rural families, while not excluded from the communication technologies, generally have slower internet connections (Wartman and Savage 2008). Cellular coverage may also be limited for rural families.

The handbook should inform students and their families of resources available to help them maintain contact with each other. These resources should include technology resources available to students on campus at little to no cost and how parents may be able to access similar resources (for example free access to internet and computers) in their communities.

While all students go through a transition period from high school to college, FGCSs are likely to experience a more stressful and foreign transition. Students from minority populations who were not part

of a predominantly majority community may experience a similar transition. For these students, the connections to and support from their families will help soothe the stressful and emotional aspects as well as the cultural shock of the acclimation period (Herndon and Hirt 2004; Barnett 2004). Hence, a handbook should explain to students and their families the transition to college and the important role their familial relationships will continue to play through this period. The handbook should present to parents the methods available to them to communicate with their children and how best to communicate with the university under various circumstances.

## 4.6 Early Intervention and Crises Services

Whether during their transition, early in their academic career or well after a student has become a part of the university community, students can encounter challenges that can keep them from continuing towards their goals. Universities may offer many services to help students but if the student does not seek them out he or she will "fall through the cracks". To prevent this, some universities have programs or services that reach out to students when administrators observe the student struggling. If an individual does not feel equipped to respond to the student's concerns, there may be a system for the concerned person to raise an alert so that others more qualified may respond.

***Intrusive Services*** – The stresses of the transition to and rigors of college can result in a need for counseling services. Most major universities provide these services to students for moderate fees or at no cost beyond service fees paid as part of enrollment. The services these offices offer vary in intensity. On one end of the spectrum, offices may offer informal support from peers, faculty or staff and teach students techniques to cope with negative feelings (such as those resulting from students' lack of a sense of belonging). On the other end of the spectrum, offices may provide intensive psychological or psychiatric services (Ponzetti 1990). Most campus counseling centers unable to provide the level of services needed by students will offer referrals to outside providers.

Other areas of concern for students and their families revolve around safety, health and wellness (Ullom and Faulkner 2005; Coburn 2006). Depending on each institution's size and profile, security and

police services, medical services, and health and wellness services may be provided by the university on a direct or contract basis.

***First Year Seminar*** – Many campuses have instituted a first year seminar course intended to acclimate students to the campus beyond what orientation programs are able to do. These programs, seen as best practices (Carey 2008), allow longer-term contact with students in a conscious effort to provide students with information on resources as the students may need them early in their academic career when they are least familiar with the campus, its challenges, and its services. These programs have demonstrated a positive short-term effect, however, possibly due to their limited duration, their effectiveness declines over time (Horwedel 2008).

***Early Alert Systems*** – Carey (2008) recommends the use of "intrusive counseling"[41] and "early alert" programs. Due to the nature of the counseling profession, formal counseling is generally engaged in on a voluntary basis. However, other members of a university can engage in informal intrusive guidance, encouraging students to use campus resources to overcome difficulties and making referrals through an early alert program. Early alert systems that facilitate communication between faculty and advisors or counselors can help identify student problems such as poor academic performance, attendance or participation. An early alert would allow for an early response that can salvage the student's academic performance or maintain the student's well-being. This positive intervention can further encourage students to seek services, even when faculty and staff are not yet aware of concerns (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003).

With critical incidents such as campus shootings and swine (H1N1) flu scares making front page and evening news, it is important parents know what services are available during such times. Parents who have been to college may be familiar with and know where to find these services; parents of FGCSs may not even know to look for them. For both categories of

[41] Some institutions may use "counseling" and "advising" interchangeably. In this project, counseling refers to therapeutic or psychological counseling provided by licensed therapists, counselors and psychologists; advising refers to services, provided by academic advisors, meant to help students understand their degree plans. Advising is discussed in a separate section.

parents, a handbook would be convenient location to find information on early intervention and crisis services.

The handbook should discuss services such as counseling/psychological, medical, security, and emergency responses. Because of the sensitive nature of some of these services, the handbook should also include what information a parent can expect to be able to access and the process for doing so. If the university offers a first year seminar, the handbook should also explain its purpose and benefits. The handbook should also describe any early alert systems in place with specific details on how to access it if it is open to parents. The alert system may be one that allows parents to inquire about the student's wellness or it may serve as a way for family members to express concern for their student to appropriate university officials.

## 4.7 Academic Advising and Support

Other services that do not generally deal with crises but can be particularly important in preventing "academic crises" are academic advising and support services. These services help students stay on track towards completing their chosen degree plans.

***Academic Advising*** – Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum (2003) cite a number of academic advising and support obstacles that are particularly difficult for FGCSs. These obstacles include bureaucratic hurdles, confusing choices, limited advisor availability, poor advice from staff and delayed detection of costly mistakes (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003).

After settling on a school and degree program, FGCSs may feel overwhelmed by the complexities of the registration process and degree requirements – and, just as important, non-requirements. Students who are unable to interpret their degree plans may take unnecessary courses that delay their completion of the program and exhaust their resources. These bureaucratic hurdles can be eliminated, or diminished, by centralizing academic information and assigning students to an advisor rather than having every student in a general pool.

After students attain admission and obtain financial aid, before the first day of classes, they must navigate through complex challenges. Easy access to a person familiar with the college experience makes the inevitable challenges more manageable. These challenges include choosing a major and understanding the various factors that will impact the path to fulfilling that major's requirements, e.g., course rotations, pre-requisites, and remedial courses. While exploration is part of the educational experience, students with limited financial resources may not have the luxury of taking costly classes that will not be counted towards a degree. For students unconcerned with financial matters, taking such courses may simply mean extending their time in school. For students with limited financial resources, these unnecessary courses could mean having to postpone or forego their academic pursuits while they attempt to replenish their capital. These students will benefit from visiting with academic advisors who can "go through all the degree programs and the courses they entail, with an explanation of implications, sequences, requirements, and job outcomes" in addition to an assessment of "students' achievement and goals" (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003, 137).

Even if the student is aware of the questions to ask or resources needed, a limited number of counselors or advisors available to help students with academic, employment, career and personal issues and questions, can result in the students having to wait weeks, even months, for an appointment. If students are not required to meet with an advisor, they may go several semesters without doing so and may unknowingly stray from the necessary degree requirements. When students don't seek the services of an academic advisor, they run the risk of missing out on important information and updates which can result in challenges that are harder to overcome as time passes by. Examples include changes in degree requirements and the frequency at which certain classes will be offered. For some students, these challenges can escalate to the level of crises, including those of a physical or mental health nature (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003).

Students that bounce from one advisor or department to another, rather than establishing regular contact with their program's academic advisor, increase the risk of receiving conflicting information. This may be due, in part, to students going to faculty or staff who are not thoroughly familiar with the

many degree plans offered by a university or department. These faculty or staff may give advice based on what students say they would like rather than what each degree plan requires. Students who are unfamiliar with advisors (for example, because they were "good" in high school and were therefore never "sent" to the counselor) may mistakenly avoid counselors and advisors in college. Institutions can mitigate this obstacle by requiring more contact between advisors and students. For example, requiring visits every semester to monitor a student's progress towards degree completion can give specialized advisors the opportunity to intervene if a student is not "on track". Without these interventions, students may stray off from their degree plans and by the time this problem is discovered, they may become too discouraged to spend the time, effort, and money to get back on track. Students kept on track through early interventions are likely to have a better college experience (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003).

FGCSs may be particularly prone to crises of this sort. These students may not know of the benefits of initiating contact with faculty members. In addition, they may be intimidated and see contact outside of the classroom as a sign of personal deficiency. Even if students don't feel they may have specific academic deficiencies, they may avoid contact with instructors, believing that the faculty doesn't care about anything not directly related to their course content. Even worse, students may see faculty members as gatekeepers whose job it is to weed them out (Longwell-Grice and Longwell-Grice 2008). It is particularly important for these students that institutions encourage and facilitate student-faculty contact outside of the classroom. This allows students to become comfortable sharing their ideas for major projects with their instructors early in the semester, asking for feedback on their ideas and work, and participating in extracurricular and social activities that involve faculty members (Koljatic & Kuh 2001).

For students with few financial resources, a mistake such as an incorrect course or a course out of sequence can make the difference between continuing with the pursuit of a degree and dropping out from college. Students are more likely to find themselves in these situations if they do not know of the services available to help them prepare for future semesters. Failure to plan ahead can result in mistakes – such as signing up for wrong courses – that may take waiting for the following semester to fix. This can mean the permanent loss of scarce funds and valuable time needed to complete a degree. Institutions need to detect

and help students find these mistakes early. Advisors can help students by meeting frequently and by reviewing student's selection of courses (and referencing these to the degree outline) prior to the start of a semester so that adjustments can be made if necessary. Early alert systems that facilitate communication between faculty and advisors or counselors help identify problems students may be encountering and allow for action to be taken so that the problem may be addressed. Problems may include poor academic performance, attendance or participation. This positive intervention can further encourage students to seek services, even when faculty and staff are unaware of concerns (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003).

A student handbook should describe the academic advising system at the university and clearly define how a student must go about to receive those services. It should also include information on resources available to help students stay on track between advising sessions and understand degree requirements. The handbook should encourage students to use this service as often as possible as a way to monitor their progress without seeing it as a sign of trouble. It should also reassure students that if they are in academic trouble, constant contact with their academic advisor can help them connect to resources that will help them overcome the obstacles to their academic success.

***Academic Support*** – Student learning – and ultimately graduation – is advanced through "cooperation among students" and "active learning" (Koljatic and Kuh 2001, 367-369). Cooperation among students, especially outside of class, is evidenced by opportunities to share concerns with peers regarding personal and academic issues. Through these opportunities, peers, and even faculty and staff, can provide feedback on the students' understanding and options. Other signs of cooperation among students include engagement with colleagues outside of the classroom environment and participation in extra-curricular activities such as student organizations or university committees (Koljatic and Kuh 2001; Anderson 1981). Active learning is primarily demonstrated by activities related to academic work, including student review and revision of work before submitting it to their instructor, note-taking in class and review/outlining of the notes after class, and use of library resources (ex., dictionaries, thesauruses, and librarians) to improve and expand academic work (Koljatic and Kuh 2001). In-class participation and extracurricular activities have long been encouraged as a ways of enhancing the academic experience.

Pascarella et al. (2004) point out that when FGCSs are involved in these activities, the benefits to the student go beyond a better grade for the class or assignment. Finally, other examples of academic support include tutoring services, computer labs, and peer mentoring programs (Herndon and Hirt 2004).

A handbook should include information on practices and resources that can contribute to their academic success. These include participation in formal or informal study groups, academically-focused organizations, computer labs, library resources and tutorial services.

Students seek advice from various sources, including peers, faculty and staff. In the process, the students may receive conflicting information (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003). Cases where faculty or staff members provide the incorrect information can result in the student harboring mistrust (Longwell-Grice and Longwell-Grice 2008), ultimately resulting in the students avoiding advising services. The handbook should make clear who the most appropriate person or office is to answer questions related to degree requirements/advising and where those services can be found. The handbook should also make students aware of common challenges to fulfilling degree requirements, course rotations, pre-requisites, and remedial courses. Understanding these concepts, receiving proper advising services, and utilizing academic support services help students use their money, time and effort most efficiently towards earning a degree (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003).

## 4.8 Special Needs and Populations

Diversity, traditionally, has been thought of as differences in race or ethnic backgrounds and equal access to women. On college campuses, diversity increasingly includes expanding access to individuals with disabilities and extending protections to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transsexual (GLBT) individuals.

***Disability Services*** – Disabled students are increasingly able to access a higher education. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 made campuses more accessible to students with physical disabilities (Terry et al. 2005). And, “the enhancement in psychopharmaceuticals” makes it possible for students with mental disorders and learning disabilities “to thrive in even the most selective of colleges”

(Coburn 2006, 11). It is estimated that 10% of students entering college are taking medications for mental disorders (Coburn 2006). For these students, the anxiety of new found independence (Terry et al. 2005) and the lack of oversight of their recommended care plans (Coburn 2006) can create obstacles to a stable day-to-day living experience. For these students, services offered by staff with specialized knowledge of disabilities and accessibility issues can be the difference between completing a degree and quickly withdrawing from school to return to the home environment. While the literature does not associate disability with FGCSs, the experience of disabled students in college, especially if going away from home, can mirror that of FGCSs. For this reason, it is particularly important universities take steps to ensure services available to FGCSs are also accessible to students with varying disabilities.

***Gender Identity/Sexual Orientation*** – The number of students identifying themselves as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transsexual (GLBT) has grown and today's traditional college-aged generation is described as more open to non-traditional sexual identities. Still, the close quarters of campus residence halls may challenge some and may try even those who previously did not feel affected by non-traditional sexual identities. GLBT students may face hostile environments. If they have not "come out", and wish to do so, they can face psychological and adjustment challenges that require specialized services to help them cope and eventually thrive. GLBT students may fear discrimination and harassment. "A supportive campus environment with administrators, faculty, and students working to create an inclusive environment which is safe, respectful, and welcoming of all its members is critically needed on every campus, and particularly for the GLBT community which continues to fight for such an environment in the university community" (Terry et al. 2005, 16). Policies against various forms of discrimination at public colleges and universities can result in inclusion efforts, both administration and student led. Despite this, these efforts are not always broadly announced, making the inclusion in a handbook extremely valuable to a student who may need support in this area.

The handbook should explain services available to individuals with disabilities, particularly information related to accessibility and accommodations. It should also describe services available to support students with disabilities and students dealing with gender identity issues. The handbook should

include information on any university "safe place" program that advocates or fosters a safe and welcoming environment for individuals without regard to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

### 4.9 GLOSSARY/CONCEPTS

Despite having typically spent 12-13 years attending school, once they arrive on campus, college students encounter new expectations and new terminology. While for CGCSs the new concepts may come easily, FGCSs often encounter more difficulty. Concepts or terms used on a daily basis in most colleges may take some time for FGCSs to grasp. For example, Collier and Morgan (2008) found out some FGCSs did not understand the purpose of office hours and what actually happens during that time. Hence, FGCSs seldom pursue contact with their faculty during those times – or any other time outside of the classroom. Even when students understood the concept of office hours, some, due to cultural and upbringing differences, had difficulty "fac[ing] an instructor' (Collier and Morgan 2008, 440). Another challenge Collier and Morgan (2008) found was that FGCSs rely more on general verbal communication from their instructors rather than referring to a syllabus for assignment instructions and at times may take those verbal instructions too literal.

A handbook should include a section on campus lingo. While student handbooks may include such a section, as previously stated, parents generally do not receive a copy.

## *Summary*

The descriptive categories detailed above are listed in Table 4.1 below. Each category/subcategory is linked to its supporting literature.

Table 4.1 – Conceptual Framework Table

| Descriptive Categories | Supportive Literature |
|---|---|
| **Pre-College Activities** | Intro: Herndon & Hirt 2004, Barnett 2004 |
| College Preparatory Coursework | Aronson (2008), Barnett (2004), McCauley (2007) |
| Parental Support & Encouragement of Student Goals | Abi-Nader (1990), Barnett (2004) |
| Tests/Practice Tests | Aronson (2008), Carey (2008), Ishanti (2006), Wartman & Savage (2008) |
| College Preparation/Info. Programs | Carey (2008), Lum (2006), Wartman & Savage (2008) |
| Open Houses | Ashburn (2007) |
| **Transition programs** | |
| New Student Orientation | Ashburn (2007) |
| Meeting faculty | Collier & Morgan (2008), Terenzini, et al. (1994) |
| Bridge programs | Carey (2008) |
| **Financing an education** | Intro: Ullom & Falkner (2005), Farrel (2008), Macy (2008) |
| Savings | Aronson (2008), Wartman & Savage (2008) |
| Financial Aid | Carey (2008), Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum (2003), Farrel (2008), Giancola, Munz, & Trares (2008), Herndon & Hirt (2004), Ishanti (2006), Pascarella et al. (2004) |
| Student Employment | Anderson, Kristine L. (1981), Aronson (2008), Pascarella et al. (2004) |
| **Building community and connections** | |
| Connecting with the Campus and Others | Aronson (2008), Ashburn (2007), Herndon & Hirt (2004), McGlynn (2008), Orbe (2008) |
| Campus Activities and Student Organizations | Aronson (2008), Ashburn (2007), Longwell-Grice & Longwell-Grice (2008), Terenzini, et al. (1994) |
| Mentoring | Abi-Nader (1990), Ponzetti (1990) |
| Cultural Acclimation | Hurtado & Carter (1997), Terry et al. (2005), Wartman & Savage (2008) |
| Spiritual | Herndon & Hirt (2004), Hurtado & Carter (1997), |
| Learning/Residential Communities | Anderson (1981), Carey (2008), Cortez (2008), Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum (2003), Hurtado & Carter (1997), Ponzetti (1990), Terenzini, et al. (1994) |
| **Maintaining Family Connections** | Intro: Terenzini et al. (1994), Hoover (2008) |
| Student/Parent Communication | Barnett (2004) |
| Institutional/Parent Communication | Ullom & Faulkner (2005), Wartman & Savage (2008) |
| Technology | Ullom & Faulkner (2005), Wartman & Savage (2008) |
| **Early Intervention & Crises Services** | |
| Intrusive Services | Coburn (2006), Ponzetti (1990), Ullom & Faulkner (2005), |
| First Year Seminar | Carey (2008), Horwedel (2008) |
| Early Alert | Carey (2008), Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum (2003) |
| **Academic Advising & Support** | |
| Advising | Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum (2003), Koljatic & Kuh (2001), Longwell-Grice & Longwell-Grice (2008) |
| Support | Anderson (1981), Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum (2003), Herndon & Hirt (2004), Koljatic & Kuh (2001), Longwell-Grice & Longwell-Grice (2008)Pascarella et al. (2004) |
| **Special Needs and Populations** | |
| Disabilities | Coburn (2006), Terry et al. (2005) |
| Gender identity | Terry et al. (2005) |
| **Glossary/Concepts** | Collier & Morgan (2008) |

## CONCLUSION

The transition from high school to college is a difficult period for students and their parents. There are many factors, already discussed, that can facilitate or make more difficult the transition. One difficulty is the lack of cultural capital on the part of FGCSs (Terenzini et al. 1994). While the aspirations of FGCS parents may be the same as those of CGCSs (Wartman and Savage 2008), these parents can give only limited advice to their children on how to navigate higher education and the college experience (Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003). Even for parents who have attended college, the transition can be difficult if they are armed with outdated information on the higher education processes or practices. While student affairs practitioners and university administrators may be knowledgeable and experienced when it comes to working with students, each year, a new group of students arrives and the university personnel know little about these students as individuals. On the other hand, parents may not be as familiar with student development theories and university life, but they have known their children for their entire lives (Ullom and Faulkner 2005). This dichotomy should make the answer to what role parents can play fairly clear. Engaging parents in their children's academic pursuits is a benefit to higher education since parents can help institutions reach the "mutual goal of helping students become engaged learners, competent and creative problem solvers and responsible and effective citizens – in essence, helping students grow up" (Coburn 2006, 11).

Institutions can promote student development and independence by introducing students and their parents to available services early enough for students to use those services. Otherwise, it is of little benefit for the students to learn of the services through sheer happenstance and with irrelevant timing[42]. FGCS, low SES, nontraditional and minority students are all at greater risk of not enrolling in college, and when they do, they remain at greater risk of not graduating (Aronson 2008; Collier and Morgan 2008). While numerous and varied, many of the obstacles can become much more manageable if the students and their families can access some of the cultural capital or essential knowledge that others, including those trying to recruit and retain the students, may take for granted. To accomplish this,

[42] See Herdon and Hirt 2004; Terenzini et al. 1994; Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum 2003.

"somebody has to care" (Terenzini et al. 1994, 72). Showing students that the institution genuinely cares can give students the needed self-esteem to make the academic, social and cultural transitions successful. The catch is that if institutions wish for students to establish the New Tradition of obtaining a college education, the institutions will need to demonstrate to students and their families that they care even before the student enrolls in college – not just when students in crises seek assistance. A handbook is an excellent way of demonstrating to students and their families the available services, the resources committed to students' success, and the staff that is ready to help – in short, that Texas State cares.

The next chapter identifies and explains the methodology utilized for this project.

# CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology used to prepare for and collect the information necessary to create a handbook at Texas State for prospective and new First Generation College Students and their families. The operationalization table (Table 5.1) organizes and directs the data collection process. This chapter could be used as a guide to collect data to replicate the research project at Texas State or to create a handbook at another institution. Information on potential biases, or weaknesses, and how these were addressed is included.

**Table 5.1 – Operationalization Table**

| **Pre-college Activities** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Method** | **Texas State Source of Info*** |
| College preparatory coursework | Interviews:<br>1. What can students and their families do to address the issues of <category>.<br>2. What services do you offer that can help students address the issues of <category>.<br>3. How do you communicate with or explain services to parents vs. students? (Prod: Brochures, websites, etc.)<br>4. What, if anything, do you do to guide parents in helping their child succeed in college as it relates to <category>?<br>5. What, if anything, do you do to help parents understand the changes and development that a student experiences during his/her college career? | Ms. Amy Beck, Supervisor of Academic Advising |
| | | Mr. Eric Tradup, Admissions Asst. Dir./New Student Orientation |
| | Artifacts (website)<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | Admissions Website |
| Parental support & encouragement of student goals | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 above +<br>6. Can, and if so how can, parents be involved when students seek your services? (Prod: Do you believe parents should seek to be involved in this area of their student's life?) | Ms. Jessica Herrington, Annual Giving Coordinator |
| | | Dr. Greg Snodgrass, Asst. VPSA/Counseling Center Director |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 7. How do you respond if parents call your office/department to ask about their child's participation in your services? | |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts | Counseling Center, LBJSC 5-4.1 |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & any artifacts discovered during interview/direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | Parents Association Website & informational artifacts |
| | | Counseling Center Website & informational artifacts |
| Tests/practice tests | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 above | Mr. Eric Tradup, Admissions Asst. Dir./New Student Orientation |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | Admissions Website |
| College preparation/ information programs | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Mr. Eric Tradup, Admissions Asst. Dir./New Student Orientation |
| | | Ms. Mariko Gomez, Financial Aid and Scholarships Director |
| | | Dr. Stella Silva, Multicultural Student Affairs Assoc. Director |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek artifacts | Undergraduate Admissions Center |
| | | Office of Financial Aid, JCK 240 |
| | | MSA, LBJSC 5-2.1 |
| Open houses | Direct Observation<br>Visit to make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts | Undergraduate Admissions Center |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & informational artifacts discovered during direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | Admissions website & informational artifacts |
| **Transition Programs** | | |
| **Category** | **Method** | **Texas State Source of Info** |
| Orientation | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Mr. Eric Tradup, Admissions Asst. Dir./New Student Orientation |
| | | Ms. Lisa Furler, PAWS Preview Coordinator |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | New Student Orientation Website |
| | | PAWS Preview Website |
| Meeting faculty | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 above | Mr. Eric Tradup, Admissions Asst. Dir./New Student Orientation |
| | | Ms. Lisa Furler, PAWS Preview Coordinator |
| | | Ms. Amy Beck, Supervisor of Academic Advising |
| | | Ms. Pam Jacobs, Interim Associate Director, Dept. of Housing & Residential Life |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bridge programs | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Mr. Terence Parker, Asst. Director for Retention Management & Planning, VP Student Affairs |
| | | Dr. Stella Silva, Multicultural Student Affairs Assoc. Director |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts. | VP Student Affairs, JCK 980 |
| | | Multicultural Student Affairs, LBJSC 5-2.1 |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & any artifacts discovered during interview/direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | VP Student Affairs Website & informational artifacts |
| | | Multicultural Student Affairs website & informational artifacts |
| **Financing an Education** | | |
| **Category** | **Method** | **Texas State Source of Info** |
| Savings | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 above | Ms. Mariko Gomez, Financial Aid and Scholarships Director |
| Financial Aid | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Ms. Mariko Gomez, Financial Aid and Scholarships Director |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts. | Office of Financial Aid, JCK 240 |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & any artifacts discovered during interview/direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | Financial Aid website & informational artifacts |
| Student Employment | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 above | Ms. Mariko Gomez, Financial Aid and Scholarships Director |
| | | Mr. Terence Parker, Asst. Director for Retention Management & Planning, VP Student Affairs |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts. | Office of Financial Aid, JCK 240 |
| | | VP Student Affairs, JCK 980 |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & any artifacts discovered during interview/direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | Financial Aid website & informational artifacts |
| | | Vice President for Student Affairs website & informational artifacts |
| **Building Community and Connections** | | |
| **Category** | **Method** | **Texas State Source of Info** |
| Connecting with the Campus and Others | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Mr. Terence Parker, Asst. Director for Retention Management & Planning, VP Student Affairs |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts. | VP Student Affairs, JCK 980 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & any artifacts discovered during interview/direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | Vice President for Student Affairs website & informational artifacts |
| Learning Communities | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Ms. Pam Jacobs, Interim Associate Director, Dept. of Housing & Residential Life |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | Dept. of Housing & Residential Life Website |
| Campus Activities & Student Organizations | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Mr. Andy Rhoades, Director, LBJ Student Center |
| | Artifacts (website)<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | Campus Activities and Student Organizations Website |
| Mentoring | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Ms. Terence Parker, Asst. Dir., Retention Management and Planning, Vice President for Student Affairs |
| | Artifacts (website)<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | Vice President for Student Affairs Website |
| Spiritual | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Dr. Stella Silva, Multicultural Student Affairs Assoc. Director |
| | | Mr. Vincent Morton, Assoc. Dean of Students |
| | Artifacts (website)<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | Multicultural Student Affairs Website |
| | | Dean of Students Website |
| Cultural acclimation | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Dr. Stella Silva, Multicultural Student Affairs Assoc. Director |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts. | Multicultural Student Affairs, LBJSC 5-2.1 |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & any artifacts discovered during interview/direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | Multicultural Student Affairs website & informational artifacts |
| **Maintaining Family Connections** | | |
| **Category** | **Method** | **Texas State Source of Info** |
| Student/parent communication | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 above | Ms. Jessica Herrington, Annual Giving Coordinator |
| | | Ms. Pam Jacobs, Interim Associate Director, Dept. of Housing & Residential Life |
| Institutional/ parent communication | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 above | Ms. Jessica Herrington, Annual Giving Coordinator |
| | | Mr. Terence Parker, Asst. Director for Retention Management & Planning, VP Student Affairs |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts. | Parents Association, Hill House 100 |
| | | VP Student Affairs, JCK 980 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & any artifacts discovered during interview/direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | Parents Association website & informational artifacts |
| | | VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS website & informational artifacts |
| Technology | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3 above | Mr. Don Volz, Special Asst. to the VP for Info. Tech. |
| **Early Intervention & Crises Services** | | |
| **Category** | **Method** | **Texas State Source of Info** |
| Early Alert | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Mr. Terence Parker, Asst. Director for Retention Management & Planning, VP Student Affairs |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | Vice President for Student Affairs Website |
| Intrusive services | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Ms. Amy Beck, Supervisor of Academic Advising |
| | | Mr. Terence Parker, Asst. Director for Retention Management & Planning, VP Student Affairs |
| | | Mr. Vincent Morton, Assoc. Dean of Students |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | Academic Advising Centers Website |
| | | Vice President for Student Affairs Website |
| | | Dean of Students Website |
| First year seminar | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Dr. Pam Wuestenberg, Asst. Dean, University College |
| **Academic Advising & Support** | | |
| **Category** | **Method** | **Texas State Source of Info** |
| Academic Advising | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Ms. Amy Beck, Supervisor of Academic Advising |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | Academic Advising Centers Website |
| Academic Support | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Ms. Amy Beck, Supervisor of Academic Advising |
| | | Ms. Lindley Workman Allyea, Asst. Dir. of Student Learning Assistance Center |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website for relevant information on <category>. | University College Website |
| | | Student Learning Assistance Center Website |
| | | Alkek Library Website |
| **Special Needs and Populations** | | |
| **Category** | **Method** | **Texas State Source of Info** |
| Disabilities | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Ms. Tina Schultz, Director, Office of Disability Services |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts. | Office of Disability Services, LBJSC 5-5.1 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & any artifacts discovered during interview/direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | Office of Disability Services website & informational artifacts |
| Gender Identity | Interviews<br>Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 above | Dr. Greg Snodgrass, Asst. VPSA/Counseling Center Director |
| | | Dr. Stella Silva, Multicultural Student Affairs Assoc. Director |
| | Direct observation<br>During interview visit, make environmental observations and seek informational artifacts. | Counseling Center, LBJSC 5-4.1 |
| | | Multicultural Student Affairs, LBJSC 5-2.1 |
| | Artifacts<br>Review website & any artifacts discovered during interview/direct observation for relevant information on <category>. | Counseling Center website & informational artifacts |
| | | Multicultural Student Affairs website & informational artifacts |
| **Glossary/Concepts** | | |
| **Category** | **Method** | **Texas State Source of Info** |
| Glossary/ Concepts | Interviews<br>(All interviewed for this project):<br>8. What terms or concepts should students and their families learn and understand? | Ms. Lindley W. Alyea, Asst. Dir. of Student Learning Assistance Center |
| | | Ms. Amy Beck, Supervisor of Academic Advising |
| | | Ms. Lisa Furler, PAWS Preview Coordinator |
| | | Ms. Mariko Gomez, Financial Aid and Scholarships Director |
| | | Ms. Pam Jacobs, Interim Associate Director, Dept. of Housing & Residential Life |
| | | Ms. Jessica Herrington, Parent Relations Coordinator |
| | | Mr. Andy Rhoades, Director, LBJ Student Center |
| | | Mr. Vincent Morton, Assoc. Dean of Students |
| | | Ms. Terence Parker, Asst. Dir., Retention Management & Planning, VP for Student Affairs |
| | | Ms. Tina Schultz, Director, Office of Disability Services |
| | | Dr. Stella Silva, Multicultural Student Affairs Assoc. Dir. |
| | | Dr. Greg Snodgrass, Asst. VPSA/Counseling Center Director |
| | | Mr. Eric Tradup, Admissions Asst. Dir./New Student Orientation |
| | | Mr. Don Volz, Special Asst. to the VP for Info. Tech. |
| | | Dr. Pam Wuestenberg, Asst. Dean, University College |
| *Websites referenced in this column are listed along with their URL in table 5.5. | | |

**Selected Methodology**

The method, or research technique, used in this descriptive research was case study. This case study used Texas State University-San Marcos as the focus and setting.

In the attempt to describe the factors that may impede FGCSs from succeeding in college and the structure of a handbook that provides information and resources to overcome those factors, descriptive categories were developed. Following Shields & Tajalli (2006), the conceptual framework, in this case descriptive categories, was used as a map from beginning to end to connect the different aspects of the study. Case study methodology is useful in conducting descriptive research (Yin 2003; Babbie 2004), and therefore, was used to gather the information that was sorted using the developed categories and formatted into the handbook. Further, "case studies are the preferred strategy when …the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" Yin (2003, 1). These two conditions clearly exist in this case. The investigator has little control over what the university does in relation to the descriptive categories and First Generation College Students that enroll at Texas State. And, whether these FGCSs succeed at Texas State or not has an impact on both the students and the university. Every year thousands of new students enroll at Texas State. Many of those students are FGCSs and the university spends thousands of dollars providing services aimed at helping students persevere through graduation.

Qualitative field research generally "yields qualitative data: observations not easily reduced to numbers" and has the advantage of being able to provide "deeper and fuller understanding" of that which is being studied (Babbie 2004, 282). Case studies are a way of conducting an "in-depth examination of a single instance of some social phenomenon, such as a village, a family, or a juvenile gang" (Babbie 2004, 293). Case studies are commonly used in

Public Administration and Education (Yin, 2003) and it's therefore very appropriate for a study involving a public university, as is the case here.

The end product (the handbook) of this study is meant to ensure that parents and transitioning students learn "what" is available as well as "how" or "why" those programs are beneficial. The case study will allow the flexibility to answer these questions. The "depth of understanding" and flexibility permitted by the case study method results in another very important strength – validity, which is generally weaker when using more qualitative methods such as experiments or surveys (Babbie 2004, 307).

**Case Study Weaknesses (and Mitigation)**

Yin (2003, 10-11) points out some of the criticisms and historical weaknesses of case studies. First, is "the lack of rigor" – "sloppy" investigators, investigators who allowed personal biases "to influence" the study, and a lack of "systematic procedures." This project underwent various faculty reviews to ensure academic soundness and ultimately a review by an oral examination committee composed of two academicians and a practitioner. The operationalizaiton table offers a roadmap to a systematic process for the collection of data. Descriptive categories also helped keep the project organized.

A second concern is that while case studies have strong validity, their reliability tends to be weak (Babbie 2004). In other words, though case studies are "generalizable to theoretical propositions," they "provide little basis for scientific generalization" to bigger populations (Yin 2009, 15). It is not the intent or claim of this project to make generalizations beyond Texas State. Instead, the data collected is used to develop a handbook specific to Texas State. Again, the operationalization table provides a plan to do this.

Some of the weaknesses of case studies are attributable to the fact that in-depth case study observations are made by individuals with personal biases (Babbie 2004). These biases can impact researchers' interpretations or measurements. When gathering information for a handbook, a researcher may over- or under- emphasize a point. To remedy this, feeback was requested from those who provided data and staff in the Dean of Students (DOS) office. The DOS office *acts as a clearinghouse to refer students to appropriate campus offices*[43] and therefore DOS staff would have a broad knowledge and a general understanding of the university's services and resources as well as the student body's profile and needs.

The handbook created through this study is specific to Texas State and not universities in general. But, if someone wanted to create a similar handbook for another university, this research could serve as a guide and could provide a framework for such a project. Because of the investigator's employment at Texas State, relationships with campus administrators, and the relevance of the topic to the campus, access to the administrators (program or departmental directors) and information were readily available.

## Data Collection & Unit of Analysis

One of the advantages of case studies is that they allow for flexibility in the selection of data sources and collection methods (Yin, 2003). Data for this study is collected through the use of document analysis, interviews, direct observation, and physical artifacts. The selection of data sources, or sampling, is purposive or judgmental. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where selection of the units to be observed is based on the researcher's knowledge of a population and the study's goals (Babbie (2004, 183). Many of the concerns addressed or services provided universities to address student issues are delegated to specific

[43] From the Dean of Students' website at www.dos.txtate.edu.

departments. Those departments are targeted for data collection with each method and source described in more detail below. For this project, the unit of analysis is the services offered by the university. The information collected is sorted into the categories identified in the literature review and the conceptual framework for possible inclusion in a handbook. The handbook is intended for potential and incoming university students and their families who may be unfamiliar with the higher education environment and useful universities services.

For specific questions and sources of information used and their connection to the organizational structure of the handbook (conceptual framework), see the Operationalization Table (Table 5.1).

**Document Analysis**

Yin (2003, 85) states that "documentary information is likely to be relevant to every case study topic" and "can take many forms and should be the object of explicit data collection plans." This type of evidence is important in "corroborat[ing] and augment[ing] evidence from other sources" (Yin 2003, 87). This study sought annual reports prepared by certain university departments for corroboration purposes and to take a snapshot of the actual services offered and outreach efforts rather than more in-depth material provided via an interview.

Unfortunately, cursory reviews of some of these documents made clear that due to their format and intended audience, they would not provide relevant information for a handbook intended to help students understand university services or the college experience. These reports were generated for annual departmental reviews and focused on quantifying the services provided, measuring progress on strategic plans, and challenges such as limited staff or workspaces. This information would be fairly irrelevant to a student wanting to know how to

utilize a department's services. For this reason, document analysis was forfeited as a data collection method for this project.

**Focused Interviews**

"One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview" (Yin 2003, 89). These interviews can generally be flexible and less structured that surveys (Babbie 2004) but will follow "a consistent line of inquiry" (Yin 2003, 89). Focused interviews may vary in their formality, from casual with open-ended questions to more formal, survey-like inquiries. This research employed a moderate level of formality for the focused interviews. The questions posed were open-ended and sough responses about facts, opinions, and other sources of evidence or interviewees. Although not all, most of the interviewees were familiar with the interviewer which facilitated the casual aspect of the interviews and allowed for less guarded interviews. A set of questions was used to guide the interviews, help avoid biasing the data collection process and maintain a balance between a having a casual interview and gathering data using a process that is consistent regardless of which school official is interviewed. The questions included:

1. What can students and their families do to address the issues of <category>.
2. What services do you offer that can help students address the issues of <category>.
3. How do you communicate with or explain services to parents vs. students? (Prod: Brochures, websites, etc.)
4. What, if anything, do you do to guide parents in helping their child succeed in college as it relates to <category>?
5. What, if anything, do you do to help parents understand the changes and development that a student experiences during his/her college career?
6. Can, and if so how can, parents be involved when students seek your services? (Prod: Do you believe parents should seek to be involved in this area of their student's life?)
7. How do you respond if parents call your office/department to ask about their child's participation in your services?
8. What terms or concepts should students and their families learn and understand?

These questions, derived from the literature review and nine categories of the conceptual framework, were previously integrated into Table 5.1 (Operationalization Table). An interview

guide (Appendix A) was created and used as a guide during interviews. Besides the questions, the guide includes information on the Institutional Review Board exemption, faculty supervision and focus of this project. The guide served as a tool to address the concerns identified by Vaden (2007) of low response rates, unanswered questions, and lack of clarity. Conducting the interviews in person also provided the opportunity for "first hand observations of the respondent" (Vaden 2007, 39).

For this research, university administrators were sought for the interviews. The administrators initially sought were mostly at the director level. Some of these directors had limited availability or did not directly implement the programs and services to be discussed. Consequently, some of them suggested that coordinators or assistant directors responsible for overseeing particular services be interviewed instead. Those ultimately interviewed were incorporated into the Operationalization Table (Table 5.1) and are listed, including department and title, in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 – Interviewees

| Last Name | First Name | Department | Title |
|---|---|---|---|
| Beck | Amy | Academic Advising | Supervisor |
| Furler | Lisa | PAWS Preview | Coordinator* |
| Gomez | Mariko | Financial Aid | Director* |
| Herrington | Jessica | University Advancement (PA) | Annual Giving Coordinator |
| Jacobs | Pam | Dept. of Housing and Residential Life | Interim Associate Director* |
| Rhoades | Andy | LBJ Student Center | Director |
| Morton | Vincent | Dean of Students Office | Associate Dean of Students |
| Parker | Terence | VPSA (Retention Mgt. & Planning) | Assistant Director |
| Schultz | Tina | Office of Disability Services | Director |
| Silva | Stella | Multicultural Student Affairs | Associate Director |
| Snodgrass | Greg | Counseling Center | Director |
| Tradup | Eric | Admissions (New Student Orientation) | Assistant Director |
| Volz | Don | VP for Information Technology | Special Assistant |
| Workman | Lindley W. | Student Learning Assistance Center | Assistant Director |
| Wuestenberg | Pam | University College | Assistant Dean |
| *These individuals' title or employment status changed over the course of the study, the title listed is the one current at the time of the initiation of this study. | | | |

The interviews occurred mostly at the respondent's work site. This allowed for direct observation (discussed further below) and follow-up/prodding questions that would be less feasible through other methods. For example, the Parents Association underwent recent significant staff changes and, soon, so will its focus and possibly even its name. This information could be beneficial for the construction of the handbook (first one or subsequent editions) and unlikely to be gleaned from a survey, document analysis (in this case because the changes are so recent), or physical/cultural artifacts. The interviews helped verify that the information and materials gathered through other methods (e.g., physical/cultural artifacts) and from other sources (e.g., websites and pamphlets) are real in practice. The personal interaction during interviews also established a rapport that could be beneficial to both this study (doors were left open to return for additional information) and those interviewed (some expressed interest in the handbook for possible use in their work).

Due to a scheduling conflict, one interview was conducted over the phone. Another occurred at a neutral site (conference room) out of shear convenience. The time it took to complete each interview ranged from approximately 15-90 minutes.

While no participant reviewed the study prior to its completion, respondents or a member of their department will have the opportunity to review a draft of the handbook prior to it being made available online or published for distribution. These individuals will be able to suggest edits that may improve the handbook's quality and usefulness and thus reduce any bias or error and provide updates as departments undergo change in staff, programs/services, websites, and policies.

Table 5.3 provides a summarized view of the interviewees and the categories reviewed with each of them.

Table 5.3 – Interviewees & Categories Reviewed

| Name | Department | Pre-College | Transition Programs | Financing an Education | Building Comm. & Connections | Maintaining Family Connections | Early Inter. & Crises Services | Academic Advising and Support | Special Needs & Populations | Glossary/ Concepts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Alyea, Lindley W.** | **Student Learning Assist. Center** | | | | | | | -Academic Support | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Beck, Amy** | **Academic Advising** | -College Pre Coursework | -Meeting Faculty | | | | -Intrusive Services | -Academic Advising<br>-Academic Support | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Furler, Lisa** | **PAWS Preview** | | -Orientation<br>-Meeting Faculty | | | | | | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Gomez, Mariko** | **Financial Aid** | -College Prep./Info Programs | | -Savings<br>-Financial Aid<br>-Student Employment | | | | | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Herrington, Jessica** | **University Advanc. (PA)** | -Parental Supp. & Encouragement | | | | -Student/ Parent Communication | | | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Jacobs, Pam** | **DHRL** | | -Meeting Faculty | | -Learning Communities | -Student/ Parent Communication | | | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Rhoades, Andy** | **LBJ Student Center** | | | | -Campus Act. & Student Orgs. | | | | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Morton, Vincent** | **Dean of Students Office** | | | | -Spiritual | | -Intrusive Services | | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Parker, Terence** | **VPSA (Ret. Mgt. & Planning)** | | -Bridge Programs | -Student Employment | -In General<br>-Mentoring | -Institutional/ Parent Communication | -Early Alert<br>-Intrusive Services | | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Schultz, Tina** | **Office of Disability Services** | | | | | | | | -Disabilities | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Silva, Stella** | **Multicultural Student Affairs** | -College Prep./ Info Programs | -Bridge Programs | | -Spiritual<br>-Cultural Acclimation | | | | -Gender Identity | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Snodgrass, Greg** | **Counseling Center** | -Parental Supp. & Encouragement | | | | | | | -Gender Identity | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Tradup, Eric** | **Admissions (New Student Orient.)** | -College Prep. Coursework<br>-Tests/ Practice Tests<br>-College Prep./ Info Programs | -Orientation<br>-Meeting Faculty | | | | | | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Volz, Don** | **VP for Info. Tech.** | | | | | -Technology | | | | Glossary/ Concepts |
| **Wuestenberg, Pam** | **University College** | | | | | | -First Year Seminar | | | Glossary/ Concepts |

**Direct Observation**

The collection of data through **direct observation** can also vary in its level of formality and "is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied" (Yin 2003, 93). A primary concern with using direct observation as a means of collecting information is that subjects may act or respond differently when they know they are under observation (Babbie 2004; Vaden 2007). For this study, the concern of altered behavior was a non-issue because the information gathered was about services offered by university departments and not about individual's conduct or personal opinions. The opinions sought were professional in nature, specifically, what an administrator believes should be included in a handbook to promote their respective department, services or topic of concern.

During direct observation, a researcher can take photographs for potential use in their work. Initially, photographs were to be taken for inclusion in the handbook. Because of confidentiality and privacy concerns associated with photographing individuals, directly or those in the background, this activity was foregone. In place of photos taken on site, the handbook will use stock photos, graphic art, and photos from the university's PhotoBank[44]. The PhotoBank is an on-line resource provided by the Office of University Marketing which includes photos of the university, students, faculty and staff. These photos are available free for use in university publications.

While the time and cost of engaging in a case study can be significant (Yin 2003; Vaden 2007), this research was conducted locally therefore mitigating the concern. It is likely that any similar future studies meant to result in a handbook specific to a university will be conducted by a student or employee of that university, negating the concern for the time and cost involved.

[44] See http://www.umktg.txstate.edu/resources/photobank.html.

Field visits were used to make observations, conduct interviews, and seek physical artifacts. The duration of site visits ranged from approximately 15-90 minutes, however, interviews generally took up most of that time. The time taken to browse the location and gather artifacts such as pamphlets took from 5-15 minutes, usually while waiting for or immediately after an interview. Sites visited are listed in Table 5.4 and took place during business hours.

Table 5.4 – Site Visits

| Department/Service | Location |
|---|---|
| Counseling Center | LBJSC 5-4.1 |
| Financial Aid | JCK 240 |
| Multicultural Student Affairs | LBJSC 5-2.1 |
| Office of Disability Services | LBJSC 5-5.1 |
| Parents Association | Hill House 100 |
| Undergraduate Admissions | Undergraduate Admissions Center |
| VP for Student Affairs | JCK 980 |

**Physical or Cultural Artifacts**

"A final source of evidence is a **physical or cultural artifact** – a technological device, a tool or instrument, a work of art, or some other physical evidence" (Yin 2003, 96). Babbie (2004, 96) refers to these as "social artifact[s]" and defines them as "any product of social beings or their behavior." With the advent of the internet, and increased reliance on it by universities, most university departments now have very popular technological devices – websites. These websites are generally available with few restrictions, particularly time restrictions. Generally, the websites can be accessed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, every week of the year, from any location with an internet connection.

For this study, artifacts such as brochures, pamphlets and information sheets were sought during field visits. Also, websites for each department/service under review were sought. When a website was found for a department, it was thoroughly reviewed. The review included every page that was part of the website. Some of these websites led to the discovery, through links, of other relevant websites. For example, the Financial Aid website had links to non-university sources of aid and the Admissions website had links to college planning sites. The websites that were reviewed in their entirety are referenced in the Operationalizaton Table (Table 5.1); Table 5.5 lists these websites and their URL.

Table 5.5 – Websites Reviewed[45]

| Department/Service | Website |
|---|---|
| Academic Advising Centers | http://www.txstate.edu/ucollege/advising/advisors.html |
| Admissions | http://www.admissions.txstate.edu/ |
| Alkek Library | http://www.library.txstate.edu/ |
| Campus Activities & Student Orgs. (CASO) | http://www.lbjsc.txstate.edu/caso/about/mission.html |
| Counseling Center | http://www.counseling.txstate.edu/ |
| Dean of Students (DOS) | http://www.dos.txstate.edu/ |
| Dept. of Housing & Res. Living (DHRL) | http://www.reslife.txstate.edu/ |
| Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) | http://www.msa.txstate.edu/ |
| Office of Disability Services (ODS) | http://www.ods.txstate.edu/ |
| New Student Orientation (NSO) | http://www.admissions.txstate.edu/admitted/orientation.html |
| Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships (Financial Aid) | http://www.finaid.txstate.edu/ |
| Parents Association | http://www.txstate.edu/parents/ |
| PAWS Preview | http://www.pawspreview.txstate.edu/ |
| Student Learning Assistance Center | http://www.txstate.edu/slac/ |
| University College | http://www.txstate.edu/ucollege/ |
| Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) | http://www.vpsa.txstate.edu/ |

Because of the websites virtually unlimited time availability, as opposed to interviews, direct observations, and any data gathering method that depends on the availability of other individuals or facilities, websites became a primary source of information for this study. All other methods and sources helped to confirm, update, and supplement the information gathered through the

[45] The Texas State University-San Marcos Homepage is www.txstate.edu. The websites on this table were the original target websites and were thoroughly reviewed. Some of these sites, as well as the suggestions of some interviewees, led to the limited exploration of other sites.

extensive website review undertaken in this project. The information gathered included descriptions of services/resources, locations and contact information, requirements/qualifications for services, links/referrals to other departments or relevant sources of information, policies and procedures.

**Summary**

The triangulation of data collected through these various sources should lead to "converging lines of inquiry" and ultimately result in findings that are "much more convincing and accurate" than using only one source of data (Yin 2003, 98).

The case study method served well in conducting an environmental scan of Texas State student services and departments to identify programs/services that fit into the categories identified as essential to overcoming challenges to enrollment and, ultimately, graduation. A case study allowed for the exploration of how each office or department that provides these services involves or serves parents. In preparing the handbook, the categories were used to organize the content in a manner that makes sense and is an easy to use guide for students and their families.

Though there is adequate information on the challenges of FGCSs and underrepresented populations, the literature is academic in nature. It helps explain the challenges these students face and provides quantitative descriptions of the differences between students of differing demographics and backgrounds. What the literature does not clearly provide is a response or information for parents to turn to if they wish to help their children navigate through their college experience. This case study allowed for the search of campus services based on literature

suggestions but was a flexible enough methodology that also permitted the finding of new leads and modifying of inquiries to ferret out the most useful information.

## Human Subjects Protection

The Texas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved an exemption for this Applied Research Project on October 6, 2009 – Request Number EXP2009Q8171. A copy of the Certificate of Approval is attached as Appendix B. The request for exemption was based on this project meeting the standards for "Not Human Subjects Research."[46] Participants were informed of this exemption and provided contact information for the IRB Administration and a link to the IRB Inquiry Form.

This research did not involve the use of human subjects beyond the interviews of university personnel. The interviews involved questions regarding that person's office/department and the services provided by that unit. This information is generally available to the public upon request, or through formal requests under the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA) for more formal, internal reports. In this case, formal TPIA requests were not necessary. Interviews did not include personal questions or seek identifiable information beyond the role of the respondent. There were no foreseeable risks or discomforts to the respondents. Interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis. If a respondent was identified but was not available or willing to participate or wished to discontinue participation, an alternate respondent with that department or program was sought. There were no penalties of loss of benefits to which a respondent would be subjected for refusing or discontinuing participation.

[46] See http://www.txstate.edu/research/orc/humans-in-research.html for Texas State University IRB procedures and information.

Universities maintain many sensitive, confidential, and protected records. Educational records, personal information, and information deemed confidential were neither sought nor used for this project. In the creation of a handbook, quotes from participants may be included. Quotes will only be attributed to individuals if they consent to the use of their name and/or title. No individual benefit or compensation was offered to participants.

The following chapter presents the summary results of the data collected for the handbook. The handbook is attached as Appendix C and includes greater details sorted using the descriptive categories developed early in the research process and used throughout the study.

# CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

## Chapter Purpose

This chapter ties the results of this Applied Research Project to its three-fold purpose.[47] This is done by presenting information about departments at Texas State University that provide services and assistance to potential, incoming, and enrolled students to overcome challenges to their academic and social success. The focus is on challenges (categories) identified in the literature and the information is presented following the format of the conceptual framework:

**6.1 Pre-College Activities**
-College Preparatory Coursework
-Parental Support and Encouragement of Student Goals
-Tests/Practice Tests
-College Preparation/Information Programs
-Open Houses

**6.2 Transition Programs**
-New Student Orientation
-Meeting Faculty
-Bridge Programs

**6.3 Financing an Education**
-Savings
-Financial Aid
-Student Employment

**6.4 Building Community and Connections**
-Connecting with the Campus and Others
-Campus Activities and Student Organizations
-Mentoring
-Cultural Acclimation
-Spiritual
-Learning/Residential Communities

**6.5 Maintaining Family Connections**
-Student/Parent Communication
-Institutional/Parent Communication
-Technology

**6.6 Early Intervention and Crises Services**
-Intrusive Services
-First Year Seminar
-Early Alert

[47] (1) To identify factors that may impede FGCSs and underrepresented students from successfully transitioning to and completing college, (2) to determine and describe the structure of a handbook that informs current/potential Texas State students and their families about the college experience, identifies available resources, and educates parents on ways to overcome those factors, and (3) to develop a handbook that Texas State can use as a recruitment tool and that students and parents can use as a guide through the student's selection of and transition to college.

**6.7 Academic Advising and Support**
-Advising
-Support

**6.8 Special Needs and Populations**
-Disabilities
-Gender Identity

**6.9 Glossary/Concepts**

Each section includes specific aspects of the challenge or mitigating programs/actions (subcategories) that can help students and their families overcome that obstacle. Each section begins with a summary of the offices/services and the role of parents in assisting students with the challenges identified in the framework. The summary information facilitated the creation of a handbook (Appendix # C). Following each summary is a table listing 1) the challenge, 2) the programs or actions that can help overcome the challenge, 3) the offices/services that provide those programs or can support those actions, and 4) the page in the handbook where more detailed information on each topic and office/service can be found, including office contact information.[48]

The end result of this research, the *Handbook for a New Family Tradition*, can be used by Texas State University as a recruitment or outreach tool. The handbook's primary target audience is First Generation College Students, underrepresented students and their families. While this handbook is specific to Texas State, the framework used to create it is generalizable and can be used by others to develop a handbook with data that is unique to other institutions.

[48] The table in section 6.9, Glossary/Concepts, does not have predetermined subcategories. Instead, it will list terms identified as important for students and their families to be familiar with.

## 6.1 Pre-College Activities

### College Preparatory Coursework

Texas State does not offer college preparatory coursework for non-students. It does offer remedial coursework, however, that is not the focus of this section. The preparatory coursework referred to here are the classes that students take while in high school. What Texas State does offer is guidance on how to meet the admission requirements and better prepare for the rigors of college coursework. The primary office for this information is the Admissions office. Admissions Counselors visit most school districts in the state. During their visits, the counselors can answer students' and parents' questions. Often, the counselors deliver recruitment literature and updates for high school guidance counselors to have available for students interested in the information when the Admissions Counselor is not immediately available. High school guidance counselors play such an important role in helping students apply and select a college that Your guidance counselor" is referred to in various sections of the handbook. The admissions information is available on the Admissions website, along with a feature (Meet your Counselor) that can be used to identify each geographic area's assigned Admissions Counselor. Ultimately, the Admissions Office reviews applications for decisions on university admission, including conditional admissions when students don't meet the admissions standards.

The Testing, Research Support and Evaluation Center (TREC) also provides useful information. TREC maintains a list of AP exams approved for course credit at Texas State. This list can help students determine if the course & exam available at their high school will earn them the credit they seek at Texas State. The contact information for Admissions and TREC is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

### Parental Support and Encouragement of Student Goals

Students should share educational and career goals with family so that the family is aware and can support those goals. Texas State does not offer any services specific to this end but generally encourages parents to support their students in their educational pursuits. Indirectly, university personnel

such as admissions counselors/staff in contact with the interested students can answer questions about the college experience and requirements so that the students can better communicate with their parents. Guidance counselors, teachers, and the attached handbook can also assist in this end.

**Tests/Practice Tests**

Students must take a variety of tests for college admission and placement. The Testing, Research Support and Evaluation Center (TREC) administers a number of those tests, including the ACT and SAT. The websites for the national exams provide practice material, dates and locations of upcoming tests as can students' high school guidance counselors. A test generally required for placement in Texas is the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA). The Testing, Research Support and Evaluation Center is a testing site for the THEA. TREC's website provides information on the various tests, including links to the test websites. The THEA test requirement contains exemptions based on students' SAT, ACT, or TAKS scores, previous college enrollment/credits, or military service. At Texas State, the Success Initiative Program (SIP) administers the state mandated Texas Success Initiative Program. This program requires a test which determines students' readiness to enroll in certain courses. Students who fail to achieve specified scores on the selected test may be required to enroll in remedial courses. The SIP program offers information on the exams that students can take to meet this requirement (THEA, COMPASS, ACCUPLACER and ASSET), score requirements and exemptions. Finally, the Admissions office can be a resource for students as they prepare to take the tests or submit their scores. This can particularly be the case when a student is close to meeting the admissions requirements since the Admissions office can make exceptions by admitting students conditionally. The contact information for Admissions, Success Initiative Program and Testing, Research Support and Evaluation Center is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

**College Preparation/Information Programs**

Most school districts offer students programs hosted by district personnel and focus on providing students with important information for completing college admission and financial aid applications. In addition, districts offer college fairs with representatives from multiple colleges, or the colleges may

arrange for individual visits to the high schools. According to Eric Tradup, Admissions Assistant Director, in addition to having regionally assigned admission counselors that live in the areas they serve, Texas State participates in the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers' annual college fair tour.

In addition to participation in typical high school visits and college fairs by Admissions personnel, Texas State offers special programs targeted for disadvantaged junior high and high school students. These are federal TRIO[49] grant programs administered by Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA). The programs include Educational Talent Search, Rural Talent Search, and Upward Bound.

Texas State's Educational Talent Search (ETS) targets Travis County Jr. High and High School students. The program provides students and their families academic, career, and financial aid advising as well as activities that expose students to college campuses. The services and activities are meant to encourage and support students to finish high school and enroll in an institution of higher education.

Texas State's Rural Talent Search (RTS) serves students in Goodnight Middle School and San Marcos High School in San Marcos, TX and Seguin High School in Seguin, TX. Like ETS, RTS provides academic, career and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to the college of their choice.

Upward Bound is designed to increase the academic skill and motivation necessary for students to pursue a college education. Upward Bound services include tutorials, life skills, and college prep activities during the school year and a summer college residential component. In the residential component, students spend part of their summer at Texas State and attend classes for high school and/or college credit. They also participate in recreational and social activities. Upward Bound participants who graduate from high school are eligible to participate in a bridge program at Texas State or Austin Community College where they enroll in one college course and their tuition, fees and textbooks for the course are paid by Upward Bound.

[49] TRIO programs are a specific set of federally funded grant programs intended to give students of disadvantaged backgrounds encouragement and an opportunity to pursue a higher education. Though there are currently several TRIO programs, the original set consisted of three programs, hence the term TRIO.

ETS, RTS, and Upward Bound sponsor and support a Hip Hop TRIO Student X-Change. The event, coordinated by the student organization Hip Hop Congress, features Texas State student leaders as hosts for workshops and panel discussion. Topics of the workshops and discussions include the university, the importance of a college education, hip hop culture[50] and other topics to motivate students and reinforce to them that a higher education is attainable.

Dr. Stella Silva, Associate Director of Multicultural Student Affairs and supervisor of the Texas State ETS, RTS & Upward Bound programs, recommends that students visit their high school guidance counselors for information on school and district programs that help students pursue a college education. The guidance counselors will know if programs such as ETS, TRS, and Upward Bound are available in their district. Dr. Silva also suggests that students seek "Go Centers" in their community. "Go Centers" are community based centers with information on applying for and selecting a college and financial aid. These centers were established to help increase the number of students pursuing a college education. Again, guidance counselors are the best resource to find out if such a resource is available in their community.

Once contact and relationships are established between students and college admissions counselors, Dr. Silva recommends that students keep in touch with their admissions counselors to ensure their application is moving forward through the review process.

The contact information for Texas State's MSA, ETS, RTS and Upward Bound is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C). The contact person for the Student X-Change program is Mr. Jesse Silva (js202@txstate.edu). MSA has links to the ETS, RTS, Upward Bound websites (under "Affiliations") and the Hip Hop TRIO Student X-Change (under "Programs and Services").

[50] For more on hip-hop culture, the recruitment and success of disadvantaged students in higher education, see Cordero (2008).

**Open Houses**

Texas State's open house program is Bobcat Days. The Admissions office coordinates and hosts the program. This program allows students interested in attending Texas State and their families to visit on one of four Saturdays each year and learn more about the university, tour the campus, and meet staff from most academic departments and many student support service offices. The staff and volunteers make presentations on their respective areas, the admissions and financial aid application process. Members of the Parents Association are usually present to interact with and answer parents' questions. The Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C) includes contact information for Admissions and the Parents Association.

Table 6.1summaritively connects the offices/services available at Texas State to assist in addressing each issue/concern (handbook subsection) under the category of pre-college activities and the pages in the handbook where information on those offices/services is included.

Table 6.1

| **Pre-College Activities** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Handbook Subsection** | **Office/Service** | **Handbook Page #** |
| College Preparatory Coursework | Testing, Research Support and Evaluation Center (TREC)<br>Admissions | 4<br>4 |
| Parental Support & Encouragement of Student Goals | Admissions<br>Counseling Center<br>Parents Association | 4-5<br>10<br>10 |
| Tests/Practice Tests | Admissions<br>SIP<br>TREC | 5<br>5<br>5 |
| College Preparation/Information Programs | Admissions<br>Multicultural Student Affairs<br>Educational Talent Search<br>Rural Talent Search<br>Upward Bound<br>Hip Hop TRIO Student X-Change<br>University College Advising Center | 6, 10<br>7-8<br>7-8<br>7-8<br>7-8<br>7-8<br>8 |
| Open Houses | Admissions<br>Parents Association | 9<br>10 |

## 6.2 Transition Programs

### New Student Orientation

Texas State has a two-part orientation program. The first part, New Student Orientation (NSO) takes place during the summer and students can select the overnight session that works for them. This is a typical summer orientation for students who have been admitted and plan on attending Texas State or need just a bit more information to make their final college selection. During New Student Orientation, students and parents receive information on resources available to help students succeed. During NSO, students have the opportunity to meet with an academic advisor and register for classes. The second part of orientation, PAWS Preview, is scheduled over a three-day period right before the start of the semester. This program is for students committed to attending Texas State. Those who will live on campus during the academic year can move into their residence hall before the start of PAWS Preview. Students gain access to campus technology resources (e-mail and computer accounts) during PAWS Preview. The program provides critical information students need to begin and succeed at Texas State both in and outside of the classroom. While there are sessions and components of PAWS Preview that parents can attend, most PAWS Preview components are meant to allow students the opportunity to immerse themselves into the campus culture and begin connecting with their new peers. Therefore, parents should not expect to spend much time with their children during PAWS Preview. The PAWS Preview website includes the information above, thoroughly describes the program and includes a schedule of the program. The contact information for PAWS Preview is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

### Meeting Faculty

Naturally, all students will meet faculty when they attend college. But, meeting faculty early can have a positive impact on student success. Students can meet faculty while attending a Bobcat Day (open house) or by making a specific request through the Visitor's Center anytime they visit the campus during their college selection process. Bobcat Days and the Visitor's Center both fall under the Admissions umbrella. Students also have the opportunity to meet faculty during PAWS Preview. According to Lisa

Furler, PAWS Preview Coordinator, faculty members present workshops and seminar course instructors meet their classes during PAWS Preview. The contact information for Admissions and PAWS Preview is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C). The handbook encourages students to take advantage of faculty's office hours to meet with their faculty outside of the classroom.

**Bridge Programs**

At Texas State, the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions jointly administer the university's bridge program, Emerging STARS. The program is for conditionally accepted students. The summer program, through a grant, pays for participant's room, board, and a book stipend. Students in the program must enroll in an academic skills course and a composition course in order to build their skills and to experience college academics in a less hectic and very supportive environment. During the students' summer participation, parents are invited to programs. According to Terence Parker, Assistant Director for Retention Management and Planning, the program, besides serving as a transition for students, facilitates communication with parents. The program and its activities allow the VPSA staff to share more information with parents of a few hundred students than is typical with the parents of thousands of students who do not participate in the program and first enter classes in the fall or spring semesters. The Emerging STARS program partners with other departments to provide students with important information. For example, the University College Advising Center has done a presentation for students and parents. Another bridge program is available to students who participate in Texas State's Upward Bound program. The contact information for the Vice President for Student Affairs, Upward Bound, and the University College Advising Center is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

Table 6.2 connects the offices/services that can assist in addressing each issue/concern (handbook subsection) under the category of transition programs and the pages in the handbook where information on those offices/services is included.

Table 6.2

| Transition Programs | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Handbook Subsection** | **Office/Service** | **Handbook Page #** |
| New Student Orientation | Admissions<br>NSO<br>PAWS Preview<br>Parents Association (Parent Tips) | 11<br>11-12<br>12<br>12 |
| Meeting Faculty | Admissions<br>PAWS Preview | 13<br>13 |
| Bridge Programs | Upward Bound<br>VPSA (Emerging Stars)<br>University College Advising Center | 14<br>13-14<br>14 |

## 6.3 Financing an Education

**Savings**

Texas State offers tools that help students prepare for college and develop a savings plan. The tools include budget tips, worksheets and a cost calculator presented by the Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS) office and an online money management information program hosted by the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA). The contact information for FAS and VPSA is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

**Financial Aid**

Financial Aid is available to students from many different sources and not all are administered by colleges. Most funds disbursed by Texas State are administered by the Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS) office. These include federal grants, work-study and loans made available for students who qualify (based on need) after applying through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Although FAFSA is not a Texas State program, in this section it is listed alongside the Texas State programs because students are expected to complete it in order to be considered for other types of aid and scholarships. In the handbook, FAFSA appears in the body as well as the glossary and helpful links sections.

**Student Employment**

Students can pay for part of their college expenses through income from part-time or full-time employment. This includes work-study, on-campus, off-campus, seasonal, and summer employment. The Career Services office helps students with on- and off-campus job placement services as well as other services (for example, job application, interview preparation, and job/career exploration). The Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS) office disburses work-study funds made available as part of a federal aid package. Three offices that higher a significant number of students for campus positions are highlighted in the handbook, including Department of Housing and Residential Life (DHRL) and Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC). Both of these departments have pages on their websites describing these employment opportunities. The contact information for Career Services, FAS, DHRL, SLAC, and NSO is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

Table 6.3 lists the page numbers in the handbook where information on the offices/services available to help addressing each issue/concern (handbook subsection) related to financing an education.

Table 6.3

| Financing an Education | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Handbook Subsection** | **Office/Service** | **Handbook Page #** |
| Savings | Financial Aid and Scholarships<br>Vice President for Student Affairs | 15<br>17 |
| Financial Aid | Financial Aid and Scholarships<br>Multicultural Student Affairs<br>Parents Association | 15-19<br>19<br>19 |
| Student Employment | Career Services<br>Financial Aid and Scholarships<br>Dept. of Housing and Residential Life<br>Student Learning Assistance Center<br>New Student Orientation | 20<br>20<br>22<br>22<br>22 |

## 6.4 Building Community and Connections

**Connecting with the Campus and Others**

The Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) office, as the lead office for student retention responsibility, coordinates two programs to help students connect early with the campus and others with similar backgrounds or interests. The Hometown Bobcats connects students with others from their same hometown (targeting areas with high Hispanic populations). The Interest Inventory connects students with organizations or efforts based on the student's interests (based on an online interest survey in the VPSA website). According to Parker, the survey is updated throughout the year to include new activities and delete inactive programs. The contact information for VPSA is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

**Campus Activities and Student Organizations**

At Texas State, the office of Campus Activities and Student Organizations (CASO) coordinates, as an office and through chartered student organizations, programming for the student body at large and in support of specific populations and interests. The office also supports more than 300 registered student organizations. In the handbook, four organizations or councils were highlighted for their broad support or because they would be reasonably expected to attract FGCSs. The organizations are the Associated Student Government (ASG)[51], Student Association for Campus Activities (SACA)[52], First Generation College Student Organization (FGSO)[53] and Underrepresented Student Advisory Council (USAC)[54]. ASG is made up of representatives elected by the student body as well as some volunteer positions and some paid executive positions. SACA is the university's primary source for free entertainment on campus. FGSO is an organization for students neither of whose parents graduated from a four-year university or college. FGSO advocates for and supports its FGCS members through activities, guidance,

[51] Website link available in the Dean of Students' website.
[52] Website link available in the Campus Activities and Student Organizations website.
[53] Additional information in the Upward Bound website.
[54] Featured in the Multicultural Student Affairs website.

and leadership development opportunities. USAC is an MSA-sponsored programming and leadership development council made up of almost 40 student organizations that include persons from underrepresented groups. The contact information for CASO and MSA is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C). Contact and/or website information for ASG, SACA, FGSO, and USAC was included in the handbook.

**Mentoring**

At Texas State there is one university-wide mentoring program targeting first-year students. The program is coordinated by the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) office. Participation in the program is voluntary. Those who sign up are matched with a faculty, staff, or peer mentor who is available during the new student's first year at Texas State to help with challenges and questions. Though matched for one year, the relationships established through the program often last for much longer than the initial year. The contact information for VPSA is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (ARP Appendix C).

**Cultural Acclimation**

Many student organizations program activities based on their interests and background, including cultural. In addition, the office of Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) offers a comprehensive battery of programs and activities to support the cultural acclimation of students, diversity of the student body, and awareness of cultural/diversity issues. MSA sponsors and coordinates social-cultural activities, leadership retreats and dialogue forums for minority groups and issues, diversity awareness presentations for all entering freshmen, and numerous cultural, religious, and awareness celebrations. Details of these activities are available on the Multicultural Student Affairs website. The contact information for MSA is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

**Spiritual**

Some students, in the absence of their parents, may decrease their religious practices. Those who are spiritually active most likely will continue practicing the religion they grew up with. For these students who in a new environment may be seeking their spiritual home away from home or new spiritual

guidance, there are several resources that can provide support. Various religious student organizations are registered with Campus Activities and Student Organizations (CASO), some affiliated with area churches others self-organized. The Dean of Students (DOS) office maintains a flier with the names of Ministries on or around campus that have offered to serve students seeking spiritual support. Assistant Dean of Students, Mr. Vincent Morton, stated that this flier is available to anyone upon request and may soon have it posted on the DOS website. Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA), through its USAC spiritual and religious organizations and community contacts can help students in search of a spiritual or religious connection. The contact information for CASO, DOS and MSA is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

**Learning/Residential Communities**

With almost 6,000 students living in campus housing, the Department of Housing and Residential Life (DHRL) is primarily responsible for the learning/residential communities on campus. DHRL supervises a Residential College where students commit to taking block courses, participating in organized activities, and living in one of three reserved halls with in-residence faculty members. It also organizes, with the support of various academic departments, learning communities based on specific majors or programs such as College Assistance Migrant Program participants or students who have declared their major as Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental. The contact information for DHRL is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

Table 6.4 lists the ways (handbook subsections) students can build community and connections and the offices/services that coordinator or support those efforts. The table includes the page numbers where information on those offices/services is found.

Table 6.4

| Building Community and Connections | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Handbook Subsection** | **Office/Service** | **Handbook Page #** |
| Connecting with the Campus and Others | Vice President for Student Affairs | 23 |
| Campus Activities and Student Organizations | Campus Activities and Student Organizations<br>Associated Student Government<br>Student Association for Campus Activities<br>First Generation Student Organization<br>Underrepresented Student Advisory Council<br>Multicultural Student Affairs | 24<br>24<br>25<br>25<br>26<br>25 |
| Mentoring | Vice President for Student Affairs | 26 |
| Cultural Acclimation | Multicultural Student Affairs | 26-27 |
| Spiritual | Campus Activities and Student Organizations<br>Dean of Students<br>Multicultural Student Affairs | 27<br>27<br>27 |
| Learning/Residential Communities | Dept. of Housing and Residential Life | 28-29 |

## 6.5 Maintaining Family Connections

**Student/Parent Communication**

While Texas State is responsible for infrastructure and resources that can help students remain in contact with their families – phone and internet services and technology resources – their communication remains their responsibility. In general, most individuals interviewed for this project believed students should communicate personal and academic information with their parents. This, they agreed, would ease the number of calls from parents inquiring about their student's academic and personal performance or solicitation of/participation in services. The Counseling Center and New Student Orientation collaborate to present parents information on how parents can support their students and understand the student growth and development that can be expected to occur during the students' years in college. The Counseling Center distributes a calendar to parents that outlines in a one year chronology those changes and some of the challenges students may encounter. The contact information for NSO and the Counseling Center is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).The handbook presents general tips encouraging the communication between students and their families.

**Institutional/Parent Communication**

There are various times and ways in which parents can receive information and stay in touch with the university. Before and after a student enrolls, parents can use the University College's "WebAsker" to submit academic or general questions via e-mail (dn04@txstate.edu)[55] or phone (888-245-9428) and receive a response from University College staff. During New Student Orientation (NSO), parents receive information about the campus and its services.

During student move-in (for those who will live on campus), Department of Housing and Residential Life (DHRL) staff are available to meet with and answer any questions parents may have. DHRL also sends a newsletter once per semester to parents of students who live on campus.

The Parents Association (PA), according to its website, provides a link between home and parents by keeping parents informed about university goals, policies, programs, and student activities. The PA answers parents' questions on a wide range of issues and helps parents and students find the right resources/office to resolve those issues. The Parents Association hosts an annual family weekend to give parents the opportunity to visit their children and meet other parents, faculty and staff. But, according to the Annual Giving Coordinator who oversees the efforts of the PA, this event will likely be replaced with an event geared towards instilling a culture of philanthropy to encourage financial contributions to the university.

The handbook reminds parents that the university webpage (www.txstate.edu) along with all departmental websites are available 24 hours/day and lists the procedures that the university follows in case of an emergency and how Texas State will communicate information about the emergency to the public. The link to the university's emergency procedures (www.emergencyinfo.txstate.edu) and emergency contact numbers are included in the handbook. For parents who prefer or need to communicate via telephone, the university switchboard (operator) is available at 512-245-2111 from 8:00a.m.-8:00p.m. Monday-Friday and 9:00a.m.-noon on Saturdays. For emergencies, the University

[55] This is the e-mail of Dr. David Nelson, Associate Dean of University College. Dr. Nelson was originally sought as an interviewee. His recommendation was Ms. Amy Beck and Dr. Pam Wuestenberg be interviewed (see Table 5.5). Though Dr. Nelson was not interviewed, he provided information on "WebAsker" during Ms. Beck's interview.

Police Department (UPD) is available 24 hours/day at 512-245-2805. The contact information for University College, NSO, DHRL, PA and UPD is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

**Technology**

Texas State has an Information Technology (IT) division to serve the campus (students, faculty and staff). It provides information technology resources and infrastructure to advance the university's educational mission. IT delivers secure telephone, computing, and Internet access as well as provides customer-focused technical support and training to assure optimal use of information technology. In addition to computer equipment, software and internet connections, IT, through its Information Technology Assistance Center (ITAC) provides students with technical support and repair services. The university focuses on providing services on campus, however, the handbook recommends that families use technology resources in their communities to keep connected with their student.

Table 6.5 connects the offices/services that play a role in establishing, encouraging, and facilitating communication between students and their families and between the university and students' families. The table includes the pages where information on these offices/services can be found in the handbook.

Table 6.5

| Maintaining Family Connections | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Handbook Subsection** | **Office/Service** | **Handbook Page #** |
| Student/Parent Communication | New Student Orientation<br>Counseling Center | 30-31<br>30-31 |
| Institutional/Parent Communication | University College<br>New Student Orientation<br>Dept. of Housing and Residential Life<br>Parents Association<br>University Switchboard<br>University Police Department | 31<br>31<br>31-32<br>31<br>32<br>32-33 |
| Technology | Information Technology<br>Information Technology Assistance Center | 34<br>34 |

## 6.6 Early Intervention and Crises Services

**Intrusive Services**

Early intervention and crises services cover a wide range of issues and concerns. Some of the more general yet intrusive services are offered by the Counseling Center, Vice President for Student Affairs Office, Dean of Students Office, University Police Department, and the Alcohol and Drug Resource Center. Other services related to wellness are offered by the Student Health Center, Student Recreation Center, and dining services provider.

The Counseling Center offers counseling and psychological services ranging from support groups that help students learn techniques for cope with negative feelings to individual counseling for students with serious mental health disorders. The Student Health Center (SHC) provides primary and women's healthcare services to students. The SHC has a 24/7 Ask-A-Nurse Advice Line, a smoking cessation program, and health education information in a variety of media. The Counseling Center and the SHC collaborate to provide psychiatric services.

The Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) office, through its Welcome Bobcats System, reaches out to all new students during the first days of the semester. This outreach is to welcome them and offer to answer questions about academic services, opportunities to get involved on campus and adjustment issues. According to Mr. Parker, the VPSA office provides support and referrals on an as-needed basis for students who are military veterans or foster care alumni.

The Dean of Students Office (DOS), through its Student Justice component, responds to students alleged to have violated the Code of Student Conduct (behavior violations) to determine the validity of the allegations and potentially impose sanctions. Student Justice also reaches out to victims or witnesses of conduct violations to ensure they are well and to offer support and services.

University Police Department (UPD) is the primary source of protection for the Texas State community. It has the full law enforcement authority and provides all of the essential law enforcement and emergency services typically offered by other Texas police departments. UPD also coordinates educational and prevention programs such as a night time escort service on campus and a rape defense training program.

An active lifestyle and healthy diet are essential components to healthy living. At Texas State, the Student Recreation Center (SRC) offers services and programs that stimulate physical fitness as well as growth, development and retention of students. The programs are opportunities for social interaction and leadership development by bringing together individuals with similar interests to engage in a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Chartwells, the university's contracted dining services provider, is responsible for operating multiple dining venues to ensure that students have access to quality and varied dining options.

The Alcohol and Drug Resource Center (ADRC) supports and encourages healthy lifestyle choices for the university community at large. This is done, in part, by providing emotional support and educational programs to help students achieve their emotional and personal objectives. Students may be required to participate in ADRC's educational programs if they commit an alcohol or drug violation.

Links to the websites of most of the departments/services mentioned in this section can be found in the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) office website. The contact information for the Counseling Center, Student Health Center, VPSA, Dean of Students, University Police Department, Student Recreation Center, and Alcohol Drug and Resource Center is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C). The website for Chartwells is included in the handbook to help students and parents learn about the different meal plans, places to eat, menus and nutritional information.

**First Year Seminar**

The university's first year seminar, University Seminar (US) 1100, is a one credit-hour, semester-long course which acclimate students to the campus beyond what is possible during orientation programs. Freshmen are advised to take this required General Education Core Curriculum course during their first semester on campus. Instructors with knowledge of the resources on campus help students adjust to the challenges of life and learning at Texas State in order to help them succeed academically and personally. Students should sign up for the course during New Student Orientation (NSO) after having met with an academic advisor to determine if a reserved section (based on interest, participation in another program, other identified feature) is an option. If it is an option, the advisor may need to grant the student permission to enroll in the class. By signing up for US 1100 during NSO, the student is able to meet with that class' instructor and classmates during PAWS Preview. The contact information for University Seminar 1100, New Student Orientation and PAWS Preview is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

**Early Alert**

Texas State, like other schools, has an Early Alert Program – Positive Action With Students (PAWS) Alert. PAWS Alert system, administered by the VPSA, allows faculty and staff to refer students they believe need assistance in overcoming challenges related to academics, academic deficiencies, career, personal, social, physical and emotional issues[56]. The VPSA office receives the referrals and in turn refers them to the university offices/services best equipped to provide the apparently needed assistance. Student's receipt of the assistance is generally voluntary. The contact information for VPSA is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

Table 6.6 lists the early intervention and crises services handbook subsections and the offices/services at Texas State that fall under those subsections. The table includes the page numbers where information related to each of the offices/services is found in the handbook.

[56] Another program, "Academic Early Alert System", allows faculty and staff to submit academic concerns. Academic colleges receive these alerts and can reach out to their students in an effort to provide academic support that will allow students to return to good standing, especially when students have more than one alert.

Table 6.6

| Early Intervention and Crises Services | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Handbook Subsection** | **Office/Service** | **Handbook Page #** |
| Intrusive Services | Counseling Center<br>Student Health Center<br>Vice President for Student Affairs<br>Dean of Students<br>University Police Department<br>Student Recreation Center<br>Food service provider<br>Alcohol and Drug Resource Center | 36-37<br>36<br>38<br>38<br>38-39<br>39<br>39<br>39 |
| First Year Seminar | University Seminar 1100<br>New Student Orientation<br>PAWS Preview | 39-40<br>40<br>40 |
| Early Alert | Vice President for Student Affairs | 40 |

## 6.7 Academic Advising and Support

**Advising**

Academic advising, an essential service provided by universities to help students understand and stay on track to completing their chosen degrees, is offered at Texas State by various Advising Centers. Each academic college has an Advising Center for all the students whose major falls under that college. The colleges include Applied Arts, McCoy College of Business Administration, Education, Fine Arts & Communication, Health Professions, Liberal Arts, Science, and University College. Undecided and Undecided-professional, and General Studies major students are advised by the University College. Students attending classes at Texas State's Round Rock campus receive advising through that campus' One Stop Center. Links to each Academic Advising Center's website can be found in the University College website.

For students who go on academic probation, the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) division in collaboration with Academic Affairs offers a program that helps students get back on track. The program involves individual academic counseling and group workshops to address some of the students' academic/learning deficiencies. A table with the website, location

and phone number of every advising center is included in the handbook. The contact information for VPSA is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

**Support**

At Texas State there are numerous services that provide students academic support. The Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC) is the most extensive support program and is available to all students. Lindley W. Alyea, SLAC Assistant Director, lists tutoring, supplemental instruction, and workshops on various topics as some of the services offered by SLAC. The Student Learning Assistance Center's website contains much of the information published or created by SLAC. This includes learning/study guides and PowerPoint presentations. The website also allows for online tutoring. The Albert B. Alkek Library is the university's library. Aside from its collections, research assistance and study areas, the library houses SLAC, Instructional Technologies, a computer lab, and an interlibrary loan service.

The University College coordinates the first year seminar (University Seminar 1100) which has helpful student resources listed on its website. Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) administers the grant-funded Student Support Services (SSS)[57] which offers academic and educational support services. The Collaborative Learning Center offers tutoring and other academic support to students in the College of Science. The Math Lab, sponsored by the Department of Mathematics, provides math tutoring and specialized math software. The Writing Center helps students with any type of writing work and preparation for the Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation (GSP) exam.

The contact information for SLAC, Alkek Library, University College, University Seminar, Multicultural Student Affairs, and SSS is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C). Websites and/or contact information for the Advising Centers, Collaborative Learning Center, Math Lab and Writing Lab are included in the handbook.

[57] This is another TRIO program.

Table 6.7summaritively lists the offices/services available at Texas State that provide academic advising and support (handbook subsections) and the pages in the handbook where those offices/services are included.

Table 6.7

| Academic Advising and Support | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Handbook Subsection** | **Office/Service** | **Handbook Page #** |
| Advising | Advising Centers<br>Vice President for Student Affairs | 40-42<br>43 |
| Support | Student Learning Assistance Center<br>Alkek Library<br>University College<br>University Seminar<br>Multicultural Student Affairs<br>Student Support Services<br>Collaborative Learning Community<br>Math Lab<br>Writing Center | 43-45<br>44<br>44<br>44<br>44<br>44<br>44<br>44-45<br>45 |

## 6.8 Special Needs and Populations

**Disabilities**

While ensuring equal access to university programs and activities is the responsibility of all university departments (each being responsible for the services they provide), the primary responsibility for helping students with disabilities find the resources and accommodations falls on the Office of Disability Services (ODS). The office provides and coordinates a variety of accommodation services such as sign language interpreters, adaptive computer technology, and disability management counseling. ODS conducts disability screenings and fosters a supportive and inclusive educational environment by promoting disability awareness among the university community. ODS helps students and their families understand the differences in accommodations and services provided in public school systems and those in higher education. In addition, the office provides information on scholarships available to students with disabilities and information that can help students with disabilities gain equal access to facilities, programs and opportunities to succeed. The contact information for ODS is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

**Gender Identity**

With a growing number of openly Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or transsexual (GLBT) individuals both in general and on college campuses, it has become increasingly important to ensure individuals, regardless of their sexual preference and identity, are and feel welcome and safe. The Vice President for Student Affairs division, through a team composed of members from different student support offices, coordinates an Allies Program. The program aims to create and sustain "safe places" where GLBT students can comfortably seek assistance in addressing concerns. The Allies Program fosters a welcoming environment where all students can have access to and participate in all aspects of campus life, regardless of their sexual orientation or identity. Also, the Counseling Center can offer individual counseling to students whose questions about or their experience relate to their sexual identity strain their academic success, personal development or personal relationships. The center also sponsors a group that fosters an inclusive and supportive environment where students can share their experiences with each other. The contact information for VPSA and the Counseling Center is included in the Directory portion of the handbook (Appendix C).

Regarding special needs and populations, table 6.8 lists the offices primarily responsible for assisting individuals address issues related to disabilities and gender identity (handbook subsections) and the pages in the handbook where these offices are referenced.

Table 6.8

| Special Needs and Populations | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Handbook Subsection** | **Office/Service** | **Handbook Page #** |
| Disabilities | Office of Disability Services | 46-49 |
| Gender Identity | Vice President for Student Affairs<br>Counseling Center | 49<br>49 |

## 6.9 GLOSSARY/CONCEPTS

The following terms were defined in artifacts or identified by interviewees as university lingo that is used on campus but may be unfamiliar to potential or new students. It will help those students to familiarize themselves with the terms as it is almost inevitable that they will hear them at some point. Definitions or explanations for these terms are included in the glossary/concepts section of the handbook (Appendix C).

Table 6.9

| Glossary/Concepts | |
|---|---|
| **Term/Topic** | **Handbook Page #** |
| Academic Probation | 50 |
| Academic Suspension | 50 |
| Allies | 49, 50 |
| Bobcat Build | 50 |
| Buckley Amendment | 50 |
| Buildings | 50 |
| College | 50 |
| Common Experience | 51 |
| Commuter | 51 |
| Convocation | 51 |
| Core Curriculum | 51 |
| Credit Hour | 51 |
| Dead Day | 51 |
| Dean | 51 |
| Disciplinary Expulsion | 52 |
| Disciplinary Probation | 52 |
| Disciplinary Suspension | 52 |
| Dorm or Dormitory | 52 |
| Drop | 52 |
| Faculty | 52 |
| FAFSA | 52, 69 |
| FERPA | 53, 70 |
| Full-time enrollment or student | 53 |
| GPA | 53 |
| Grants | 53 |
| Loans | 53 |
| Mall | 53 |
| Nontraditional Student | 53 |
| NTSO | 53 |
| Office Hours | 53 |
| Ombudsman | 54 |
| Part-time enrollment or student | 54 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Prerequisite | 54 |
| Probation | 54 |
| Quad | 54 |
| RA | 54 |
| Registrar | 54 |
| Registration | 54 |
| Residence Hall | 55 |
| Student Center | 55 |
| Student Volunteer Connection | 55 |
| Syllabus | 55 |
| Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board | 55 |
| THECH | 55 |
| TSUS | 55 |
| Texas State University System | 55 |
| Undecided | 56 |
| Undecided-professional | 56 |
| UPD | 56 |
| West Campus | 56 |
| Withdraw | 56 |
| Work-study | 56 |

# CLOSING

This project has resulted in the creation of a handbook that can serve as a tool for FGCSs, their families, and Texas State. One of the considerations taken into account during this process was to make the handbook as timeless as possible. This meant using information that would be reasonably expected to remain constant for an approximate two- to three-year period. For the most part, this was done by avoiding the use of personal names and e-mail addresses. However, in a couple of cases personal e-mails were the only contact number listed for a program. Websites were essential during the research process and in the handbook and these, to a lesser extent, may change from year to year. An advantage of websites is that information can be updated and added via links as needed. In this case study, following links lead to the discovery of the Testing, Research Support and Evaluation Center at Texas State which provided relevant information and links to national exams and credit by exams. This same advantage can become a disadvantage if the URLs are changed when web pages are modified, resulting in dead ends for anyone seeking the information. ("Oops! This link appears to be broken" and "Page Not Found" messages can be discouraging.) To minimize any potential negative impact, primary websites were used, not specific service or personal pages.

During the information collection phase, information was at times found in unexpected places. For example, the Department of Housing and Residential Life had a section on student employment opportunities. Rather than including this information on the Building Community and Connections category, it was included in the "Financing an Education" category.

The handbook includes a two-year planner for students. This can be used to keep important deadlines and notes handy. The planner will help make the handbook something that can be used every day rather than being shelved or stuck at the bottom of a locker (out of sight, out of mind). Because the handbook information may change, contact information for essential offices was included in the handbook.

This project focused on FGCSs preparing or recently arriving to complete their undergraduate degree. There may well be a need for a conceptual framework for graduate students which opens the opportunity for further research. There is a misconception that financial aid is not available beyond the bachelor's level, yet some of the aid at Texas State was specifically for graduate students – a critical category for further research.

Another area that appears ripe for further study is the impact of FERPA (the Buckley Amendment) on colleges overall and specifically on various departments. Two diametrical interpretations are most common. The first and most common is that FERPA restricts the ability of university personnel to share information with anybody (including parents and other university personnel). The other interpretation suggests that FERPA is a tool that helps universities communicate with others by specifying the conditions under which educational records can be shared (with parents, faculty and staff). Most departments (through their websites and literature) and individuals (through structured interviews) clearly have adopted the first interpretation.

This study's resulting handbook was created around the San Marcos campus of Texas State. RRHEC was not really taken into consideration. Future ARPs in the same area could pursue to fill the gap for graduate students, Round Rock campus students or other schools altogether.

Anyone wanting to create a FGCS handbook for their campus can use this study and handbook as a guide or foundation but each handbook must reflect the culture of its campus and keep up to date with organizational changes. While it is a good idea to create timeless pieces of literature that can be used from year to year, a good, user friendly handbook will most likely need to be carefully reviewed and updated before being reprinted.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY


Abi-Nader, Jeannette. 1990. "A house for my mother": Motivating Hispanic high school students. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 21(1): 41-28.

Anderson, Kristine L. 1981. Post-high school experiences and college attrition. *Sociology of Education* 54(1): 1-15.

Arnett, Jeffrey J. 1994. Are college students adults? Their conceptions of the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Adult Development* 1(4), 213-224.

Arnett, Jeffrey. J. 2000. Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist* 55(5): 469-480.

Arnett, Jeffrey. J. 2006. Emerging adulthood: Understanding the new way of coming of age. In Arnett, J. J. and J. L. Tanner, eds. *Emerging adults in America; Coming of age in the 21st century*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Aronson, Pamela. 2008. Breaking barriers or locked out? Glass-based perceptions and experiences of postsecondary education. In *Social class and transitions to adulthood. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, ed. J.T. Mortimer, 41-54. Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Doi: 10.1002/cd.

Aschaffenburg, K., and I. Maas. 1997. Cultural and educational careers: The dynamics of social reproduction. *American Sociological Review* 62: 573-587.

Ashburn, Elyse. 2007. It's a family affair. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 53(33): A40.

Babbie, Earl. 2004. The practice of social research. 10th ed., Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Barnett, Marina. 2004. A qualitative analysis of family support and interaction among Black college students at an Ivy League university. *The Journal of Negro Education* 73(1): 53-68.

Bradbury, Barbara L. and Peter C. Mather. 2009. The integration of first-year, first-generation college students from Ohio Appalachia. NASPA Journal 46(2): 258-281.

Brooks, David. 2001. The organization kid. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 287(4): 40-54. http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200104/brooks.

Carey, Kevin. 2008. *Graduation rate watch: Making minority student success a priority*. Washington, D.C.: Education Sector.

Castleberry, Thomas E. 2006. Student learning outcome assessment within the Texas State University MPA program. Applied Research Projects (182). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/182.

Coburn, Karen Levin. 2006. Organizing a ground crew for today's helicopter parents. *About Campus*, July-August 2006.

Collier, Peter J. and David L. Morgan. 2007. "Is that paper really due today?": Differences in first generation and traditional college students' understandings of faculty expectations. *Higher Education* 55: 425-446.

Cordero, Rafael Ray. 2008. Don't forget the hip-hop!: Recruiting economically disadvantaged minority students in higher education: An assessment of postsecondary programs at Texas State University. Applied Research Projects (274). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/274.

Cortez, Mari. 2008. Trying to fit in a different world: Acculturation of Latino families with young children in the United States. *International Journal of Early Childhood* 40(1): 97-100.

Csikszentmihalyi Mihaly, Devin Rahunde and Samuel Whalen. 1997. Talented teenagers: The roots of success & failure. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Davis, Patricia S. 1991. Parents writing with students. *The English Journal* 80(4): 62-64.

Deil-Amen, Regina and James E. Rosenbaum. 2003. The social prerequisites of success: Can college structure reduce the need for social know-how?. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 586: 120-143.

Escobar, Margina. 2008. Gauging alumni perceptions of the effectiveness of the Masters of Public Administration (MPA) program at Texas State University-San Marcos in meeting its mission: A follow-up study. Applied Research Projects (286). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/286.

Farrell, Elizabeth F. 2007. Deans can't stand 'helicopter parents,' but they hover, too, when their kids apply. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 53(34): B8.

Giancola, Jennifer Hohler, David C. Munz, and Shawn Trares. 2008. First- versus continuing-generation adult students on college perceptions: Are differences actually because of demographic variance?. *Adult Education Quarterly* 58(3): 214-228.

Glenn, David. 2008. Study finds graduation gap for first-generation students, regardless of preparation. *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* http://chronicle.com/article/Study-Finds-Graduation-Gap-/841/.

Gonzales, Evelina Garza. 2009. External funding and tenure at Texas State University-San Marcos. Applied Research Projects (315). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/315.

Herndon, Michael K. and Joan B. Hirt. 2004. Black students and their families: What leads to success in college. *Journal of Black Studies* 34(4): 489-513.

Hoover, Eric. 2008. Surveys of students challenge 'helicopter parent' stereotypes. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 54(21): A22.

Hoover-Dempsey, Kathleen V., Joan M. T. Walker, Howard M. Sandler, Darlene Whetsel, Christa L. Green, Andrew S. Wilkins, and Kristen Closson. 2005. Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications. *The Elementary School Journal* 106(2)105-130.

Horwedel, Dina M. 2008. Putting first-generation students first. *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* 25(5): 10-12.

Howe, N. and W. Strauss. 2003. *Millennials go to college: Strategies for a new generation on campus.* Washington, DC: American Association of Collegiate Registrars.

Hurtado, Sylvia, and Deborah Faye Carter. 1997. Effects of college transition and perceptions of the campus racial climate on Latino college students' sense of belonging. *Sociology of Education* 70(4): 324-345.

Ilo, Saidat. 2005. Research in public administration: A content analysis of applied research projects completed from 1999-2005 at Texas State University in the masters of public administration program. Applied Research Projects (11). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/11.

Ishanti, Terry T. 2006. Studying attrition and degree completion behavior among first-generation college students in the United States. *The Journal of Higher Education* 77(5): 861-885.

Koljatic, Mladen and George D. Kuh. 2001. A longitudinal assessment of college student engagement in good practices in undergraduate education. *Higher Education* 42(3): 351-371.

London, Howard B. 1989. Breaking away: A study of first-generation college students and their families. *American Journal of Education* 97(2): 144-170.

Longwell-Grice, Rob and Hope Longwell-Grice. 2008. Testing Tinto: How do retention theories work for first-generation, working-class students?. *Journal of College Student Retention* 9(4): 407-420.

Lum, Lydia. 2006. Handling "helicopter parents". *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* 23(20): 40-43.

Lum, Lydia. 2008. Encouraging the discouraged. *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* 24(25): 14-17.

Macy, Beth. 20002. Encouraging the dream: Lessons learned from first-generation college students. *The College Board Review* 191: 36-40.

Mallinckrodt, Brent. 1988. Student retention, social support, and dropout intention: Comparison of black and white students. *Journal of College Student Development* 29(1): 60-64.

McCauley, David. 2007. The impact of advanced placement and dual enrollment programs on college graduation. Applied Research Projects (206). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/206.

McGlynn, Angela Provitera. 2008. Millennials in college: How do we motivate them?. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review* 73(6): 19-22.

Moore, Rosalina Treviño. 2009. Employers' assessment of Texas State University MPA program. Applied Research Projects (289). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/289.

National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC). 2007. Deciding on postsecondary education: Final report (NPEC 2008-850), prepared by Keith MacAllum, Denise M. Glover, Barbara Queen, and Angela Riggs. Washington, DC.

Nunez, Anne-Marie and Stephanie Cuccaro-Alamin. 1998. First-generation students: Undergraduates whose parents never enrolled in postsecondary education. NCES 98-082. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education-National Center for Education Statistics.

Orbe, Mark P. 2008. Theorizing multidimensional identity negotiation: Reflections on the lived expeirneces of first-generation college students. In *The intersections of personal and social identities. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, ed. Zamitia, M., My. Syed, and K. Radmacher, 120: 81-95. Wiley Periodicals, Inc. Doi: 10.1002/cd.217.

Paredes, Raymund. 2009. "The Broader Biotic Community" (lecture, Austin, TX, August 7, 2009).

Pascarella, Ernets T., Christopher T. Pierson, Gregory C. Wolniak, and Patrick T. Terenzini. 2004. First-generation college students: Additional evidence on college experiences and outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education* 75(3): 249-284.

Pavela, G. 1992. Today's college students need both freedom and structure. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. http://chronicle.com/che-data/articles.dir/articles-38.dir/issues-47.dir/47b00101.htm.

Ponzetti, Jr., James J. 1990. Loneliness among college students. *Family Relations* 39(3): 336-340.

Pratt, Phillip A. and C. Thomas Skaggs. 1989. First generation college students: Are they at greater risk for attrition than their peers? *Research in Rural Education* 6(2):31-34.

Sandberg, John F. and Sandra L. Hofferth. 2001. Changes in children's time with parents: United States, 1981-1997. *Demography* 38(3): 423-436.

Shields, Patricia M. 1998. Pragmatism as a philosophy of science: A tool for public administration. *Research in Public Administration* 4: 195-225. http://ecommons.txstate.edu/polsfacp/33.

Shields, Patricia and Hassan Tajalli. 2006. Intermediate theory: The missing link to successful student scholarship. *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 12(3): 313-334. http://ecommons.txstate.edu/polsfacp/39/

Smith, William L. and Pidi Zhang. 2009. Students' perceptions and experiences with key factors during the transition from high school to college. College Student Journal 43(2): 643-657.

Stewart, Lewis E. Factors contributing to download activity for applied research projects completed at Texas State University in the Master of Public Administration program. Applied Research Projects (306). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/306.

Terenzini, Partick T., Laura I. Rendon, M. Lee Upcraft, Susan B. Millar, Kevin W. Allison, Patricia L. Gregg, and Romero Jalomo. 1994. The transition to college: Diverse students, diverse stories. *Research in Higher Education* 35(1): 57-73.

Terry, Renee Barnett, Charlene M. Dukes, Laura E. Valdez, and Andrew Wilson. 2005. Changing demographics and diversity in higher education. In *Partnering with the Parents of Today's College Students*., ed. Keppler, K., R. H. Mullendore, and A. Carey, Washington D.C.: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2005.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). 2009. Closing the gaps by 2015: 2009 progress report. http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/1852.PDF?CFID=2158661&CFTOKEN=41143926

Texas State University Equity and Access Committee (TSUEAC). 2006. Student Measures Assessment Report, 2006.

http://www.emm.txstate.edu/marketing-resources/equity-access-report/contentParagraph/0/document/Student-Measures-EA-Report-2006FINAL.pdf.

Ullom, Craig and Bill Faulkner. 2005. Understanding the New Relationship. In *Partnering with the parents of today's college students*, ed. Keppler, K., R.H. Mullendore, and A. Carey. Washington, DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Vaden, Jason. 2007. A model assessment tool for classroom technology infrastructure in higher education. Applied Research Projects (207). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/207.

Varela, Genevee. 2007. A needs assessment for a Ph.D. program in public administration for Texas State University. Applied Research Projects (253). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/253.

Villareal, Alison Nicole. 2009. Attaining global perspective: Preparing undergraduate students for an interdependent world. Applied Research Projects (295). http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/295.

Wartman, Katherine L., and Marjorie Savage. 2008. Understanding the relationship among students, parents, and the institution. *ASHE Higher Education Report* 33(6). Wiley InterScience. Doi: 10.1002/aehe.3306.

Wolf, De'Sha, Linda J. Sax, and Casandra E. Harper. 2009. Parental engagement and contact in the academic lives of college students. NASPA Journal 46(2): 325-358.

Yin, Robert K. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 4th ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

# **Appendix A**: Interview Guide

The Texas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved an exemption for this Applied Research Project on October 6, 2009 – Request Number EXP2009Q8171. A copy of the Certificate of Approval is available upon request. The request for exemption was based on this project meeting the standards for "Not Human Subjects Research."[58] IRB Administration can be contacted at ospirb@txstate.edu and 512-245-2314. The link to the IRB Inquiry Form is http://www.osp.txstate.edu/irb/irb_inquiry.html. The faculty supervisor for this project is Dr. Pat Shields, Professor and Masters of Public Administration Director in the Political Science Department. She can be contacted at ps07@txstate.edu or 512-245-3256.

This project is a requirement for completion of the Masters in Public Administration. My focus is on underrepresented students, particularly First Generation College Students, the challenges they face in their pursuit of a degree, and the services available at Texas State to help them enroll, transition, and ultimately graduate. I've identified some common challenges or "categories" and I would like to ask you how you think students can overcome those challenges, what services your office offers to deal with those challenges, and what in particular you think should be included in a handbook designed for FGCSs and their families.

Questions:

9. What can students and their families do to address the issues of <category>.

10. What services do you offer that can help students address the issues of <category>.

11. How do you communicate with or explain services to parents vs. students? (Prod: Brochures, websites, etc.)

12. What, if anything, do you do to guide parents in helping their child succeed in college as it relates to <category>?

13. What, if anything, do you do to help parents understand the changes and development that a student experiences during his/her college career?

14. Can, and if so how can, parents be involved when students seek your services? (Prod: Do you believe parents should seek to be involved in this area of their student's life?)

15. How do you respond if parents call your office/department to ask about their child's participation in your services?

16. What terms or concepts should students and their families learn and understand?

Thank you for your time, do you have any literature or reports that I could take with me?

[58] See http://www.txstate.edu/research/orc/humans-in-research.html for Texas State University IRB procedures and information.

**Appendix B:** Texas State Univ. Inst. Review Board (IRB) Exemption Approval

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN MARCOS
*The rising STAR of Texas*

## Institutional Review Board

## Request For Exemption

# Certificate of Approval

**Applicant: Ismael Amaya**

**Request Number : EXP2009Q8171**

**Date of Approval: 10/06/09**

Assistant Vice President for Research and Federal Relations

Chair, Institutional Review Board

# **Appendix C:** Handbook

# FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT

A student neither of whose parents enrolled in college

FGCS for short, FGCSs for plural

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN MARCOS

*The rising* STAR *of Texas*

**A member of The Texas State University System**

# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for considering Texas State University as the place to pursue your college education. And, thank you for picking up a copy of this handbook. This handbook was created to primarily help First Generation College Students and their families. When First Generation College Students embarks on the process of selecting and enrolling in a college, they may have questions that family members may not be able to answer because they have not had the experience of attending college. At the same time, family members may have questions of their own and would like reassurances that their child or young adult will have the tools necessary to succeed in college. This handbook introduces students and their family to important aspects of the college experience and the resources available to help students succeed at Texas State. Many of the college resources are for students to use once they enroll. Some of the resources and the information in this handbook can help students prepare for college while in high school.

This handbook is arranged by sections or topics. Each section includes the names of departments or offices at Texas State that offer services or assistance to students in overcoming challenges related to that topic (see the Table of Contents). Other items you will find in the handbook include:

- -Special sections, notes, and tips intended for parents.
- -A glossary of terms that are important for students to learn and helpful for parents to understand. Some of the words appear throughout the handbook and others were added because students will encounter them in college.
- -A directory of the offices or departments named throughout the handbook. Offices or departments in the directory are <u>double-underlined</u> whenever they appear in the handbook. Most of these offices have a website with much more information and important updates.
- -Information on student privacy rights.
- -A two-year planner – use it during your Junior and Senior years in high school!

The table of contents can help find information quickly but please read this handbook from cover to cover in the near future. As you read, write notes and contact names on the handbook, mark it with sticky notes, fill-in important dates in the planner section, and spend time with family discussing each section. Think of this handbook as a toolbox filled with tools (information) meant to help you get to college and through it. How these tools are used is up to you. The more you use your toolbox the more you will get out of it. If after consulting this handbook you still have unanswered questions, do not hesitate to contact any of the offices listed in the directory towards the end of this handbook.

Once at Texas State, be sure to request a copy of the official Student Handbook (it is reserved for students who officially enroll). It provides additional information and a planner for the first year in college.

Finally, some information is repeated throughout this handbook. That was not an accident, it was important enough to be listed more than once!

# NOTE TO TRANSFER STUDENTS

This handbook was designed with the first-time college student in mind. However, much of the information is applicable to first-time in college and transferring First Generation College Students. Students planning on transferring to Texas State should consult with the office below for information specific to transfer students (see the directory for their websites, each has a section for transfer students):

- -Admissions
- -Vice-President for Student Affairs
- -University College
- -Financial Aid and Scholarships

## Table of Contents


**PREPARING FOR COLLEGE** 4
- COLLEGE PREPARATORY COURSEWORK 4
- SHARING GOALS WITH FAMILY 4
- TESTS/PRACTICE TESTS 5
- COLLEGE PREPARATION/INFORMATION PROGRAMS 6
- OPEN HOUSES 9

**TRANSITION PROGRAMS** 11
- NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION (NSO) 11
- PAWS PREVIEW 12
- MEET FACULTY 13
- BRIDGE PROGRAMS 13

**FINANCING AN EDUCATION** 15
- SAVINGS 15
- FINANCIAL AID 15
- STUDENT EMPLOYMENT 20

**BUILDING COMMUNITY AND CONNECTIONS** 23
- CONNECTING WITH THE CAMPUS AND OTHERS 23
- MENTORING 26
- CULTURAL ACCLIMATION 26
- SPIRITUAL SUPPORT 27
- LEARNING/RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES 28

**MAINTAINING FAMILY CONNECTIONS** 30
- STUDENT/PARENT COMMUNICATION 30
- INSTITUTION/PARENT COMMUNICATION 31
- TECHNOLOGY 34

**EARLY INTERVENTION AND CRISES SERVICES** 36
- GENERAL SERVICES 36
- FIRST YEAR SEMINAR 39
- EARLY ALERT SYSTEMS 40

**ACADEMIC ADVISING AND SUPPORT** 41
- ACADEMIC ADVISING 41
- ACADEMIC SUPPORT 43

**SPECIAL NEEDS AND POPULATIONS** 46
- DISABILITY SERVICES 46
- GENDER IDENTITY/SEXUAL ORIENTATION 49

**GLOSSARY/CONCEPTS** 50

**DIRECTORY & INDEX** 57

**HELPFUL LINKS** 69

**FERPA (FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT)** 70

**PLANNER (JR. & SR. YEARS)** 71

**FINAL NOTES** 85

# PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

The decision to attend college is usually made well before the last semester of a student's senior year in high school. Accordingly, there are steps and activities that students considering a higher education should engage in and during which parents' support can be very helpful. Remember, most high school students are under 18 years of age and therefore parents often have to approve a student's participation in these activities. For those that don't require parental permission, parental encouragement may make the difference between whether or not students choose to participate.

### *COLLEGE PREPARATORY COURSEWORK*

One of the biggest challenges for students entering college is a lack of preparedness for the rigors of the academic curriculum. Some students handicap themselves during high school by selecting less demanding courses in order to earn easier credits and higher grades. Students who do this are more likely to find themselves in shock and struggling in their college courses. Students should fight the temptation to complete only the minimum requirements for graduation and instead take on a challenging high school curriculum. In Texas, not only do the Recommended and Distinguished Graduation Program (or equivalent) better prepare students for college, these are the minimum requirement for admission to Texas State. (If you are not sure which high school program you are completing or for information on honors, dual credit and advancement placement programs, check with your guidance counselor.) Many high schools offer honors, dual credit, and advanced placement programs that students can take advantage of to better prepare for college level courses and even begin earning college credits. When students apply to Texas State, in addition to test scores and degree plans, the admission office takes into account if a student enrolled in extra math, science, or foreign language courses.

Students who take AP classes and want their test scores sent to Texas State must use Texas State score recipient code # 6667. Students who already took their AP exams and did not include Texas State as a score recipient can have their scores sent to Texas State by contacting the College Board at 888-225-5427. For a list of AP exams that have been approved for course credit at Texas State, visit the "Credit by Exams" section of the Texas State Testing, Research Support and Evaluation Center website at www.txstate.edu/trec/cbe/ap.html.

For questions related to admission to Texas State, including admission requirements, contact your Texas State Admissions Counselor, call the Admissions office, or visit the Admissions website at www.admissions.txstate.edu (counselors are listed under "Staff Contacts).

### *SHARING GOALS WITH FAMILY*

While your parents may not have gone to college and they may know little about the college experience, it is important that you share your goals with them. It is hard for them to support you when they do not know what you want. There may be some areas of concern for them, how to pay for your education is probably one of them. There is a section later in this handbook that addresses that topic. You may be able to respond to your family's concerns on your own or with the help of this handbook, your high school counselor, college Admissions

counselor, or another person you know who may know about going to college. All of your high school teachers have been to college and there is a very good chance some of them attended Texas State. These teachers can be an excellent resource for you, especially if you have established a good relationship with them and they know some of your college and career goals.

You are going to need your parents help when completing your admissions and financial aid applications. For example, you will need copies of their income tax filings. Make it easier on your parents and yourself by letting them know well ahead of time of what you will need and when; remind them as your deadlines approach.

***TESTS/PRACTICE TESTS***

Some colleges specify which of the standardized exams, the ACT or SAT, students must take to be considered for admission. Texas State accepts either one and students who take both can submit both of their scores for consideration. Whichever test a student takes, Texas State requires the writing component although it is not considered in the admissions decision. While one of these tests will be required for admission, students can apply to Texas State even before they take the exam in order to begin processing their application. The scores (including higher scores if tests are retaken) can be submitted once they are available and the Admissions office will review the application with the new information at no additional cost or fee. Students can contact the Admissions office when they are close to but short of meeting the admission requirements to see if conditional admission is an option.

Prior to taking any of the standardized aptitude tests, students should take advantage of study materials available at their school or local library, the test's website, or other sources and prepare by taking practice exams. If at first your test score does not meet the Texas State requirement for admission, do not be discouraged. You can review and find additional information on the tests to prepare and retake the exam. Because Texas State has raised its admissions requirements over the years, some students take the standardized exams more than once before being admitted.

In addition to standardized exams required for admission, students in Texas must take an exam to determine their readiness to take on certain college level courses. The exams used at Texas State include the THEA, COMPASS, ACCUPLACER, and ASSET. Students who fail all or part of their exam may still enroll but may be required to participate in remedial programs or developmental courses to better ensure their success in their required college courses. Some students may be exempt from having to take all or parts of the test based on their SAT, ACT, or TAKS scores, previous college enrollment/credits, or military service. For more information on the test, requirements and exemptions, visit the Success Initiative Program website at www.txstate.edu/tsip.

The Testing, Research Support & Evaluation Center (TREC) administers a number of tests and maintains information on the credit by examinations, institutional examinations, placement exams and national exams such as the ACT and SAT. For more information on the TREC, the tests available at Texas State, web links to national, placement, and credit exams, visit the TREC's website at www.txstate.edu/trec/.

Generally, each time you take the ACT, SAT or any other standardized test required for college admission, you must pay a fee. You should prepare by saving money for these fees or let your parents know ahead of time that you will need their help. If your family cannot afford the test fees, consult with your high school counselor – fee waivers area available for most exams.

***COLLEGE PREPARATION/INFORMATION PROGRAMS***

Throughout the country there are programs that help students prepare for college. Some of the programs are supported by local schools, some by government grants, and others by colleges or a combination of these. In Texas, many communities have established "Go Centers" which serve as central points of information about college, financial aid, and other programs that help students prepare and plan for college. Some information programs are as simple as one day workshops offering tips to help students and their families manage the admissions, financial aid and required test applications. Other programs offer students academic support over multiple years and may include a college component where students attend college classes and may even stay on campus for various weeks.

Texas State Admissions staff provides information about Texas State to high school counselors in most school districts in Texas and together arrange times to allow students interested in Texas State to meet with the admissions counselor. The admissions counselors are assigned to geographic areas so that that interested students work with the same person through the admissions process. These admissions counselors routinely attend college fairs held for students of individual high schools or entire districts. During some of these visits, other university personnel will join the admissions counselors to provide additional information on things such as financial aid, essay writing for admission and aid applications, academic programs, and .

Ask your high school guidance counselor when the counselors of the colleges you are interested in will be at your school and where to find the nearest "Go Center". Once you have established contact with admissions counselors, stay in touch by marking your calendar with their future visits to your area, calling or e-mailing them any time you have a question, or need to provide additional information related to your admissions documents.

The Texas State admission deadlines for freshmen students are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Fall Priority | March 1 |
| Fall Deadline | May 1 |
| Spring | November |
| Summer I | May 1 |
| Summer II | June 15 |

In addition to visits to high schools by admissions counselors, Texas State offers programs that provide information to high school students so they can learn about and prepare for college. Most of these programs are grant-funded educational programs administered by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) and include:

**Educational Talent Search (ETS)** – ETS identifies and assists Travis County Jr. High and High School students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial aid advising to its participants encouraging them to graduate from high school and continue on to the college of their choice. ETS programs may include: academic, financial aid, career, or personal advising; career exploration; tutorial service referrals; information on postsecondary education; field trips and exposure to college campuses; quality information on grant, scholarship and loan programs; assistance in completing college admissions and financial aid applications; assistance in preparing for college entrance exams; free college entrance exam waivers; mentoring programs; special activities for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders; and workshops for the families of participants. All services provided by the Texas State ETS are free!
If you live in Travis County, visit the "Affiliations" section of the MSA website to learn more about Texas State's ETS program. If you do not live in Travis County and want to find the ETS program nearest you, ask your school counselor or Go Center representative.

**Rural Talent Search (RTS)** – RTS identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to the college of their choice. The Texas State RTS program is open to students attending Goodnight Middle School (San Marcos, TX), San Marcos High School (San Marcos, TX), or Seguin High School (Seguin, TX). If you attend these schools, visit the "Affiliations" section of the MSA website to learn more about Texas State's RTS program. If you do not attend these schools and want to find the RTS program nearest you, ask your school counselor or Go Center representative.

**Upward Bound Program** – Upward Bound is designed to increase the academic skill and motivation necessary for students to pursue a college education. The program includes an academic year component where participants receive tutorials, life skills, and college prep activities during the school year. During the summer, students participate in a residential component (they live on campus!). The summer component includes academic classes and elective courses (dual credit is available) as well as recreational and social activities. For participants who graduate high school, the program offers a "bridge" component (see the section on "Transition Programs" of this handbook for more information on bridge programs). Upward Bound Bridge students enroll in one college course at Texas State University or Austin Community College during Summer Session One – Upward Bound pays for the course fees and textbooks! Texas State's Upward Bound program serves

students attending Lehman (Kyle, TX), San Marcos (San Marcos, TX) and Seguin (Seguin, TX) High Schools. If you attend these schools, visit the "Affiliations" section of the MSA website to learn more about Texas State's Upward Bound program. If you do not attend these schools and want to find the Upward Bound program nearest you, ask your school counselor or Go Center representative.

**Hip Hop TRIO Student X-Change** is sponsored and supported by the TRIO programs at Texas State (Education Talent Search, Rural Talent Search, and Upward Bound) and coordinated by the student organization Hip Hop Congress. In this program, Texas State student leaders host workshops and panel discussions on the university, the importance of a college education, hip hop culture and other topics to motivate students and reinforce to them that a higher education is attainable. For more information on the X-Change program, visit the "Programs and Services" section of the MSA website or e-mail Mr. Jesse Silva at js202@txstate.edu.

Although the MSA office is available to all students at Texas State, there are benefits to building relationships with the MSA staff by participating in the programs listed above. When students arrive on campus, they can already have a connection with a department and staff who will be supportive of and serve as advocates for the student and his/her family.

**¡Se Habla Español!**

Dear Parents,

The Educational Talent Search, Rural Talent Search, and Upward Bound Programs all require parent authorization for students to participate.

To help communication between staff and Spanish-speaking parents, a bilingual person is always on staff. The bilingual staff members are present at events requiring parent participation. Program information is also available in Spanish.

F.Y.I. A section later in this handbook will discuss academic advising for when you arrive at Texas State. BUT! The University College Advising Center has an online service available to any person, including those who are considering Texas State. The online service allows individuals to submit questions they may have about

-Texas State academic policies and/or procedures
-Information about campus resources
-The Texas State General Education/Core Curriculum requirements
-Any academic questions, comments, or concerns

The program is called "Ask An Advisor!" and can be found on the University College Advising Center at http://www.ucollege.txstate.edu/advising/.

F.Y.I. Note to Students Attending Community/Junior College: To help ensure a smooth transition, Texas State academic advisors occasionally visit the community/junior colleges that have the largest numbers of students transferring to Texas State. These include Austin Community College, Blinn College, and Alamo Colleges. To learn when Texas State academic advisors will be visiting your community/junior college, ask your current academic advisor or use the "Ask An Advisor!" feature described in the FYI noted above.

### *OPEN HOUSES*

College selection is more than just being admitted, it involves assessing which institution is a good fit based on each student's goals and interests. To help, most universities have open houses. These programs give students interested in attending a college (and their families) an opportunity to visit and learn more about the campus. Open houses provide information that can help applicants determine if an institution will help them meet their academic and career goals. These programs allow students and their families to familiarize themselves with the university, its services and how these services can help the student succeed. Information on admission and financial aid is generally available at these events. Students do not have to wait until their senior year to visit the colleges they are interested in. In fact, it is a good idea to begin visiting campuses during the junior year in high school – even as early as sophomore year. During these visits, prospective students should talk to students already at those schools to get the cons (negatives or disadvantages) about that school since most college representatives will be focusing only on the pros (positives or advantages).

Texas State's open house for prospective students and their families is Bobcat Days. Bobcat Days are an opportunity to explore the academic and cultural environment of Texas State. These open-houses are scheduled for four Saturdays in the academic year, usually one in the months of October, November, February, and April. The programs include admissions and residence life overviews, opportunities to talk with faculty in the academic departments and staff in student affairs offices, information on financial aid, multicultural student affairs and transfer credit. A panel of current students is available to answer questions and visitors can dine at the student food court. Campus tours and departmental open houses round out the schedule.

Reservations are not required and attendance is free (except meals). For more information on Bobcat Days, visit the "Visit Campus" section of the Admissions website (see directory).

F.Y.I. For students who have gone to another college first and wish to transfer to Texas State, they can attend a different open house – Transfer Days. For more information on Transfer Days, go to www.admissions.txstate.edu/visit/transfer-days.html.

**Parent Tip:** Despite what your student may wish to believe, you are most likely the one who knows him/her best. Therefore, it is important that you attend as many of the programs and college visits your student participates in when considering which college to attend. This will allow you the opportunity to ask questions of the college representatives and give feedback to your child on whether you believe the college is a good fit, has the support resources that your child will need to succeed, and know what issues or concerns will need to be anticipated and addressed. This is not a time to deny the student an opportunity to be the primary decision maker on which college is best for him/her, but help the student make a realistic and objective assessment of the choices available to them.

Dear Parents,

Your student needs your support and encouragement. You play an important role in their academic goals. Once a student has decided to attend college, it helps for parents to encourage the student by discussing college options and helping them organize college and financial aid/scholarship applications. When students do not talk about college and are not encouraged to pursue a higher education, they are less likely to go to college. Even if you did not attend college yourself, there will be things you will be able to do to help. At some point, your student will ask you for important information, much of it related to financial matters. While your main concern may be that you feel you do not have the money to pay for college, it is important that you provide your child with the information and related documentation, for example, income tax returns. That information will help your student apply for financial aid, a topic which is covered later in this handbook.

If you or your student have questions about college, look for answers in this handbook or visit with your child's high school guidance counselor, college admissions counselor, or someone who is familiar with your child's academic and career goals, for example a teacher with whom your student may have a good relationship.

As your child leaves home for college, your concerns may turn from financial to wellness. You may worry if your child indicates having difficulties or because you are not able to see for yourself if your child is doing well. There are many services available to help students through just about any difficulty. Resources that you may be able to use as your child prepares for college and after he/she enrolls include:

**Admissions** – The Admissions website has a section on resources for parents at www.admissions.txstate.edu/future/pre-seniors/parent.html and includes information to help students and their families choose the right college, access financial aid, and ensure the student's wellness and safety.

**Counseling Center** – The center provides services to currently enrolled students and can provide consultations to parents who have concerns about their student's wellness. There is information and resources available online to students and their families that can be helpful as the student prepares for the transition to Texas State. Please see the Counseling Center entry in the directory which further describes the services provided by the Counseling Center.

**Parents Association** - Texas State has a Parents Association available to help parents connect with the university. While the services and benefits of this organization are designed for enrolled students, incoming students and their parents can benefit from reviewing the "Success Tips" offered on the Parents Association website. These tips give insight into what students may expect in college and how they can be prepared to succeed. The Parents Association is a good resource to stay informed about university events, programs and student activities in order for parents to support their child's academic endeavors after their student has left for college. If you attend a Bobcat Day, look for Parents Association staff and volunteers at the browse session. They will be present to tell you more about the association.

Family influence plays an important role well before a student even decides to attend college – and which college to attend. This influence consists of constant encouragement, praise, support (financial, moral, and social), and supportive discussions about the child's educational and career aspirations. This encouragement should take place regardless of a family's financial resources (a section later in this handbook will cover how to finance a college education). Encouraging your child to participate in the activities listed in this section is an excellent start.

# TRANSITION PROGRAMS

While attending college is a period of growth and development for students, that growth and development can occur at different rates. For example, some students may take longer to complete a degree if they only enroll on a part-time basis. Even though the college experience may be different for all students, every student must make the transition from potential student to enrolled student. Below are some of the services offered at Texas State to help admitted students make that transition. (If you do not attend Texas State, look for similar services at your chosen institution.)

### *NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION (NSO)*

New student orientations are common at colleges and universities and Texas State is no exception. Like Bobcat Days, NSO is filled with information for students, particularly information on resources available to help students succeed. It also includes components for parents to answer their questions and highlight how they can support their students. New student orientation is geared towards students who have chosen to enroll at Texas State, however, students who have not yet decided which school to attend may want to attend orientation to help them make their decision.

All new students are expected to attend NSO. During this program, students not only learn about the campus and resources available to ensure their academic success, they will also meet with an academic advisor and register for classes.

To participate in NSO, a student must be admitted to Texas State. There are various sessions to choose from during the summer to accommodate any vacations or family commitments students may have already planned. The sessions are offered for freshman (those who have 0-29 hours of college credit) and transfer students (those who have already earned 30 hours or more of college credit). There is a fee of $60 for the orientation. There are fee waivers available, particularly for students who are deemed eligible for a full-Pell-Grant (must have already filed a FAFSA). Parents/guests may attend NSO for a fee of $15. Transfer students who are not able to attend NSO have the option of completing an online orientation.

To register for a NSO session or for a list of "What to Bring to NSO", visit the NSO section of the Admissions website. Anyone unable to register online can call (512-245-3655) or e-mail the NSO office for a registration form at nso@txstate.edu. Students unable to attend any of the orientation sessions should call the NSO office to discuss orientation options.

Students attending the Round Rock Higher Education Center have a different process to follow and should visit www.rrhec.txstate.edu/current/newstudents.html to determine their next step.

***Parent Tip*** *– If you attend New Student Orientation (NSO), look for the Parents Association! Staff and members of the association will be present to answer any questions you may have. Also, look for Admissions' NSO Handbook for Parents, "Parent Basics."*

***PAWS PREVIEW***

PAWS Preview is a required (and free!) transition program for new Texas State freshmen. The program is the second component of NSO and is scheduled right before the start of the semester. It is intended to provide critical information students will need to begin and succeed in college – both in and outside of the classroom. Students receive information on programs, services, activities, people and traditions at Texas State. Students meet faculty, staff and fellow students. During this program, students receive access to campus technology that will be essential to communicating with family, faculty and peers as well as to completing academic requirements such as research and assignments.

For more information on this program, students should visit the PAWS Preview website at www.pawspreview.txstate.edu, e-mail PAWSPreview@txstate.edu, or call 512-245-8295.

***Parent Tip*** *– At PAWS Preview, members of the Parents Association will be part of a Parent-to-Parent Panel Discussion. These parents will share tips and hints for helping students have a successful freshman year. Topics will include homesickness, academics, student money management, safety, and other issues. Parents are also welcome to attend the New Student Convocation, a ceremony at the beginning of each fall semester, which marks the beginning of a new student's college career. But, remember, PAWS Preview is the time where your child is really making the transition to college, beginning to make important connections, and will be busy attending important programs on his/her own. Other than attending the parent sessions and convocation, parents should plan on spending time exploring the university or the town and not with their student.*

### *MEET FACULTY*

Even before students show up to their first day of classes, it is important that students meet and connect with their instructors. Meeting faculty before the semester begins can provide new students the opportunity to begin understanding that each teacher's expectations may be different and that it is o.k. (and encouraged) for students to seek faculty advice early rather than waiting until they are having difficulties in class.

Students can meet faculty (and staff) at the "University Exchange" portion of Bobcat Days. For more information on Bobcat Days, visit www.admissions.txstate.edu/visit/bocat-days.html) or review the information on open houses in the "Preparing for College" section of this handbook. Students can usually meet a faculty member in their area of interest during visits to the campus if they make a request through the Visitor's Center or by calling the appropriate academic department ahead of time to arrange the meeting. Bobcat Days and the Visitor's Center are services of the Admissions office, additional information can be found in the Admissions website (see directory).

When students register for courses, they learn who will teach their classes. Students can contact their instructors to introduce themselves prior to the first day of classes. Most First Year Seminar instructors (for more information on First Year Seminar, see the "Early Intervention & Crises Services" section of this handbook) are at PAWS Preview to meet with their classes. Other faculty are also present. Most instructors have office hours during which a student can meet them in person before or at the beginning of the semester. These office hours, good for the entire semester, are usually included in every instructor's syllabus. Instructors may also include on the syllabus or announce in class when they will offer review sessions or other times during which they will be available to provide additional help with the class material. Take advantage of these times and extra help!

### *BRIDGE PROGRAMS*

*Bridge programs* are transition programs that bridge the gap between high school graduation and the fall semester by offering summer classes. Overall, there are less activities on campuses during the summer. This makes *bridge programs* an excellent way for FGCSs to gradually immerse themselves into college life.

Texas State offers a *bridge program* called Emerging STARS. The program is for students conditionally accepted to Texas State. Many of the students that participate in this *bridge program* are First Generation College Students and may have low socio-economic status. To help these students, the program secured a grant to provide room, board, and a book stipend. The program takes place during the second summer session and allows students to experience Texas State during a less hectic semester. Emerging STARS program also helps ease parent's transition by providing information on the program and the student's activities. Program staff is available during these students' move-in to the residence hall to meet parents and answer any questions they may have. To better ensure the success of participants during their *bridge* participation and subsequent years, students must enroll in an academic skills course (EDP 1350). To help participants experience a typical course while in a highly supportive environment, students in the program must also enroll in a composition course (ENG 1300 or

ENG 1310). The program is administered by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) in collaboration with Academic Affairs.

For more information on the Emerging STARS program, visit the "Emerging STARS" section of the Vice President for Student Affairs website.

Another *bridge program* is available to students who participate in Texas State's Upward Bound program. For more information on Upward Bound and their *bridge* component, review the information on college preparation/information programs in the "Preparing for College" section of this handbook or the visit the Upward Bound website.

***Parent Tip**: While your child's transition to college may be a bit stressful, it should also be an exciting time for you, your student, and your family. It is healthy to discuss your concerns with your child, but make sure he/she knows you support their decision to attend college.*

**¡Se Habla Español!**

Dear Parents,

If your student participates in the Emerging STARS program and you need information in Spanish, do not hesitate to ask if a Spanish-speaking staff person is available. More than likely, the answer will be yes.

In the past, in an effort to provide students and their parents with important information, the University College Advising Center made a presentation to Emerging STARS participants and finished with a bilingual "Question and Answer" session for parents.

# FINANCING AN EDUCATION

College affordability and financial aid are common concerns for many students and their families, especially when the family may have limited funds to pay for college. Even when income is limited, families should not feel that an education is out of reach. The first thing to remember is that a college education is an investment and the cost of it now will bring greater benefits in the future. The benefits include greater career opportunities and consequently greater salary potential. This section presents information on ways of financing a college education.

### *SAVINGS*

One of the ways families can pay for college is by putting money aside in the years leading up to high school graduation. The earlier a family begins, the more they will be able to save. Even when families are not able to save much for college, any little bit can help pay for things that other sources may not cover or to provide small rewards as a student reaches goals on their way to completing their college degree. To help students and their families develop a budget for college and save money, Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS) has a Budget Worksheet, Budget Tips, and a College Cost Calculator in the "Help Links" section of its website (see directory).

Saving money for college is not the exclusive responsibility of parents. Students can help by saving some money from after-school, weekend, or summer jobs and from birthday cash gifts.

### *FINANCIAL AID*

Every year, grants, loans and scholarships supported by the federal or state governments and colleges are made available so that students who need help can have the resources necessary to pursue a college education. Some of this assistance is awarded based on need while other is based on merit (academic or extra-curricular accomplishments). While some may say that the money is just "there for the asking," it takes a little bit more than just "asking." It takes applying. Below is information on what financial aid is available at Texas State and how students and their families can apply for it. One thing to remember is that applying for financial aid is not always easy. It takes time to gather and prepare documents, complete the application, and submit the application prior to the established deadlines. Students usually need their parents' assistance to complete a financial aid application because the application requires family income information. Each family's situation and needs will be different and no family should be embarrassed about their inability to pay for college, their economic/social circumstances, or their need to apply for financial aid. Financial aid is available to make a college education accessible and subsequently provide individuals with greater opportunities in life.

At Texas State, over 17,000 students receive some type of aid through the Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS) office, that's more than half of all students! FAS is the primary office for anything related to financial aid. This office helps students receive any federal aid (grants, work-study, and loans) for which they qualify. It is important that students and their families can distinguish between the different types of financial aid because $20,000 dollars in grants is not the same as $20,000 in loans. Here are some definitions to explain the difference:

**Grants** are available to help cover the costs of attending Texas State. Federal, state and university grants are awarded based on financial need and do not have to be paid back. There are various types of grants available.

**Work-Study** is aid that gives students an employment opportunity. A work-study award is the maximum amount a student can earn in their work-study job. The money is earned based on the number of hours worked. If students do not earn their entire award because they did not work enough hours, the money is forfeited. If a student earns their entire award before the end of the semester, their employer can keep them employed by paying for additional work hours with departmental funds. Like grants, work-study awards are based on financial need.

**Loans** are sometimes necessary to be able to pay for a college education, however, loans should be used as a last resort because they must eventually be repaid (with interest). There are different types of loans, limits, and repayment conditions that should be considered when borrowing money for college.

FAS also administers the application process for most scholarships available at Texas State and can help students through the provision of or assistance in seeking scholarships, alternative loans, and non-resident tuition and fee waivers. The type and amount of aid will depend on various factors, including need, qualifications, and the availability of funds. There is one thing all types of aid have in common – again, to get it, students must apply for it!

For more information on grants, work-study, and loans, including eligibility and how to apply, visit the "Undergraduate Aid" section in the Financial Aid and Scholarships website at www.finaid.txstate.edu. Remember that all applications have deadlines. The deadline for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the application needed for federal grants, work-study, loans and a requirement for consideration for other aid at Texas State is April 1 for the upcoming academic year. There is an additional application for students who plan on attending summer school; the deadline for the summer aid application is March 1 prior to the upcoming summer semesters. All families are encouraged to complete the FAFSA application, even if they don't think they will qualify or they have been denied aid in the past. When students complete the form, they may be surprised with aid they didn't expect as their circumstances and eligibility change and they can apply for additional scholarships. Helpful tips and a link to the FAFSA website are available at the FAS website.

There are other types of aid available when federal aid is not enough to cover the cost of attendance. These include scholarships and parent loans. Texas State offers many scholarships that range from those that award a few hundred dollars to those that can pay for all expenses, up to $56,000 ($14,000/year for 4 years). Scholarships are awarded under various categories which may be further subcategorized. The major categories include Freshman, Transfer, Continuing, Graduate, International, College and Departmental. For more information on these scholarships, eligibility, workshops to improve your scholarship applications, and how to search for outside scholarships, visit the "Scholarships" section of the Financial Aid and Scholarships website.

**Parent Tip:** When financial aid grants, work-study, scholarships and students loans are not enough to cover the cost of attending college, parents may apply for parent loans. (Note: We already said loans should be a last resort. If you must take out loans, student loans should be considered first since they usually have better terms than parent loans.) For more information on parent loans, including how to apply, visit the "Parent Aid" section of the Financial Aid and Scholarships website (see directory).

**Students can increase their Financial Literacy!**

To help students responsibly manage their personal finances so they may pay for college while incurring the least amount of debt possible, the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) offices has a money management information program under the "Student Success" section on its website. The program is entitled "Money Savvy Cats" and is provided through a collaboration between the VPSA, Financial Aid and Scholarships and the Family and Consumer Sciences Program faculty. Parents can also visit the website and take advantage of these tools.

Some of the websites listed on the "Helpful Links" section of this handbook include money management tools as well as planners with important admission and financial aid deadlines.

*Privacy Note to Family Members:*
*Because of a federal privacy law (FERPA[59]) that applies to colleges and universities, Financial Aid and Scholarships can only share information with parents or spouses of students if the student completes and submits to the Financial Aid and Scholarships a "Release of Student Financial Aid Information Form." The form is available in the "Special" section of the FAS website.*

[59] Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, see the section on FERPA in this handbook for more information.

*Dear Parents & Students*

*As a general rule, most students going to college right after high school will have to apply for financial aid as a dependent of their parents or guardians. Therefore, you should be ready to provide your child information related to your income, including copies of income tax filings. There are some exceptions to this requirement. Students applying for federal aid for the 2009-2010 academic year may be able to file as independents if they:*

*-Were born before January 1, 1986,*
*-Are married (even if separated) at the time of applying for aid,*
*-Will be working on a master's or doctorate program at the beginning of the 2009-2010 academic year,*
*-Are serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed forces at the time of applying for aid, or*
*-Are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.*

*Other overrides to the rule may be available. A student in extraordinary circumstances that warrant a re-evaluation of their dependency status should contact the FAS office.*

Scholarship & Financial Aid Highlights

Disabled Students may qualify for an additional financial aid allowance that can help cover special services, personal assistance, transportation, equipment and supplies that are reasonable incurred and not provided for by other agencies. For a definition of Disabled Student and the process to make this request, visit the "Special" section of the Financial Aid and Scholarships website. Students with disabilities should also read the section on disability services in the "Special Needs and Populations" section of this handbook. That section includes information on services and scholarships available to students with disabilities.

Bobcat Promise & San Marcos High School Bobcat Promise – Texas State wants to make sure that anyone who wants to pursue a college education has the opportunity to do so regardless of their family's financial resources. With this in mind, Texas State made a promise – that if a student does their part to enroll and do well academically at Texas State, the university will

guarantee to cover the cost of tuition and fees for 15 credit hours per semester for four years to new entering freshmen. This is done through a combination of federal, state, and institutional funds. This is a guarantee in excess of $7,000 per year and students can still cover other expenses they may incur with scholarships or other forms of aid.

The requirements for this award, or promise, are:

- -Be an entering first-time freshman.
- -Be a Texas resident.
- -Have a family adjusted gross income of $25,000 or less; for San Marcos (TX) High School graduates, $35,000 or less.
- -Enroll full-time and complete at least 15 credit hours each fall & spring semester.
- -Apply & be accepted to Texas State by April 1prior to the upcoming academic year.
- -Submit a completed FAFSA no later than April 1 prior to the upcoming academic year.

To remain eligible for this award for four years, students must maintain at least a 2.0 overall Texas State GPA and make Satisfactory Academic Progress.

For more information on the Bobcat Promise, visit the Financial Aid and Scholarships website.

Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) offers LBJ Achievement Scholarships to students with financial need. Students who are first generation college students, received free/reduced lunches in school, or are TRIO participants are strongly encouraged to apply for these scholarships. For eligibility information, application deadlines, and applications, visit the "LBJ Achievement Scholarship" section of the MSA website (see directory) or call 512-245-2278.

Parents Association Scholarships offers four $1,500 scholarships each year. Additional scholarships are awarded contingent on funds raised each year. In 2009-2010, an additional $30,000 were made available (30 scholarships of $1,000 each) to help students who needed financial assistance in order to attend college. At least 10 percent of the awards were designated for first generation students, 10 percent for "special need" students, and 80 percent for students whose family is a member of the Parents Association.

When applying for anything that requires a fee, ask if a fee waiver is available. There are fee waivers available to those who qualify for things such as the admissions application ($60) and New Student Orientation ($60).

NOTE: Students who are not Texas Residents generally pay significantly higher tuition rates than Texas Residents. Some foreign students or non-citizens are eligible to be classified as a Texas resident for tuition purposes (and save a lot of money!). To learn more, including eligibility, see the information on Senate Bill 1528 in the "Special" section of the FAS website. Students who are not U.S. citizens, permanent residents with an Alien Registration Card (I-551), or conditional permanent resident with visa type I-551C, but qualify as Texas Residents for tuition purposes can apply for state financial aid by completing the Texas Application For State Financial Aid (TAFSA). For more information on the TAFSA and an application, visit the "Forms and Worksheets" section of the FAS website.

### *STUDENT EMPLOYMENT*

Students who do not have sufficient savings and financial aid to pay for college and want to minimize the amount of loans they take out can work while attending school. Students who do this should remember that they are students who work and not workers who go to school. Students who put more emphasis on working rather than school run the risk of losing focus of their academic goals and neglecting their studies. This is more of a concern when students work outside of the university for an employer who is not sensitive to student needs. These needs include a limited and flexible work-schedule.

Typically, the best (most flexible) jobs for students are on campus. Most supervisors on campus understand that students' top priority is doing well in school and are more likely to allow students flexibility when the students need time off to study, attend review sessions, or visit with a professor. Many campus jobs, especially work-study positions, allow students to study or do class assignments while on the job during times of slow activity or between tasks. To qualify for work-study, students must complete the FAFSA and if awarded it, must confirm to Financial Aid and Scholarships acceptance of the award and intent to find placement. Most campus jobs limit students hours to a part-time basis and help students maintain a balance between their school, work, and personal demands. In addition, working on campus helps students make important connections with colleagues and university administrators.

At Texas State, students can explore employment and internship opportunities through the "Jobs4Cats" feature of the Career Services website (see directory) or in person at the LBJ Student Center, suite # 5-7.1. Career Services also offers job fairs, career coaching, help on deciding a major, resume reviews, a career library, a computer lab and interview rooms to practice job interview skills.

***Parent Tip**: To help students responsibly manage their personal finances so they may pay for college while incurring the least amount of debt possible, the VPSA offices has a money management section on its website. The section is entitled "Money Savvy Cats" and is provided through a collaboration between the VPSA, Financial Aid and Scholarships and the Family and Consumer Sciences Program faculty. Encourage your child to use these tools!*

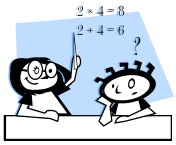
Students who work on campus tend to perform better in school than students who work off-campus. If you plan on working while at Texas State, look for information on the Career Services online (virtual) job fair which generally begins during PAWS Preview (see the section on "Transition Programs" for more information on PAWS Preview). If you must work but can't find a campus position that works with your schedule or interests, the Career Services office can also help you find off-campus or summer jobs.

*Dear Parents,*

*While, generally speaking, a college education can be an expensive endeavor, there are ways of significantly reducing the cost. And, the earnings associated with having a college degree, on average, more than outweigh the expense. At Texas State, using average figures, the cost of attendance can range from $17,000-$19,500 per year depending on housing options and personal money management. While these figures may seem very big, keep in mind that much of it will be expenses your child (and you) may have to bear whether your child goes to college or not, for example money for personal expenses, a place to live and the food to be eaten throughout the year. Tuition, fees, and book for a year are estimated at less than $8,500. By encouraging your child to apply early for financial aid and seek tuition waivers and scholarships, a college education is well within reach.*

# Campus Employment Highlights

The Department of Housing and Residential Life (DHRL) offers many student employment opportunities that include assisting with programming, clerical duties, maintenance, and tech support. Most of these jobs pay on an hourly basis, however, some provide free room and board in addition to a stipend. To learn more about employment opportunities with DHRL and how to apply, visit the "Employment Information" section on the DHRL website (see directory).




Students who do well academically and wish to use their abilities to help other students while getting paid to do it may be eligible for tutoring jobs with the Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC, see the academic support information under the "Academic Support" section of this handbook for more information on SLAC). Tutors can help other students by providing traditional tutoring or by leading a Supplemental Instruction study session for a class that other students may find difficult. To learn more about these employment opportunities, visit the "Tutoring" and "Supplemental Instruction" sections of the SLAC website (see directory) at www.txstate.edu/slac.

New Student Orientation (NSO) hires approximately 25 OLs each year. OLs are currently enrolled students who assist new Bobcats during their Orientation experience. NSO offers training. Bobcat Pride is required. The positions and information are listed at the orientation webpage at www.admissions.txstate.edu/nso and posted through Career Services from September through mid-November of each year. For more information on OL positions, contact Ms. Victoria Gandaria at 512-245-9718.

# BUILDING COMMUNITY AND CONNECTIONS

Building community and connections can strongly influence how much students enjoy their college experience. These connections give students a sense of belonging, form their new support network, and help students persist through graduation. Connecting with others and the campus and developing a sense of belonging can be achieved in a number of ways.

### *CONNECTING WITH THE CAMPUS AND OTHERS*

One of the difficulties of going to college is leaving friends and support systems behind. Life-long and close friends may go to other schools or enter the workforce. The same may be said about family members in the same age range such as siblings and cousins. Students may feel anxious about going to a new place without the people they are accustomed to.

When students become part of the Texas State community, they begin to build a home away from home and establish relationships that become part of the student's new support network. The support network includes classmates and casual acquaintances who students will need to work with for class projects as well as new or old friendships that will last a lifetime and may help students cope with difficult, personal challenges while at school.

There are various efforts in place at Texas State to help students begin connecting with peers early in their college career. Two of these are described below.

The *Hometown Bobcats* program is a retention initiative established to support students from historically underrepresented areas in Texas. Throughout the year, students from El Paso, the Houston Metroplex, Laredo, Dallas, and the Valley areas meet with other students from the same hometowns. These meetings help foster a supportive environment to help facilitate students' personal, social and professional growth.

Students who are not sure where to go to become involved or want to be contacted by representatives of student organizations can complete the Vice President for Student Affairs' online "*Interest Inventory*" to indicate their interests. A staff or member of a student organization involved in any marked area of interest will contact the student to extend an invitation to related activities.

Visit the Vice President for Students Affairs website for more information on these programs. The Hometown Bobcats program can be found in the "Retention" section and the Interest Inventory can be found under the "Student Success" section.

## CAMPUS ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Campus activities and student organizations are a key piece of the college experience. Without them, college would be little more than classrooms and labs and the college experience would be no more than going to class and doing homework. There is MUCH MORE to college.

While doing well academically should be students' primary concern, it is also important that students become involved in extra-curricular activities. These activities are not just fun, they provide real benefits such as expanding students' support network and fostering success inside and outside of the classroom.

When responsible for the success of events and organizations, students gain leadership and management skills that can transfer to their academic, personal, and professional life. The activities may be specific to an interest, hobby, academic subject, or career objective that caters to a small group of interested people or they could be very broad in nature and involve hundreds, even thousands, of students, faculty and staff coming together. Leading the way in providing such activities for individuals and support to student organizations is an office, fittingly called, Campus Activities and Student Organizations (CASO). Other departments may support a few organizations or activities related to their academic focus, but CASO is the office where all official student organizations must register. The office offers free advice and support to student organizations, including assistance with fundraising efforts, meeting spaces, leadership training, civic engagement and student development.

There are almost 300 registered student organizations at Texas State. Many of these organizations participate in activities open to all students such as Homecoming, football tailgate parties, diversity programming, and leadership development. Each year, leadership and academic award programs are held to recognize students for their accomplishments and service to their organizations, the university, and the community. If students do not find an organization or activity that interests them, they are encouraged to start a new one!

CASO also offers services for commuter students. These include commuter breakfasts and an off-campus housing guide for students who are eligible to live off-campus. For more information on the programs offered by CASO and to search for a student organization, visit the CASO website at www.lbjsc.txstate.edu/caso.

### Highlighted Organizations

Associated Student Government (ASG) – ASG is the voice of Texas State students. It is a governing and advocacy body that answers to the student body at large. Members of ASG work closely with faculty, administrators, city leaders, and state officials to advance the collective cause of Texas State students. For more information on ASG, including meeting times, visit www.asg.txstate.edu, call 512-245-1ASG (1274), visit LBJ Student Center, room 4-5.1, or fax 512-245-3464.

Student Association for Campus Activities (SACA) – SACA is Texas State's primary source for free entertainment on campus. The organization provides fun and diverse programs that encourage fellowship and camaraderie among students. Programs include music festivals, famous comedians and hypnotists, lectures, and movies in the park, pool, or drive-in. Most SACA members are volunteers, however, the organization does have a few paid student positions. For more information on SACA, visit www.lbjsc.txstate.edu/involvement/saca.html.

First Generation Student Organization (FGSO) – FGSO is for any student whose mother and father has not graduated from a four-year university or college. FGSO targets the issues specific to first-generation students and offers an informational and support group. FGSO has over 75 active members and offers several events and activities that include mentoring, fellowship, guidance, and leadership development as well as academic and social support. FGSO members support each other and San Marcos High School students by serving as positive role models in their pursuit of a higher education and participating in panel discussions. There are no dues to become a member of this organization. FGSO's activities are sponsored and supported by various university offices (including Multicultural Student Affairs and the Parents Association) and the SOAR (Seeking Opportunities, Achieving Results) program of San Marcos.

FGSO is advised by Upward Bound staff. For more information, visit the "First Generation Student Organization" section of the Upward Bound website at www.msa.txstate.edu/upwardbound, contact Dr. Stella Silva at ss23@txstate.edu or Ms. Mari Garza at ag41@txstate.edu, call, toll free, 1-800-211-6829 or 245-3838, or fax 245-7868.

The Underrepresented Student Advisory Council (USAC) - USAC is not an organization but a Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA)-sponsored programming and leadership development council made up of almost 40 student organizations that include persons from underrepresented groups. A link with information on USAC is on the MSA website. USAC organizations include:

African Student Association
Alpha Lambda Omega Christian Sorority
Alpha Phi Alpha
Alpha Psi Lambda
Asian Student Association
Bilingual Education Student Organization (BESO)
Black Men United (BMU)
Black Student Alliance (BSA)
Black Woman United (BWU)
Bobcat Equality Alliance
Chi Upsilon Sigma
Delta Sigma Theta
Fashion Nation
FOCUSED
Gospel Expressions Association (GEA)
Harambe Dance Group
Hillel at Texas State
Hip Hop Congress
Hispanic Business Student Association (HBSA)
Hombres Unidos
IMPACT Movement
International Student Association
Japanese Language and Culture Club
Kappa Delta Chi (KDChi)
Lambda at Texas State
Lambda Theta Phi
Latinas Unidas
Latino Student Assoc. (LSA)
National Assoc. of Hispanic Journalist
National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)
Omega Psi Phi
Phi Beta Sigma
Rincón Hispano Universitario
Sigma Delta Lambda (SDL)
Sigma Lambda Beta
Sigma Lambda Gamma
Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists (MAES)
Zeta Phi Beta

### *MENTORING*

When students go away to college, they may have less contact with supportive family members. Therefore, it is important that students forge new relationships with people who will be supportive of their goals. Students may naturally forge these relationships as they meet peers and university personnel, however, there is assistance available for students who may not be as outgoing as their peers or who may not know where to start to develop these relationships. One way of connecting with others is through mentoring programs. A mentor can be particularly helpful through the transition to college when students may experience feelings of anxiety or loneliness and when students may not yet know where all campus resources are located.

Through the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA), the university offers a Mentoring Program for new students. The program matches new students with staff, faculty, and peer mentors committed to helping the new student acclimate to the university and succeed. Participants in the program generally have higher GPAs and retention rates than non-participants. To help students and their mentors develop their relationships and support the new students' success, the Mentoring Program sponsors academic and social activities. The best time to sign up is upon being accepted to Texas State, however, students can sign up at any time during their first year at Texas State.

For more information on the Mentoring Program, including how to join, visit the "Programs and Services" section of the VPSA's website.

### *CULTURAL ACCLIMATION*

For some minority students, going to college may be the first time they are actually a minority in a majority environment. Texas State has a diverse student population and students can participate in services and organizations available to help them acclimate to the university while maintaining relationships with individuals of similar backgrounds.

Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) – MSA offers various programs and activities to help students of underrepresented backgrounds connect with each other and succeed. Below are some of MSA's programs.

> The Leadership Institute for Minority Males (LIMM) provides minority males with support through leadership training and development to improve their academic success and increase the graduation rates of ethnic minority male students. Members of LIMM and other student organizations collaborate each semester to create a leadership forum entitled Grown Man Discussion. During the forum, topics such as identity, economic empowerment, education, fellowship, and health of the minority male are presented in formats that include lectures, workshops, and panel discussions. Members of LIMM reach out to high school students to provide them preparation and mentoring for the purposes of college enrollment in a program called High School to College: Underrepresented Male Mentoring Group. The college student mentors meet with male high school students and parents to share their experiences with college enrollment, financial aid, involvement in organizations, and mentoring.
>
> Mama's Kitchen. MSA offers free monthly lunches to students. One highlight of this event is the opportunity for students to meet other peers as well as faculty and staff.

Faculty and staff often bring their own homemade dishes to share with students in this very casual and welcoming event. Each month features a different ethnic or cultural theme, raising awareness of different cultures and providing exciting opportunities to "taste" those cultures. Visit the MSA website for Mama's Kitchen dates.

During PAWS Preview (see PAWS Preview under "Transition Programs" in this handbook), MSA and Hip Hop Congress make a presentation on diversity to all entering freshmen. This interactive and entertaining presentation uses the culture of hip hop as a medium to discuss and relate the importance of diversity at Texas State and beyond.

Other popular MSA programs are the African American Leadership Conference and the All Male Conference. MSA also observes and schedules/supports activities to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Diversity Month, Diwali, Native American History Month, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Cesar Chavez Day, Sakura Festival, Juneteenth, Multicultural Graduation Celebration (a ceremony to recognize underrepresented students who complete a degree at Texas State), and Lavender Graduation.

***SPIRITUAL SUPPORT***

For many students, having spiritual support is important. The support some students seek is as simple as a safe and comfortable environment in which to pray. Others seek programs that provide opportunities to participate in informal peer groups or formal church groups that support spiritual expression and growth. Spiritual connections serve as an outlet for the expression of beliefs as well as provide opportunities for students to discuss academic course content with their peers outside of class. These connections also foster a sense of belonging.

College is a place where students are encouraged to be themselves while having an open mind to learn not just class material but also about themselves and those around them. But even in this environment, people may sometimes be shy when it comes to talking about religion or spirituality, often for fear of offending someone whose beliefs may be different. There are offices on campus and other resources that can help students looking for a spiritual connection.

Student organizations, some affiliated with area churches, are registered with the Campus Activities and Student Organizations office. Students can find these registered organizations by searching in the "Student Organizations" section of the CASO website.

Dean of Students Office (DOS) can provide students a flier with the names of Ministries on or around campus that have offered to serve students seeking spiritual support or a spiritual home while at Texas State. To request the Ministerial Alliance flier or religious holy day class absence notification forms, visit, call, or e-mail the DOS office. Students and parents have taken advantage of this information when encountering a crisis that they felt could be made easier to overcome with the support of any one of these organizations.

Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) advises the Interfaith Council, a collaboration of all USAC spiritual and religious organizations, and can also help students find a spiritual home. When students do not find a group, church or center that meets their religious or spiritual needs, MSA can help connect them with peers or area organizations.

The yellow pages of the local phone book are a good source for finding a church in the San Marcos community. A number of churches have chapels, centers, or host services on or near campus.

**Parent Tip**: Parents can support their children by reminding them to pray and letting them know prayers are being said for them.

### *LEARNING/RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES*

Not all students who go to college move out of their parents' home. When students do move away, studies show that those who live on campus are more likely to graduate than those who live off-campus. This can be attributed to these students focusing more on school and engaging in activities that support their academic endeavors than on work. Living on campus gives students opportunities to connect in-class and out-of-class learning and to discuss class work with their peers outside of class. Students living on-campus can also benefit from more individualized instruction by tapping in to learning communities. These communities also facilitate connections with peers and university personnel that can help guide students through the college experience. This is particularly helpful to students who do not have an immediate family member who is familiar with the ins and outs of college.

For students who live on campus, the Department of Housing and Residential Life (DHRL) created "Living-Learning Programs" to further enhance the residential experience and build on the natural partnership between on-campus living and the academic curriculum. These include Residential College and Learning Communities.

Residential College is open to any new freshman. Participants take certain basic/required classes together, allowing them opportunities to learn and study together and support each other outside of their class as they work on similar projects. Residential College students must also participate in organized co-curricular activities. These activities give students the opportunity to develop a stronger sense of community, marketable and transferable skills, and mentoring relationships with upper-classmen, faculty and staff. In addition to the activities, each year 1-2 faculty members live in the residence halls housing Residential College which provides students easy access to a faculty member who can provide academic support as well as personal and professional mentoring.

Learning Communities are similar to Residential College but are for students who have declared certain majors or who are enrolled in certain programs at Texas State. In 2009-2010, these included Business, College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), Computer Science, History, Geography, Journalism and Mass Communication, Pre-Medical/Pre-Dental, Psychology, Terry Scholars, and University Honors. Students in most Learning Communities

take courses together and participate in educational activities designed around their shared academic and career interests. Every learning community is supported by an academic department or college which provides participants with increased access to the faculty and staff in their field of interest and resources relevant to their career goals.

For more information on Residential College and Learning Communities, visit the "Student Success" section of the DHRL website. For information on the campus living requirements, visit the University Housing Policy section.

**Parent Tip**: You can encourage your child by supporting whatever university sponsored extra-curricular activities in which he/she chooses to participate. You can show interest by asking in which activities or events their chosen organization will participate. There may be opportunities for you to participate in some of those activities if they have a parent weekend or end-of-year recognition component. If your child is on an athletic team or performance group, feel free to visit the campus and watch your child perform. Celebrate your student's success outside of the classroom as much as the success inside of the classroom. This will help encourage them to seek greater responsibilities and success.

# MAINTAINING FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The support that families provide to their children doesn't, or shouldn't, end when the student leaves for college. Students are likely to establish relationships with peers and university personnel that will encourage them in their academic pursuits. However, family support and validation of their decision to attend college is just as important during the college years as in the years leading to college enrollment. If students feel encouraged by their families, they are more likely to be more motivated to succeed.

When students leave home to attend an out-of-town college, parents and students may need to exert additional efforts in order to stay connected. Connections can be in the form of direct contact with the student and connections to the university. The use of technology can facilitate communication with both.

### *STUDENT/PARENT COMMUNICATION*

Parental support is important to student success. When students have good relationships and communicate with their parents, they adjust better to college, perform better academically, develop better coping strategies, and when they need help are more likely to reach out to family members. Communication is not limited to talking face to face during home visits. In fact, during the first few weeks of the semester, parents should encourage their students to stay on campus (or their college town) to further develop and strengthen the relationships talked about in the previous section of this handbook. During Thanksgiving week, students will have an extended weekend that will allow them to get more out of their visit with family while being part of any family holiday traditions. Students and their families can stay in touch via phone (land or cellular lines), e-mail, and believe it or not, letters (yes, the kind sent through "snail mail"). Family communication does not have to be limited to parents – students should stay in touch with any family member that is supportive of the decision to go to college. Not only can they offer encouragement, they are likely to enjoy and appreciate receiving an update on the progress towards a college education.

By staying in touch, family members can gauge if the student seems to be having difficulties and help connect them to the resources on campus available to overcome those challenges. Having a communication plan can itself help parents know if their child may need assistance (for example, if a student does not return calls or stops e-mailing for an extended period).

Students who get a cellular phone for the first time when they go to college should think about where they should get their cell phone and how that may affect long distance charges for those calling them. While cellular plans may easily allow cell phone users to call anywhere in the state at no additional cost, if parents use a land line to call a cell phone issued outside of their local calling area, they will incur long distance charges. If this is a concern, students may consider getting a cell phone with a number that would be considered local for their family.

During New Student Orientation, the Counseling Center will present information on how parents can support and motivate their students and help them resolve their own issues. Support

is not about resolving students' problems, it is about encouraging students to resolve their problems and to use the resources available to them. If parents believe their student is encountering difficulties or may need assistance but don't know how to intervene or where to turn for resources, they can call the Counseling Center for a telephone consultation. Staff at the Counseling Center can tell parents if it appears that the student should be encouraged to seek services with the Counseling Center or from any of the other offices that support students. The information presented by the Counseling Center to parents at NSO and during telephone consultations is not just for the benefit of parents, it benefits students because parents can remind students of the services. This is especially helpful when students do not remember the information they received on the same topic due to having received so much information at the same time (usually during NSO or PAWS Preview)..

***INSTITUTION/PARENT COMMUNICATION***

Aside from staying in touch with students, families can support their student by staying in touch with the university in order to be apprised of important dates and events.

To help parents before and after their student enrolls at Texas State, the University College has established a service where parents can call or e-mail their academic-related questions. Called "WebAsker," whenever parents have questions about university procedures, practices, programs, professors and their class policies, etc., they can send an e-mail or leave a voice mail message and University College staff will respond with answers and/or the names and contact information of individuals who can better answer the question or address the concerns. The WebAsker e-mail address is DN04@txstate.edu; the toll-free phone number is 888-245-WHAT (9428). NOTE: The staff members provide general information and not information specific to any one student.

During New Student Orientation (NSO), student move-in, or any time parents visit the Texas State campus, they are welcome to speak with the staff that will be working with their children. Many of the offices that provide support service to students will be at the NSO and Department of Housing and Residential Life (DHRL) staff will be available during student move-in at the beginning of the fall semester. Any time parents meet a staff member, they can ask for a business card that will provide that person's contact information in case parents have questions related to the person's area of expertise.

The Parents Association (PA), coordinated by the Office of Parent Relations, provides parents a link between home and campus by keeping parents informed about university goals, policies, programs and student activities. The PA can support and help parents when concerns arise by advising on academic matters and helping students find the necessary support to succeed academically and socially. Any time a member calls with a concern, the PA will work to find an answer on how that concern can best be addressed.

The PA hosts an annual Family Weekend in the fall often referred to as the "Family Roundup". This event allows families of students to become acquainted with the campus, academic departments, student services, and university traditions. Academic and administrative leaders are available at the event to speak with parents.

The DHRL communicates with parents through a newsletter sent one time per semester to parents of students who live on campus. The newsletter contains information that is also shared with students (usually via e-mail). By receiving timely information similar to what students get, parents can plan conversations relevant to what their children have experienced so far or will have to do in the coming months (for example, determining if the student can or will live off-campus in their second year).

For information on events and incidents that affect significant numbers of students or parts of campus, the university will post information on its internet homepage (www.txstate.edu) in addition to sending e-mails to students, faculty and staff. This applies to campus closures related to weather or any incident that may compromise the safety of the university community. In most cases, local area media will also be notified.

For information related to a specific office or service, websites are becoming the most convenient and informative sources of information. University departmental or service websites can generally be found by searching for them in the university's homepage. Information posted on websites often answer parents' questions and have the advantage of being available 24 hours/day. If parents still have questions after visiting a website, they can find contact information on the website to communicate directly with a person in that office during business hours.

Family members who don't have access to the internet or prefer to call but don't know a department or service's number can call the university switchboard, or operator, at 512-245-2111. There is no fee for this service, only what your telephone service provider may charge you if you are calling long distance or using calling plan minutes. The switchboard hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m.-noon.

For emergencies, the University Police Department (UPD) is available 24 hours/day at 512-245-2805.

Dear Parents,

In recent years, critical incidents at schools, including shootings or other emergency situations, have made national headlines. Texas State has established procedures for various emergency situations, including how to respond and how to communicate that information to those who need to know. These emergencies include weather related emergencies, for example school closures and approaching weather systems that have the potential to produce dangerous lightning, and other emergencies that threaten the health, safety and welfare of the university community.

During an emergency, priority is given to communicating with emergency responders and those potentially in harm's way. But, understandably, parents, even if they are hundreds of miles away, will want to know how to receive information if they suspect or know of a possible emergency. Here are some of the methods that the university will relay information.

In cases of school closures or class cancellations due to severe weather, announcements will be made through:

*The university homepage at www.txstate.edu
*E-mail to all students, faculty and staff (usually sent by University Police Department or the University News Service)
*Messages recorded on the university news hotline at 512-245-2424
*Voicemail messages sent to all campus telephones (land lines)
*Local media announcements
*The Texas State weather emergency siren system

In cases of campus emergencies, the university can use all of the methods used to announce school closures and class cancellations and:

*Reverse 911
*An emergency sign board system (in normal conditions, these sign boards operate as digital clocks in the classrooms but during emergencies, the university police can broadcast emergency messages to all university classrooms in San Marcos and Round Rock or only to affected buildings)

For parents who live away from the San Marcos area, checking the university website and calling the university news hotline number will be the most effective. Parents are discouraged from calling the university (especially the police department) during an emergency unless they have information that will assist emergency responders. During an emergency, it is important that emergency responders be able to focus on the emergency at hand and not on fielding phone calls.

For more information on the Texas State emergency sign boards, weather warning system, and emergency contacts, visit the emergency procedures website at www.emergencyinfo.txstate.edu. The site includes information on how to respond to armed/disruptive individuals; bomb threats; fires; gas leaks, fumes, and vapors; hazardous materials spills; and weather emergencies.

## Emergency Contacts

| | |
|---|---|
| Police, fire or medical emergency | 911 |
| University Police Department (non-emergency) | 512-245-2805 |
| Fire (non-emergency) | 512-393-8460 |
| Student Health Center | 512-245-2161 |
| University Operator from university phone | 0 |
| University Operator from off-campus phone | 512-245-2111 |
| University recorded news bulletin | 512-245-2424 |
| Physical Plant (emergencies and after hours) | 512-245-2108 |
| Counseling Center | 512-245-2208 |

### *TECHNOLOGY*

Technology has clearly made it possible for families and friends to make more contacts at lower costs. Most of today's traditional college students grew up with access to cellular phones, e-mail, and internet-based social sites. Not all families, however, have equal familiarity with or access to these technologies.

Texas State, through its Information Technology division, offers resources that may be helpful in maintaining communication between students and their families. For students who live on campus, all residence halls are equipped with land lines and Ethernet connections; some rooms have one phone line for each resident. All students are issued an e-mail account to help students communicate with their peers, instructors and administrators. The e-mail account can be used by students to keep in touch with their families. Computer stations and labs are available throughout campus and wireless coverage is available campus-wide (indoors and outdoors). Students can use these facilities to access their university e-mail accounts as well as most other social networking sites and e-mail provider sites that the student may already be accustomed to using to keep in touch with family and friends. IT staff is available to answer policy questions, address service concerns, and consult with students interested in a career or employment in the area of information technology.

To understand how Texas State uses information technology to enhance campus life, visit the Educause Student Guide available under the "Quick Links" menu on the left hand side of the IT website. The guide contains information on, among other things, Academic Experience and Student Life.

IT provides students with assistance (technical support) for their computing and information technology related needs through the Information Technology Assistance Center (ITAC) which provides Software Licensing and Purchasing, Computer Repair, Phone Services, Computer Connectivity, Training and other services. These services are available via walk-in, telephone, e-mail, remote control, and live chat. For contact information, repair shop locations and service hours, visit the ITAC website and see the ITAC directory entry.

While Texas State cannot offer computer resources and e-mail accounts to students' families, the families may be able to use locally available computer and internet access services to communicate via e-mail. Public/city libraries, employee workstations, and community centers generally allow individuals to access free e-mail service providers such as Yahoo and Google.

*Dear Parents:*

*While all students go through a transition period from high school to college, FGCSs are likely to experience a more stressful transition. Minority students who were not part of a predominantly majority community may experience a bit of culture shock. If your child is one of these students, your support and communication will help ease the stress and anxiety.*

# EARLY INTERVENTION AND CRISES SERVICES

During their college years, students can encounter a wide variety of challenges. There are many services and resources at Texas State to help students overcome these challenges and stay on track towards achieving their goals. In most cases, students must make contact with the respective department or office to assert their desire to use that office or department's services. But, some of the services are more intrusive.

While some of the services clearly are meant to assist students through crises, others are implemented with the purpose of allowing faculty, staff, and peers to intervene prior to a situation becoming a full blown crisis. Some of these early intervention and crises services are described below.

### *GENERAL SERVICES*

The stresses of the transition to and rigors of college can result in a need for a variety of services. Most major universities provide these services to students for free or for moderate fees and may vary in intensity. Services often include counseling, medical, health/wellness, security and general support/advocacy.

The Texas State Counseling Center offers counseling and psychological services that range from support groups that help students by teaching them techniques to cope with negative feelings to individual counseling to help address serious mental health disorders. Most services are provided at no cost beyond service fees paid as part of enrollment. For students who require psychiatric services, psychiatric interns are available to provide services for a moderate fee. If the Counseling Center is unable to provide the level of services needed for a particular case, the student will be referred to outside service providers. These non-university service providers may offer services under students' insurance coverage or charge based on students' ability to pay (a sliding scale).

The Texas State Student Health Center (SHC) provides primary, women's and psychiatric healthcare services to university students. Students pay, along with their tuition, a medical service fee each semester that entitles them to unlimited access to Student Health Center services. Laboratory, digital radiography and pharmacy services are available onsite and are provided at moderate fees. Health insurance coverage is not required and students with urgent medical problems are evaluated and treated regardless of ability to pay.

Others services of the SHC include a 24 hours a day Ask-A-Nurse Advice Line, smoking cessation program, and health education information in a variety of media (ex., written, video, online, radio, television, interviews and presentations).

The Student Health Center provides a university-endorsed student health insurance plan for students without insurance or those seeking more affordable coverage. This plan is optional for most students, however, this or proof of coverage under a comparable health insurance plan is required for international students.

Dear Parents

Federal and state law prohibits the Counseling Center staff from acknowledging a student's participation in counseling services or any details of their case without the student first completing a written authorization form. Parents who wish to discuss or inquire about their student's case should encourage their child to complete the authorization form.

Even if a student does not complete the authorization form or is not a client of the Counseling Center, there are number of things parents can do to support and encourage their student.

1) Learn about some of the challenges students face during their transition to college. One way of doing this is to attend the session "Creating Success: Helping your student through the passage into college" offered to parents during summer orientation. If you are unable to attend the session or wish to review the topic, the PowerPoint presentation is available in the "For Parents" section of the Counseling Center's website.

2) Maintain in contact with the student during the academic year and be aware of different sources of student stress which occur during a particular time of the year. Parents can do this by asking for the "Parents Calendar" during summer orientation or requesting a copy from the Counseling Center (call or e-mail) while supplies last. The calendar identifies some of sources of stress and includes helpful campus services, advising offices, and other resources. Dates that are of particular interest to parents are highlighted in the calendar.

3) Referring a student for counseling. Parents can encourage their student to contact the Counseling Center for an initial consultation. On rare occasions, when a parent believes their student is more likely to utilize counseling services if the Counseling Center initiates contact with the student, a staff member may contact the student to discuss the parent's concern and invite him or her to an initial consultation. The staff member cannot require the student to schedule an appointment or utilize services. Counseling is a voluntary service – the student must be willing to participate. Privacy laws also apply when a parent refers their child for counseling.

4) Parents who suspect their children may be overwhelmed and in need of assistance but not know how to help may contact the Counseling Center for a phone consultation with a counselor. The counselor can share with the parent the resources that are available to students to address the specific concern raised, including whether or not counseling may be appropriate.

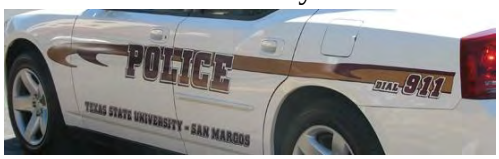
Student support staff is generally very willing to help students. Unfortunately, sometimes students may be hesitant to come forth with their questions and concerns. To help "break the ice," the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) has a Welcome Bobcats System. Volunteers, mostly VPSA division staff, call new students during the first days of the semester to welcome them to Texas State and offer to answer questions about academic services, opportunities to get involved on campus and adjustment issues.

The VPSA office offers support programs in different areas that are mentioned throughout this handbook. For military veteran and foster care alumni individuals and groups, the VPSA office will offer support and referrals on an as-needed basis

Student Justice, a component of the Dean of Students Office, is a program that can be particularly intrusive. The coordinator of this program has the responsibility of investigating alleged violations of the Texas State Code of Student Conduct (yes, even in college there are rules!). The coordinator may require students to visit the Dean of Students Office to address their conduct and impose sanctions on a student who is found responsible for a violation. These sanctions are intended to redress any consequences of student misconduct, provide a teachable moment for the student(s) involved, and deter the student from engaging in similar conduct in the future. The Coordinator may also require victims and witnesses of student misconduct to visit the Dean of Students Office to ensure that they are well, offer support and services, and ask for their opinion on how they would like to see an incident that affects them resolved.

The COSC is available online in the rules and policies section of the Student Handbook available in the Dean of Students website.

The University Police Department (UPD) is the primary source of protection for the Texas State community. All of the UPD officers are licensed by the State of Texas and have full law enforcement authority in any county in which the university owns or controls property.




UPD strives to create a safe and secure learning environment by providing traditional law enforcement and emergency response duties along with proactive educational and prevention programs. Among these programs are the Bobcat Bobbies & the Rape Aggression Defense (R.A.D.) system.

The Bobcat Bobbies is a safety escort program available from dusk to dawn, 7 days a week. This program allows any student walking alone at night to call 512-245-SAFE or 512-245-2890 for a safety escort on campus. This service is primarily intended for students walking to their car or residence hall after dark.

The R.A.D. system, a program of realistic self-defense tactics and techniques for women, teaches awareness, prevention, risk reduction, risk avoidance, and an introduction to basic defense training.

For more information on the Bobcat Bobbies, R.A.D., and other UPD services, visit the "Services" section of the UPD website

at www.police.txstate.edu. The "Safety Tips" section offers tips for safety at home, on campus, on foot, on the go, and in social situations. Finally, the "Parents" section offers tips to parents of college bound students.

The Student Recreation Center (SRC) may be simply described as a campus gym or the place where students can go for voluntary P.E. But, that would be over-simplifying. While, on the surface, the SRC is a place for students to engage in exercise and other physical activities, it also provides services and programs that stimulate growth, development and retention of students. The programs are opportunities for social interaction and leadership development by bringing together individuals with similar interests.

Enrolled students can access the SRC facilities and participate in programs that include: weightlifting and cardiovascular exercise equipment; basketball, volleyball, and racquetball courts; boxing room; equipment rental; towel, storage locker and lock service use; golf course and golf simulator; rockwall; swimming pool; intramural sports; sports clubs; and outdoor recreation (including a challenge course, camping facilities, and river recreation).

Students with visiting family members on campus have up to three family members as guests at the SRC with an access fee of $3 for children 3-15 and $6 for anyone 16 or older.

For more information on the Student Recreation Center and its services, visit the SRC website at www.campusrecreation.txstate.edu.

One area of concern for parents may be whether or not their student is eating well. While students will have to decide for themselves if they will eat their vegetables or not, Texas State does offer a variety of dining options. Most students living on campus will have a meal plan. To learn about the different meal plans, places to eat, menus and nutrition information, visit the university's food service provider's website at www.dineoncampus.com/txstate.

The Alcohol and Drug Resource Center provides support and assistance to students to help them achieve their emotional and personal objectives. By doing this, the ADRC supports and encourages healthy lifestyle choices for the university community at large. Students can talk to a counselor about themselves and behaviors which are a concern to them.

Students who are found responsible for an alcohol or drug offense by the Student Justice Office (or as a result of receiving an alcohol or drug citation) may be required to complete one or more of the courses and educational programs offered by the ADRC.

Like other types of professional counseling, all ADRC services are confidential. Enrolled students can receive free individual counseling, assessment and referral service. Appointments may be scheduled through the ADRC office in person, or by phone at: (512) 245-3601.

### *FIRST YEAR SEMINAR*

Many campuses have instituted a first year seminar course intended to acclimate students to the campus beyond what orientation programs are able to do. Texas State's program is a one-semester course, University Seminar (US) 1100, that new students are expected to take during their first semester. University Seminar instructors have good knowledge of the various resources available to help students succeed academically and personally.

US 1100 is designed to help students adjust to the challenges of life and learning at Texas State. The course includes class discussion, student participation, and involvement in the university community. University departments, speakers, and events are commonly used to connect students with helpful resources early in their academic career. Each year, some US 1100 classes are reserved for specific groups, for example, returning military veterans, international students, Emerging STARS. Others have been designated for students in Residential College, College Assistance Migrant Program, and for students in certain majors. In the past there have been US 1100 reserved for First Generation College Students. During New Student Orientation, students will meet with academic advisors. Students should discuss with their academic advisor if any of the reserved sections would be appropriate to take. If approved for one of the reserved courses, students should look for the corresponding designation during class registration, which also takes place during NSO. By signing up for US 1100 during NSO, students will be able to meet their instructor and other classmates during PAWS Preview.

**Parent Tip:** US 1100 staff will be at New Student Orientation to explain what the class entails and provide students with a US 1100 information brochure and their summer reading book. Feel free to visit with the US 1100 staff and ask any questions you may have.

### *EARLY ALERT SYSTEMS*

Sometimes students do not realize they need help dealing with challenges or may try to avoid addressing difficult situations. Unfortunately, this usually does not make things better. To help students take on these situations and remind them that there are people and services available to support them, universities may implement early alert systems. Texas State has such a system in place, the PAWS Alert.

PAWS (Positive Action With Students) Alert, a service of the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) to identify students in need of assistance in overcoming challenges related to academics, academic deficiencies, career, personal, social, physical and emotional issues. Through a web-based reporting system, faculty and staff submit their concerns; the VPSA office refers the student to the PAWS Alert-affiliated office best equipped to deal with the issue. A PAWS Alert-affiliated office may initiate contact with the student to offer assistance or the person who made the referral to determine the best way of connecting the student with appropriate resources.

Students who wish to submit a PAWS Alert can contact a faculty or staff member who can in turn enter the concern into the PAWS Alert system. The student can also call the VPSA office directly. Parents may call the VPSA office if they have concerns for their student and feel that a referral may help.

For more information on the PAWS Alert program, visit the “Retention” section of the VPSA website.

# ACADEMIC ADVISING AND SUPPORT

Other services that do not generally deal with crises but can be particularly important in preventing "academic crises" are academic advising and support services. These services help students stay on track towards completing their chosen degree plans.

### *ACADEMIC ADVISING*

Academic advising is a service offered to provide students with information directly related to their chosen degree. The primary purpose of this service is to keep students on track (taking the right courses & meeting other academic requirements) towards completing their degree. While all bachelor degrees will have a core curriculum (basics), each degree may have different classes and academic requirements, for example, required internships, grades or special projects.

Academic advisors do more than explain course requirements. They can help students plan the classes they will be taking each semester. The selection of courses can be affected by various factors. For example, some classes are only offered one time per year and others require that they be taken in a specific order because the material in the first may be necessary in understanding the material in the second. Academic advisors can help students select optional/elective courses bases on the students' strengths, weaknesses, and career goals. If students go home during the summers, advisors can let students know what classes they can take at a community college that will transfer to Texas State and satisfy their degree requirements.

It is important that students receive advising from their academic advisor. When students get advice from peers or staff members who are not academic advisors, the student may receive outdated information or information that does not apply to their degree. This can delay students' graduation date if the students take unnecessary courses or are put behind schedule in taking their required classes. Taking unnecessary courses and delaying graduation also has a financial cost for students in the form of tuition and fees.

All students should visit with their academic advisor one time per semester. Seeing an academic advisor does not mean that a student is in trouble. In fact, at one time or another, every student at Texas State will need to visit an academic advisor and seeing an advisor on a regular basis is more likely to help students stay on track and out of academic trouble.

At Texas State, which advisor a student sees will depend on the student's major. Each "college" at Texas State has an Advising Center that serves all the students who chose a major in that college. The colleges include Applied Arts, Business Administration, Education, Fine Arts & Communication, Health Professions, Liberal Arts, Science, and University College.

Students who are in the process of exploring and selecting a major are called undecided. Students who are interested in admission into the College of Business Administration but have

not yet been admitted to that program are called undecided-professional. Undecided, undecided-professional, and General Studies major students receive advising through the University College.

Students attending classes at the Round Rock Higher Education Center (RRHEC) receive advising through the One Stop Center at the RRHEC.

While there may be some differences between advising centers, there are some things they all have in common. All students, regardless of their major, must complete a core curriculum (basics). All advising centers will advise students on the core curriculum and on the required coursework for their chosen major. Students can consult with their advisor when they have questions about their degree plan, their chosen major or intended careers, and academic resources needed to succeed.

To schedule an appointment with an academic advisor call or visit the website of the appropriate academic advising center. Appointments should be scheduled in advance of their next registration so that students know if they have any registration holds (restrictions) and how to resolve those holds as well as to ensure that they have an appointment reserved before the demand for appointments increases. If students wait until their registration period, they may have difficulty getting an appointment when hundreds of other students are trying to see the same advisor. Below is a list of the Academic Advising Centers by college.

| College & Website | Location | Phone |
|---|---|---|
| University College<br>www.ucollege.txstate.edu/advising | Academic Services Building North 100 | 512.245.2218 |
| College of Applied Arts<br>www.advising.appliedarts.txstate.edu | Agriculture Bldg. 201 | 512.245.1490 |
| McCoy College of Business Administration<br>www.advising.mccoy.txstate.edu | McCoy Bldg. 115 | 512.245.1993 |
| College of Education<br>www.education.txstate.edu/advising | Education Bldg. 2143 | 512.245.3050 |
| College of Fine Arts & Communication<br>www.advising.finearts.txstate.edu | Old Main 110 | 512.245.1932 |
| College of Health Professions<br>www.health.txstate.edu/advising | Health Professions Bldg. 207 | 512.245.3506 |
| College of Liberal Arts<br>www.liberalarts.txstate.edu/advising | Flowers Hall 322 | 512.245.1852 |
| College of Science<br>www.science.txstate.edu/advising | Centennial Hall 202 | 512.245.1315 |
| Round Rock Higher Education Center<br>www.rrhec.txstate.edu/resources/osc/acadadvising | Round Rock, TX<br>By Appointment | 512.716.4035 |

Sometimes students will struggle academically. But, with a little bit of extra help and effort, they will recover and continue their progress towards graduation. When a student's grade point average (GPA) falls below a 2.0 (below a "C" average on our 4-point scale), the student is placed on academic probation. Students on academic probation are required to contact their advisor before they can register for their next set of classes. In addition, most students on academic probation will have to participate in the Partners in Academic Student Success (PASS) program.

PASS is a program provided by the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) division in collaboration with Academic Affairs. The program provides students on academic probation with workshops that can help them improve their grades and return to good academic standing. Academic Advising Centers provide one-on-one academic counseling during which students and advisors may discuss policies, learning strategies, and skill deficiencies. Advisors may require students to participate in the workshops offered by various student support offices as a condition of continuing their enrollment.

Students do not have to be on academic probation to take advantage of the sessions and workshops offered through the PASS program. For general information on the PASS program and Calendar of Events, visit http://www.vpsa.txstate.edu/common/pass.html.

### *ACADEMIC SUPPORT*

While classroom learning is at the core of the college experience, Student learning – and ultimately graduation – is facilitated when students work with each other and are active in shaping their academic experience.

Student cooperation can occur inside and outside of the classroom and includes sharing personal and academic concerns in an effort to resolve these them and participating in extra-curricular activities such as student organizations or university committees.

Active learning takes place when students go beyond the minimum requirements of attending classes and completing their assignments. This may include carefully reviewing and revising work before submitting it to their instructor, taking notes in class and reviewing them later, and using additional resources to reinforce and build that which is presented in class. Other activities that demonstrate active learning are participation in tutorial services and review sessions, whether organized by the university or student-led.

There are many services on campus available to support students in their academic endeavors, especially during those times that faculty members may not be present or available to help students with items such as homework, studying, group projects, and research. One of the important things to remember about academic support is that students must many times take the initiative to seek the help. Faculty may sometimes suggest that a student seek help but that will usually be because it is clear the student is not doing well. It is better to seek help when the student feels that help may be needed and not wait until it is obvious to the instructor. Academic support services include:

Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC), the most extensive support program on campus, is available to all students. This multi-faceted academic support program provides free tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, learning and study skills workshops, and learning specialist

consultations. Drop in tutoring services (no appointment necessary) are offered to students on an individual and group basis by peer tutors. Writing and math tutoring is available online. To help with some computer related courses, SLAC has an instructional computer lab. Supplemental Instruction is a form of tutoring that focuses on collaboration, group study and interaction for assisting students with specific courses that traditionally are difficult for students. Supplemental Instruction is provided by a student who has done well on the subject and attends the class that is being tutored. SLAC has handouts and materials to help with study skills development such as taking notes and tests, reducing procrastination, managing time utilizing textbooks, and test preparation both on-site and online.

SLAC is appropriately and conveniently located in the Albert B. Alkek Library. For more information on and schedules for SLAC services, visit the SLAC Website at www.txstate.edu/slac.

The Albert B. Alkek Library is the most important information resource on campus. While the library has many printed volumes (more than 1.4 million!), electronic journals and books, databases, and over a half-million microform & audio-visual materials, it offers much more. It houses the Student Learning Assistance Center, Instructional Technologies to help with multimedia production, a computer lab, an interlibrary loan service (so students can borrow material from other libraries at no cost), study rooms and a student lounge. The library even has laptops that students can check out.

For more information on the library services, including hours of service, visit the library website at www.library.txstate.edu.

Academic advisors, besides providing academic advising, are excellent resources for referrals to support resources on campus. Advising Centers typically have links to these resources on their website. The University Seminar, coordinated by the University College, has an excellent list of resources in the "Student Resources" section of its website. To see these, visit www.txstate.edu/ucollege/universityseminar.

Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) offers the grant-funded program, Student Support Services (SSS). SSS provides academic and educational support services to college students who meet first generation, low income and/or disability criteria, in order to increase retention and graduation rates of participants. SSS fosters an institutional climate supportive of the success of its students through student learning, development and educational experiences. All SSS services are free to students who qualify. To learn more about eligibility and apply, visit the "Affiliations" section of the MSA website at www.msa.txstate.edu.

The Collaborative Learning Center (CLC) is a free computer resource facility, tutoring lab, study space, and learning facility for students in the College of Science. Students from the Houston-Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Scholars Program (H-LSAMP) offer free walk-in tutoring in the CLC Tutoring Lab in biochemistry, biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, math, physics, and technology courses. For more information on this program, visit www.cs.txstate.edu/~hlsamp/CLC_home.htm.

The Math Lab, sponsored by the Department of Mathematics, provides math tutoring in a personalized atmosphere. The lab also has computers with specialized math software available

for individual math work and general academic needs. The lab is located at Derrick Hall Rm. 223 and can be reached at 512-245-2074. For more information, including a lab schedule, visit www.math.txsate.edu/resources/lab.

The Writing Center provides individual counseling in writing for Texas State students at any level of study, including, essays, technical writing, research papers, formal letters, in-class essay exams, and resumes. Tutors can also help students prepare for the Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation (GSP) exam. To learn more about the writing center, including hours and their online tutoring, or schedule an appointment, visit www.writingcenter.txstate.edu.

NOTE
(Parents & Students)

If you missed or need a refresher on the Student Learning Assistance Center's (SLAC) presentations – Academics at Texas State during New Student Orientation or College Note-taking during PAWS Preview – you can review the presentation on SLAC's website at http://www.txstate.edu/slac/. They are in the "Presentations" section.

Also, SLAC is available to parents and students for consultations on what services are available and may serve a student best depending on the assistance the student appears to need. SLAC can refer students to services outside of what SLAC offers.

SLAC does not have access to student grades. Any information SLAC provides to parents will be based on what the parent shares and responses will be about services available, not what services students have utilized.

# SPECIAL NEEDS AND POPULATIONS

Diversity, traditionally, has been thought of as differences in race or ethnic backgrounds and equal access to women. On college campuses, diversity increasingly includes individuals with disabilities and individuals who are Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transsexual (GLBT). Critical to being successful in college is having access to facilities and services and feeling safe.

### *DISABILITY SERVICES*

Individuals with physical limitations, mental disorders, and learning disabilities may encounter unique challenges, yet, disabled students are increasingly able to access a higher education. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 made campuses more accessible to students with physical disabilities and Texas State is no exception.

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) ensures that students with disabilities have equal access to all university programs and activities. This is done by coordinating academic accommodations and support services, promoting independence and self-advocacy, and providing information and referral to appropriate resources. ODS services include disability screenings, sign language and oral interpreting, audio textbooks, captioning (speech to text), adaptive computer technology, disability management counseling, advocacy, internships and career opportunities, and testing accommodations. The office fosters a supportive and inclusive educational environment through partnerships with faculty and staff and by promoting disability awareness among the university community.

The ODS can provide information to students on campus accessibility. Students can request the information in person, by phone, by e-mail, or by visiting the "Campus Resources" section of its website. The information covers:

*Campus Terrain* – It is hilly! The website links to campus maps that include accessible directions, parking and entrances for most campus buildings. For the best routes depending on mobility impairments, contact the ODS office.

*University Housing* – Students with disabilities can request housing accommodations. The ODS website provides a link to the Department of Housing and Residential Life "Requests for University Housing Accommodations Based on Disability-Related Needs."

*Fire and Emergency Evacuation* – Every building on campus has an evacuation plan for emergencies. Faculty and staff have a general responsibility to assist and require students to evacuate. The ODS website offers a "Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Persons with Disabilities" that students, especially those with mobility impairments, should be familiar with.

*Gender Neutral Restrooms* – The university has accessible gender neutral restroom facilities throughout the campus for those with special needs. Locations of those restrooms are listed at www.ods.txstate.edu/Student-Resources/Services/Gender-Neutral-Restrooms.

*Parking* – Parking for disabled persons is available throughout campus. The website describes the policy for parking legally on campus, especially in designated disabled parking spaces.

*Service/Assistance Animals* – While pets are generally prohibited in the classroom and campus residence halls, there are accommodations available to individuals requiring the use of a service/assistance animal on campus. The website provides the procedures for service animals.

*Transportation* – The Bobcat Tram, the university's student transportation system, includes buses equipped with lifts to meet Federal ADA requirements. These buses provide transportation on campus and to areas nearby, including major student apartment communities. The website provides links to the Bobcat Tram and Auxiliary Services websites for students who need additional information or special accommodations.

*Message to parents with disabilities:*

*Located on a hill, our campus is not always the easiest one in which to get around. When visiting us or your student, you are encouraged to visit the Office of Disability Services (ODS) website for tips on parking and building accessibility. One event we hope you will attend is your student's graduation. If you or any member of your family will be attending graduation, please visit the "Commencement" information in the "Campus Resources" section of the ODS website. It provides information on recommended arrival times, parking, shuttle services, accessible seating, and sign language interpreting services.*

Scholarships

There are various university scholarships designated for students with disabilities. The scholarships range from $250-$1000. In addition, organizations outside of the university offer scholarships in values of up to $10,000. For information on these scholarships, including how to apply, click on "General Information" in the "Student Resources" section of the ODS website.

**Parent Tip**: Generally, the parents of students with disabilities have been very involved in their children's educational endeavors. From K-12, parents have full access to student records. In college, parents should continue to provide support and encouragement to their students but understand that privacy laws and accommodations are different than K-12. The Office of Disability Services website offers "Parent Information" to parents to help make the transition from high school to college smoother (www.ods.txstate.edu/Parent-Information). The information includes tips on how parents can help their student and highlights of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The website also explains the difference between the services/accomodations students may have received in public schools under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and what they may receive in college under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. For additional information on FERPA, see this handbook's section on the topic.

To Do: Students whose disability may have affected their academic record and worry about the competitiveness of their application for admission to Texas State can talk about how their disability affected their K-12 educational experience when answering the essay question on any challenges you may have faced in your life. For students who do not meet the standard admission requirements may qualify for conditional admission and participation in the Emerging STARS program.

F.Y.I. ODS' philosophy in providing services is one of self-advocacy. This helps students develop life-long habits and skills to help them succeed in their academic, personal, and professional lives. Like all other students, individuals with disabilities will sometimes make mistakes. An essential part of the learning process is the ability to learn from and fix those mistakes. With this in mind, ODS recommends that students with disabilities contact the office during the application process to see what accommodations they could expect and decide if they are comfortable with their selection of school and confident that the accommodations will facilitate their success. For students with disabilities who do enroll at Texas State, ODS recommends that they take the class EDP 1350 during their first semester.

Students who manage a disability or mental disorder with medication should be careful to remain on their regimen on their own since parents will typically not be on hand everyday to monitor this treatment. Students should also plan how they will continue with any medical treatment they are receiving – will they return home to see your medical provider(s) or will they begin seeing someone on campus or the surrounding community?

Aside from securing accommodations to help ensure their success, students registered with ODS also have the ability to register early for classes. ODS serves students with disabilities, who suspect may have a disability, or have a temporary disability. To learn more about ODS, the services it provides and additional information on resources for students with disabilities and their families, visit the ODS website at www.ods.txstate.edu (see directory). The

website includes information for prospective students, an ODS Student Handbook, and a Handbook for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the "Student Resources" section.

### *GENDER IDENTITY/SEXUAL ORIENTATION*

The number of students identifying themselves as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transsexual (GLBT) has grown and today's traditional college-aged generation is described as more open to non-traditional sexual identities. Still, the close quarters of campus residence halls and past experiences of discrimination or hostility may cause anxiety in GLBT students as they transition to college.

The Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) division, through a team composed of members from different student support offices, coordinates an Allies Program. The Allies of Texas State program aims to create and sustain "safe places" where LGBTQ persons can speak with an Ally in confidence and without fear of being judged. The person in that safe place will work to help them address any concerns they may have or direct them to the person/office that can. Like the Office of Disability Services helps ensure that students with disabilities have access and can participate in all aspects of campus life, so does the Allies program for GLBT students. The Allies program does this by providing information, trainings, and social gatherings; honoring diversity; and fostering a welcoming campus environment.

The multi-colored placard identifies "safe places" on campus. For a list of Allies, visit the "About Us" section of the Allies website at http://www.txstate.edu/allies/.

For students whose questions about or their experience related to their sexual identity strain their academic success, personal development, or personal relationships, the Counseling Center can offer individual counseling. In addition, students can participate in a Counseling Center sponsored and led group that fosters an inclusive and supportive environment where students can share their experiences with each other. Individual and support groups can help students as they develop their gender and sexual identity. For Counseling Center contact information see the directory section of this handbook.

# GLOSSARY/CONCEPTS

College will be a new experience for students. With this new experience will come new terminology or "campus lingo." Knowing the words in this glossary will be helpful for students in their new environment. By knowing these words, parents will be better able to understand their children's experience when they hear these words.

Academic Probation – An indication that a student's Texas State cumulative GPA has fallen below 2.0. Students on academic probation must raise their grades to a 2.0 Texas State cumulative GPA or better. Students who do not improve their grades during the following semester of being placed on probation will face Academic Suspension unless granted an extension by their academic dean. Not to be confused with Disciplinary Probation.

Academic Suspension – A suspension from the university based a student's inability to improve their Texas State cumulative GPA to 2.0 or higher after being on Academic Probation. Academic Suspensions are for a specified period of time or until an academic department reinstates the student based on an appeal or bringing the grade to 2.0 or higher during summer enrollment. Not to be confused with Disciplinary Suspension.

Allies – A program that trains students, faculty and staff on the challenges faced by members of the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) community in an effort to provide "safe places" where LGBTQs can seek assistance without fear of being judged. The term *Ally* is also used to refer to a person or office that is committed to helping LGBTQ persons succeed and have equal access to all aspects of the college experience. For more information on the Allies program at Texas State or issues faced by LGBTQ issues, see page 49).

Bobcat Build – An annual, student-led, large-scale community service event where Texas State students and employees give back to the San Marcos community. Hundreds of volunteers work on various sites ranging from individual homes of low socio economic status residents to large public facilities. Visit http://www.bobcatbuild.txstate.edu/ for more information.

Buckley Amendment – see FERPA.

Buildings – most buildings on campus have abbreviations that are used on maps, schedules, or other university materials. For a list of all building names and abbreviations and a map/picture of the building, see the Building Master List at www.maps.txstate.edu/campus/building.html.

College – There are two meanings for college. The first one refers to an educational institution that awards degrees at a level beyond college. There are different types of colleges such as community and junior colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and vocational schools and each offers a different type of degree and experience. The following website for Adventures in Education (a program of Texas Guaranteed, listed in the useful links section of this handbook) provides information that explains the differences between these types of colleges: http://www.aie.org/planning-for-college/index.cfm.

The second meaning for college refers to one of several organizational units within the university that groups smaller departments based on their related majors and subjects. There are eight undergraduate colleges at Texas State: Applied Arts, Business Administration, Education, Fine Arts & Communication, Health Professions, Liberal Arts, Science, and General Studies. The Graduate College coordinates the admission of students seeking a master's or graduate degree after they have completed their bachelor's, or undergraduate, degree.

Common Experience – A year-long initiative at Texas State designed to cultivate a common intellection conversation and to foster a sense of community across the campus and university community. Each year the Common Experience theme is different. New students receive their Common Experience summer reading book during New Student Orientation. Various activities, including high profile national speakers are scheduled throughout the year to enhance the Common Experience.

Commuter – A student who does not live on campus. Rather than living in a dormitory or university apartment, commuter students travel from an off-campus residence using their own transportation or the university's student bus transportation system.

Convocation – An annual ceremony at the beginning of each fall semester where faculty, staff, student leaders, and community members welcome new students to Texas State.

Core Curriculum – A set of courses that serve as the common educational foundation for all students. These courses are commonly referred to as "the basics". The core curriculum makes up about 1/3 of each undergraduate degree program. Some courses are specifically required (for example English 1310 & 1320) while others are presented as electives (choose one of eight different math courses).

Credit Hour – Also known as Semester Credit Hour or SHC, as a rule, the number of credit hours assigned to a course indicating the number of hours the class meets each week. A three-hour course normally meets for three hours a week; it might, for example, meet from 1-2 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday. Lab and PE/PFW classes are the exception; they generally meet for longer periods of time.

Dead Day – Any day between the last day of classes and the first day of final exams. Dead days are scheduled to allow students time to prepare for final exams.

Dean – There are two types of Deans at Texas State. One is the Dean of Students (DOS). There is only one Dean of Students and this person oversees various important functions and student services. The Dean of Students' office serves as a clearinghouse to refer students to appropriate campus offices that can help them address their concerns. DOS staff members advise, mediate and conduct judicial reviews. They also educate and support students and student organizations, provide legal advice, conduct judicial reviews of alleged student misconduct, notify faculty of extended absences for family emergencies, illnesses, or deaths in a student's immediate family, and notify faculty of class absences by students for religious holy

days. The office publishes and is responsible for the enforcement of the Code of Student Conduct.

The second type of Dean is an Academic Dean. Every college (see definition of college in this glossary) has a person, or Dean, who serves as the director or supervisor for that college. When a student is not able to resolve an academic matter at the level of the instructor or the departmental chair, the matters is usually addressed by the Dean of the department involved. There are eight undergraduate college deans and one Graduate College dean. These matters include grievances and grade disputes.

Disciplinary Expulsion – Permanent separation of a student from the university for disciplinary reasons. An expulsion from Texas State bars a student from ever enrolling in any of the schools that are part of the Texas State University System. See *TSUS* in this glossary for more information on the Texas State University System.

Disciplinary Probation – The conditional enrollment status of a student for disciplinary reasons. Enrollment is conditioned upon adherence to university policies, particularly the Code of Student Conduct. A probation period is for a definite length of time during which a student may not hold an executive student organization office or represent the university in any special honorary role.

Disciplinary Suspension – Separation of a student from the university, for disciplinary reasons, for a definite term. The term may range from one semester to several years. During a disciplinary suspension from Texas State, students are barred from enrolling in any of the schools that are part of the Texas State University System. See *TSUS* in this glossary for more information on the Texas State University System.

Dorm or Dormitory – see Residence Hall

Drop – To reduce the number of hours in which a student is enrolled by deleting a course(s) from the current semester's class schedule but remaining enrolled in at least one hour of coursework. The date a student drops a class will determine if the student receives a refund for tuitions and fees associated with the dropped course. To learn more about refunds for dropped courses, students should visit the "Student Services" section of the Student Business Services website at http://www.sbs.txstate.edu/. (See also Withdraw which is similar but should not be confused with each other.)

Faculty – Any professional who teaches a class for credit at Texas State and is responsible for assigning students a grade for the class. Faculty may hold different titles such as instructor, lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. In college, the word "faculty" is used instead of "teachers".

FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid, see page 69.

FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the federal law that requires universities to protect student records and privacy. For more information on FERPA, also known as the Buckley Amendment, see page 70.

Full-time enrollment or Full-time student – Enrollment in or an undergraduate student enrolled in at least 12 hours of semester credit hours.

GPA – short for Grade Point Average, is derived by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the number of credit hours attempted. Grade points are based on a system in which an A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, and F=0. The total grade points for a class is the number based on the grade multiplied by the number of credit hours for the class. For example, an A in a one-hour PE class would earn 4 points while a B in a three-hour course would earn 9 points. The points of all classes in a semester divided by the credit hours in that semester equals the semester GPA. The points of all classes attended at Texas State divided by all the credit hours at Texas State equals the Texas State cumulative GPA. The overall GPA includes the GPA for any transfer credits (earned at other colleges) and the Texas State cumulative GPA. Every time a student earns a semester GPA of 3.5 or higher, the student makes the Dean's List and a notation is made on the student's transcript. Whenever a student's Texas State cumulative GPA falls below 2.0, the student is placed on academic probation.

Grants – When referring to financial aid, grants are need-based awards given to students to help pay for college. Unlike loans, grants do not have to be repaid.

Loans – When referring to financial aid, money loaned to a student or parent meant to be used for college expenses and which must be repaid (with interest) when the student graduates or stops going to school for 6 straight months.

Mall – The pedestrian area between the LBJ Student Center and the Alkek Library. This area is often used by student organizations for fundraisers, recruitment and other activities. Other buildings in close proximity to the mall are the Health Professions Building, McCoy, Elliot Hall and Jones Diner.

Non-Traditional Student – Generally refers to an undergraduate student who is over 23 years old or did not enroll in college directly after high school. See also NTSO.

NTSO – Non-Traditional Student Organization, a chartered Texas State organization for Non-Traditional Students. In addition to undergraduate students over 23 years of age, the organization includes under its definition of non-traditional anyone who is under 17 years of age, currently/formerly married, a parent or guardian, employed full-time, disabled, a military veteran, or whose life experience separates them from the traditional student. For more information on NTSO visit http://www.lbjsc.txstate.edu/ntso/.

Office Hours – Scheduled times during the week when faculty members are available to provide students additional help outside of the classroom. During these times, faculty are available in

their offices to help, for example, by further explaining material presented in class, answering questions about assignments, discussing past or upcoming absences, or addressing any concern/opportunity related to the student's academic performance. Faculty members often are also available during other times by appointment or via phone. Visiting a faculty member during office hours is not reserved for addressing "problems". Office hours are a good time for students to introduce themselves to teachers, especially instructors of large classes which may not provide the opportunity for faculty and students to interact on an individual basis.

Ombudsman – A person recognized or designated by an organization to help individuals understand rules, policies, procedures, rights and responsibilities as well as offer suggestions when addressing conflicts between the organization and its members. The Dean of Students Office provides currently enrolled students Ombudsman Services to address university-related challenges, for example with instructors, employers, or any university department, in accordance with appropriate University Policies and Procedures Statements.

Part-time enrollment or Part-time student – Enrollment in or an undergraduate student enrolled in less than 12 hours of semester credit hours.

Prerequisite – A course that a student must take before taking another. For example, Math 2311 is a prerequisite for Math 2312. Not all students may be required to take Math 2312 but for those who do, they will also need to take Math 2311.

Probation – See Academic Probation and Disciplinary Probation

Quad – The campus' central pedestrian area. This area is located in the center of campus. Thousands of students walk through the quad every day to get to classes. The quad is surrounded by academic buildings with Old Main (the university's oldest building) on the east end and the Alkek Library on the west end. Other buildings on the quad include Centennial Hall, Derrick Hall, Flowers Hall, Taylor-Murphy Hall, Evans Liberal Arts Building, and Psychology Building. A slang word used to refer to the act of meeting friends or spending time between classes on the quad is Quadulate/Quadulating.

RA – Residence Assistant, a student hired to live in a residence hall to help students adjust to living on campus and to serve as a peer advisor. Residence assistants also have supervisory responsibilities in their residence hall.

Registrar's Office – The office primarily responsible for maintaining accurate student records, including contact information, enrollment history, grades, and transcripts. This office creates the schedule of classes (the list of all the classes that will be offered each semester) and is responsible for the registration system.

Registration – The time when students register for the classes they will take. New students must go through an advising session with an Academic Advisor during New Student Orientation before reserving their classes.

Residence Hall – Previously commonly referred to as dormitories, or simply dorms, residence halls are the traditional housing option for new students. These buildings include "traditional" or "community" halls (2 students in one room with community bathrooms shared by several rooms), suite halls (usually two students in a room and 2-4 rooms connected by a shared bathroom), and super-suite halls (with 1-2 students in a room with 2-4 rooms sharing a common living area and with semi-private bathrooms, usually two students per bathroom).

Student Center – The Lyndon Baines Johnson Student Center, LBJ Student Center, LBJ, or simply student center, is centrally located between Alkek Library and the McCoy College of Business, the LBJ Student Center has something for everyone, musical entertainment, educational lectures, video arcade, shopping, dining, computer labs, study areas, rest areas, pool hall, and student services such as Career Services, Counseling Center, and Campus Activities for Student Organizations. Many student organizations have their meetings in the Student Center. Often referred to as the living room or game room of campus – if the campus was a house!

SVC - Student Volunteer Connection, a chartered student organization that promotes civic engagement through service learning and volunteer opportunities in the community.

Syllabus – The course agenda that will be used by a faculty member for the semester. A syllabus generally includes the faculty member's office hours, required and optional books, grading formula, reading and homework assignments and deadlines, class expectations, assignment instructions, and attendance policy. The syllabus is intended to provide all or most of the information that a student will need on the first day of class to understand what will be expected to successfully complete the course. If after reviewing a syllabus, a student has concerns about being able to meet the expectations or any conflicts with other academic or personal commitments, the student should speak with the instructor. If the conflict cannot be resolved, it may be best to consider dropping the class and registering in a class at a different time, with a different teacher, or at a later semester.

THECB – Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, a state agency that *provides leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system* in an effort to ensure the quality of a Texas college degree and expand access to college for Texans. THECB serves a function similar to the one served by the Texas Education Agency for K-12 schools. For more information on THECB, visit www.thecb.state.tx.us/.

TSUS – See Texas State University System

Texas State University System – The university system of which Texas State is a part. In addition to Texas State (San Marcos & Round Rock campuses), the TSUS includes all campuses of Lamar University, Sam Houston State University, Sul Ross State University, Lamar Institute of Technology, and Lamar State College. For more information on the TSUS and links to each of its member schools, visit www.tsus.edu.

Undecided – When referring to majors, the term means to be in the process of exploring and selecting a major. It is also used to refer to the students who have not chosen a major.

Undecided-professional – When referring to majors, the term means to be interested in admission into the McCoy College of Business Administration. Students who want to declare a major in the College of Business Administration must declare Undecided-professional until they are admitted into the college.

UPD – University Police Department

West Campus – The part of the university located west of Comanche St. This area includes the Student Recreation Center, West Campus Athletic Fields, Harris Dining Hall, The Glade Theatre, and the Speck Parking Garage. Residence halls on West Campus include Bexar, Blanco, and San Marcos Halls; Apartments include Campus Colony and Comanche Hill. This area also includes the Family and Consumer Science, Joanne C. Mitte, Roy F. Mitte, and Jerome Supple Science academic buildings. Visit http://www.fss.txstate.edu/planning/map/west.html for a map of this area.

Withdraw – To reduce the number of hours enrolled in to zero by deleting all course from one's class schedule in the current semester. When a student withdraws from classes will determine if the student receives a refund for tuitions and fees. To learn more about refunds, students should visit the "Student Services" section of the Student Business Services website at http://www.sbs.txstate.edu/ (See also Drop which is similar but should not be confused with each other.)

Work-study – When referring to financial aid, a dollar amount offered to students based on need but which students must earn through hourly employment. Unlike loans, this type of aid does not have to be repaid. Unlike grants, the money is not available upfront but must be earned throughout the semester. Work study income can help students have a modest, but steady income while at school to help cover their monthly living expenses and incidentals such as toiletries, entertainment and travel.

# DIRECTORY & INDEX

This directory lists departments cited within the handbook that were double-underlined (and the page numbers). Some entries have only website and contact information while others have additional information.

The mailing address to any department on campus is:
Office Name & Location
601 University Dr.
San Marcos, TX 78666

For a map and picture of any campus building and its abbreviation (or to learn what a building abbreviation means) see the Building Master List at www.maps.txstate.edu/campus/buildings.html.

| Admissions | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 4-6, 9, 11, 13 (Also see New Student Orientation) |
| Website | www.admissions.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | admissions@txstate.edu; for the Visitors Center, visitorscenter@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2364; Visitors Center, 512-245-8871 |
| Fax | 512-245-8100 |
| Location | The Admissions Office is housed in its own building at 429 N. Guadalupe St. The Visitors Center is housed in LBJ Student Center Suite # 3-19.1. |

Interested students can begin exploring Texas State by visiting the University's Web Homepage at www.txstate.edu. For more specific information on admissions, visit the admissions website (www.admissions.txstate.edu). There, students can review the admission requirements and learn what documentation and forms they will need to complete their application. The website includes information on different admissions categories for students who do not meet the general requirements or did not earn a typical high school diploma, for example, students who completed a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or were home-schooled. Information on residency/citizenship requirements and options is included.

At the admissions website students can access the admissions application used for all Texas public schools (through www.applytexas.org) and check the status of their application. For those who don't have readily available internet access, a paper application is available through your high school guidance/academic counselor but may take longer to be processed.

Go to the admissions website to learn what degrees are offered at Texas State and to plan a campus visit, whether with your family or as part of a school group. The "Visit Campus" section has directions and information on campus tours, open house (Bobcat Days), and the Visitors Center.

NOTES:

| Alkek Library (Albert B. Alkek) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 44 |
| Website | www.library.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | library@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2686 |
| Fax | 512-245-0392 |
| Location | The library is housed in its own building. |
| NOTES: | |

| Campus Activities and Student Organizations | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 24, 27 |
| Website | http://www.lbjsc.txstate.edu/caso/about/mission.html |
| E-mail | campusactivities@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-3219 |
| Fax | - |
| Location | LBJ Student Center Suite 4-11.1. |
| NOTES: | |

| Career Services | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 20 |
| Website | www.careerservices.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | CareerServices@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2645 |
| Fax | 512-245-3993 |
| Location | LBJ Student Center Suite 5-7.1. |
| NOTES: | |

| Counseling Center | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 10, 30-31, 34, 36-37, 49 |
| Website | www.counseling.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | counselingcenter@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2208 |
| Fax | 512-245-2234 |
| Location | LBJ Student Center Suite 5-4.1. |

The Counseling Center helps students overcome a variety of personal, social, career, and academic issues that call for assistance beyond advice provided by friends and family. This is done through individual, group, and relationship counseling; crisis and consultative sessions; and informational presentations about student mental health issues. By overcoming emotional and psychological problems, students are better able to succeed in school and develop personally.

In individual counseling, a student can discuss a variety of issues. This is a short-term service, however, if a student needs long-term services, the counseling center can refer a student to an appropriate outside agency.

In Group Counseling, students participate in therapy groups after an initial pre-screening appointment. Like in individual counseling, group counseling is strictly confidential. There are groups for a variety of topics including: First Generation College Students Support; Gender Identity; Support for Student Veterans; Anger Management; Anxiety; and Adult Children of Alcoholics.

Counseling Center services are provided at no cost to currently enrolled students. To schedule an Initial Consultation (ICON), call or visit the Counseling Center.

For students who are not ready to participate in counseling services but wish to learn more about typical issues or problem they or their peers may be experiencing, the Counseling Center maintains a "Self-Help" section on its website with links to an extensive virtual pamphlet collection.

Emergency Help

During business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., students in need of urgent psychological assistance should call the Counseling Center. An on-call counselor is available during those times to assist.

After business hours, students can call the Avail Crisis Hotline (Toll Free) at 1-877-466-0660 and identify themselves as a Texas State University student. This service can provide helpful information, make referrals, and (if needed) inform the Hays County Mobil Crisis Team for follow up.

Other emergency contact numbers are available on the Counseling Center's website under "Emergency Info."

NOTES:

| Dean of Students (DOS) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 27, 38, 51-52 |
| Website | www.dos.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | dos@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2124 |
| Fax | 512-245-8268 |
| Location | LBJ Student Center Suite 5-9.1. |

The DOS office acts as a clearinghouse to refer students and their families to appropriate campus offices. Through its services, it strives to foster a welcoming environment that is inclusive, safe and conducive to learning. The DOS reviews and recommends action for student conduct issues at the individual, group and organization level. The office notifies faculty of student's extended absences due to family emergencies, illnesses or deaths within the immediate family as well as for religious holy days. The DOS office publishes the Texas State Student Handbook. Departments of the DOS include Student Justice, Ombudsman, Emergency Services, Attorney for Students, and Leadership Programs. The DOS advises two chartered student organizations: Associated Student Government and Student Foundation.

NOTES:

| Department of Housing and Residential Life (DHRL) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 22, 28-29, 31-32, 46 |
| Website | www.reslife.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | reslife@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2382 |
| Fax | 512-245-7619 |
| Location | J.C. Kellam, Suite 320/380 |

DHRL is responsible for all residence halls on campus (commonly referred to as dorms). Visit the website to learn more about the University Housing Policy, housing options and rates, and how to make Texas State your home away from home – literally! The website has information to help "Prospective Residents" make their residence hall reservation and information for "Current Residents" on how they can (and can't) personalize their living space. Included in the website is an "Informed Families" section.

NOTES:

| Educational Talent Search (ETS) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 7, 8 |
| Website | www.msa.txstate.edu (under "Affiliations") |
| E-mail | - |
| Phone | 512-821-0025 (Austin) |
| Fax | 512-821-0027 (Austin) |
| Location | 7901 Cameron Road, Building #3, Suite 360, Austin, TX 78745 |

The Texas State ETS serves Travis County. If you live outside of Travis County, ask your school counselor or GO Center representative about the ETS program nearest you.

NOTES:

| Financial Aid and Scholarships (FAS) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 15-20 |
| Website | www.finaid.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | - |
| Phone | 512-245-2315 |
| Fax | 512-245-7920 |
| Location | J.C. Kellam, Suite 240 |

For answers to many financial aid questions, 24 hours a day, visit FAS' FA Answer Bank at http://txstate.custhelp.com.

NOTES:

| Information Technology (IT) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 34 |
| Website | http://www.vpit.txstate.edu/ |
| E-mail | - |
| Phone | 512-245-9650 |
| Fax | 512-245-1226 |
| Location | J.C. Kellam, Suite 940 |

The Information Technology Division, comprised of Technology Resources, Instructional Technologies Support, and Alkek Library, strives to provide effective leadership and support for the management of information services that enhance teaching, research, student learning, and administrative activities.

NOTES:

| Information Technology Assistance Center (ITAC) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 34 |
| Website | www.tr.txstate.edu/itac |
| E-mail | itac@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-ITAC (4822) |
| Fax | - |
| Location | Math Computer Science (MCS) Building, 2nd floor |
| For live chat, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., visit http://livechat.tr.txstate.edu<br><br>NOTES: | |

| Mentoring Program | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 26 |
| Website | www.vpsa.txstate.edu (under "Programs and Services") |
| E-mail | mentoring@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2152 |
| Fax | 512-245-7979 |
| Location | J.C. Kellam, Suite 980 |
| The Mentoring Program is a program of the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA). More information on the program, including how to join is available in the "Programs and Services" section of the VPSA website. While students can sign up for the program at any time during their first year, It is recommended that they do so after they are accepted to Texas State and prior to their arrival. This helps ensure that when the students arrives for their first semester, they will have somebody on campus ready to help them on a one-on-one basis. If an applicant requests it, the program staff will try to match new students with a mentor of similar major/academic area of interest, gender, and/or race/ethnicity.<br><br>NOTES: | |

| Multicultural Student Affairs (MSA) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 7-8, 19, 25-27, 44 |
| Website | www.msa.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | msa@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2278 |
| Fax | 512-245-1454 |
| Location | LBJ Student Center Suite 5-2.1 |

One of the goals of MSA is to provide opportunities for underrepresented and first generation college students succeed in a culturally diverse and global society. It meets this goal, in part, by offering programs that help recruit underrepresented and FGCSs and by supporting them through their years at Texas State with the goal of helping them reach graduation.

NOTES:

| New Student Orientation (NSO) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 11-12, 22, 30-31, 40 |
| Website | www.admissions.txstate.edu (under "Admitted Students") |
| E-mail | nso@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-3655 |
| Fax | 512-245-8100 |
| Location | Admissions Building at 429 N. Guadalupe St. |

New Student Orientation is a program of the Admissions office.

NOTES:

| Office of Disability Services (ODS) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 46-49 |
| Website | www.ods.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | ods@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-3451 |
| Fax | 512-245-3452 |
| Location | LBJ Student Center Suite # 5-5.1. |

NOTES:

| Parents Association (PA) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 19, 31 |
| Website | www.txstate.edu/parents |
| E-mail | parents@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2395 |
| Fax | 512-245-1181 |
| Location | Hill House # 100 |

In the past, the association used membership funds to support the programs designed to assist student learning, to explore career possibilities and development, and to integrate students into social organizations that will round out their education. Now, the funds will continue to offer support to programs but will also be used for scholarship relief for endowments that have been negatively affected by the recent economic downturn.

Parents who want to learn about others' experiences being a part of the Parents Association can read "Success Stories" and "Parent Comments" on the association's website.

NOTES:

| PAWS Preview | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 12-13, 40 |
| Website | www.pawspreview.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | PAWSPreview@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-8295 |
| Fax | - |
| Location | - |

NOTES:

| Rural Talent Search (RTS) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 7-8 |
| Website | www.msa.txstate.edu (under "Affiliations") |
| E-mail | - |
| Phone | 512-245-8135; 1-800-710-9279 |
| Fax | 512-245-8589 |
| Location | Academic Services Building North (ASBN) # 308 |

The Texas State RTS serves Goodnight Middle School & San Marcos High School (both in San Marcos, TX) and Seguin High School (in Seguin, TX). If you do not attend these schools, ask your school counselor or GO Center representative about the RTS program nearest you.

NOTES:

| Student Health Center (SHC) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 34-36 |
| Website | www.healthcenter.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | healthcenter@txstate.edu; This e-mail is for general information about the SHC only. For medical questions, call a nurse at 512-245-2167, option 2. |
| Phone | See below. |
| Fax | See below |
| Location | The SHC is a medical clinic housed in its own building at 298 Student Center Dr. The mailing address is the university address (601 University Dr.). |

Clinic and Pharmacy Hours:

- Monday, Wednesday, Friday — 8 a.m. - 5 a.m.
- Tuesday, Thursday — 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Phone Numbers:

For Emergencies, call 911

- Appointments: 512-245-2167
- General Information: 512-245-2161, option 3
- Pharmacy: 512-245-3590
- After-Hours Nurse Advice Line: 512-245-2167
- Administration Fax: 512-245-3918
- Medical Records Fax: 512-245-9288
- Health Education Resource Center: 512-245-2309

The Student Health Center has the resources to provide health information that would be useful for class projects or research papers. Follow the link above to electronically submit your request.

NOTES:

| Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 22, 43-45 |
| Website | www.txstate.edu/slac |
| E-mail | - |
| Phone | 512-245-2515, office; 512-245-2996, lab |
| Fax | 512-245-3002 |
| Location | Alkek Library, 4th floor |

NOTES:

| Student Support Services | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 44 |
| Website | www.msa.txstate.edu (under "Affiliations") |
| E-mail | - |
| Phone | 512-245-2275 |
| Fax | 512-245-1623 |
| Location | LBJ Student Center, Suite 5-6.1 |

SSS Serves students who need academic support and meet one or more of the following: First-generation college student (neither parent has a four-year degree), meet U.S. Department of Education low income guidelines or have a documented physical or learning disability on file with the Office of Disability Services or Texas Rehabilitation Commission.

The SSS website has additional information, including application forms.

NOTES:

| Success Initiative Program (SIP) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 5 |
| Website | www.txstate.edu/tsip |
| E-mail | tsip@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-3942 |
| Fax | 512-245-7648 |
| Location | Academic Services Building North Rm. 101 |

The THEA website is www.thea.nesinc.com

NOTES:

| Testing, Research Support and Evaluation Center (TREC) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 4-5 |
| Website | www.txstate.edu/trec |
| E-mail | Call for the best e-mail address as this may change. |
| Phone | 512-245-2276 |
| Fax | 512-245-2903 |
| Location | Harris Dining Hall (Underground), Intersection of Moore & Read St. |

Harris Underground is located behind the student recreation center.

To find us, visit campus map at http://www.maps.txstate.edu/campus/buildings/hdh.html

For parking information, visit testing-research-evaluation/other/parking.html

NOTES:

| Upward Bound | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 7-8, 14, 25 |
| Website | www.msa.txstate.edu (under "Affiliations") |
| E-mail | - |
| Phone | 512-245-3838; 1-800-211-6829 |
| Fax | 512-245-7868 |
| Location | The Long House |

The Texas State Upward Bound serves students attending Lehman (Kyle, TX), San Marcos (San Marcos, TX) and Seguin (Seguin, TX) High Schools. If you do not attend these schools, live outside of Travis County, ask your school counselor or GO Center representative about the Upward Bound program nearest you.

NOTES:

| University College | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 31, 42, 44 |
| Website | http://www.txstate.edu/ucollege/ |
| E-mail | ucadvising@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-3579 |
| Fax | 512-245-8765 |
| Location | Academic Service Building North # 100 |

NOTES:

| University College Advising Center | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 8, 14 |
| Website | http://www.ucollege.txstate.edu/advising/ |
| E-mail | ucadvising@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2218 |
| Fax | 512-245-8765 |
| Location | Academic Service Building North # 100 |

"Ask an Advisor!" is available at the University College Advising Center's website.

NOTES:

| University Police Department (UPD) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 32-34, 38-39, 56 |
| Website | www.police.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | police@txstate.edu |
| Phone | For emergencies or crimes in progress, call 911.<br>During business hours, 512-245-2890. Nights and weekends, 512-245-2805. |
| Fax | - |
| Location | Nueces Building (615 North LBJ Dr., San Marcos, TX 78666) |
| NOTES: | |

| University Seminar (US 1100) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 39-40, 44 |
| Website | http://www.txstate.edu/ucollege/universityseminar/ |
| E-mail | Call for e-mail address. |
| Phone | 512-245-7952 |
| Fax | 512-245-7908 |
| Location | Academic Services Building North, Room 410 |
| NOTES: | |

| Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) | |
|---|---|
| Cited on Pages | 13-14, 17, 23, 26, 38, 40, 43, 49 |
| Website | www.vpsa.txstate.edu |
| E-mail | vpsa@txstate.edu |
| Phone | 512-245-2152 |
| Fax | 512-245-7979 |
| Location | JC Kellam, Rm. 980 |

The Student Affairs Division includes most of the student support services outside of academic advising and tutoring/supplemental instruction. All services provided under the umbrella of Student Affairs, contribute to students' college experience and their retention through graduation. The VPSA office not only supervises divisional efforts, it also serves as a hub for student success initiatives and information. The "Academic Support Resources" section of the VPSA website lists numerous services, resources, and programs available on campus to assist students in there studying and academic endeavors. To help students purposely engage in activities that support skill development and success, the VPSA offers an online "Student Success Plan." The plan includes various components of success, including leadership, career, financial, social/engagement, personal and academic. Also on the VPSA website, students can find useful information on time management and effective study habits. The VPSA office collaborates with Academic Affairs to provide students on academic probation with workshops that can help them improve their grades and return to good academic standing.

NOTES:

# HELPFUL LINKS

These agencies and websites are not part of Texas State and are provided as additional sources of information and assistance in your pursuit of a college degree.

Texas State is not responsible for the content of these websites.

College for all Texans
www.collegefortexans.com
English & Spanish (Disponible en Español)
A website of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, this site provides information on choosing the right college, taking tests necessary for college admission, applying for college and financial aid, and saving and paying for college. The site has a section to help students at the middle school and high school level as well as their parents, "make a plan" for college.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
www.fafsa.ed.gov
English & Spanish (Disponible en Español)
The FAFSA is required to apply for federal financial aid. This website has the application and instructions for applying. The FAFSA4caster feature helps students learn about the financial aid process and get an early estimate of their eligibility for federal student aid. It also has information on financing a college education, loan forgiveness and repayment options, as well as other tools , resources and a financial aid glossary.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
(Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education)
www.irs.gov/publications/p970/index.html
This particular section of the IRS website presents information that may help students and their families finance a college education, reduce their tax liability, and ensure compliance when filing their tax returns.

Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (TG)
http://www.tgslc.org/
TG is a public, nonprofit Corporation that administers the Federal Family Education Loan Program in order to improve access to higher education for millions of families and students. TG provides information, financing (loans), and assistance to students and their families. Its website includes tools to help students and their families pay for college and manage their money. The website also has features to help students select a college and find scholarships (which are preferred over loans). Be sure to click on their Adventures in Education (aie) feature in the "Families and Students" section.

## FERPA (FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT)

"FERPA" was mentioned in this handbook and you will likely hear the word throughout your college career. FERPA refers to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and is also known as the Buckley Amendment. It is the federal law that gave parents the right to inspect their student's records from K-12 school level and protected the records from being disclosed to unauthorized individuals. Once a student enters the university (regardless of their age), those rights and privacy belong to the student. For parents who are concerned about obtaining information about their student, there are some ways they may be able to obtain the information. To learn more about FERPA and exceptions to the rule, visit the FERPA section of the Registrar's website at www.registrar.txstate.edu. The website includes information for and answers to questions frequently asked by students and their families. The website also has information on how students can further protect their privacy and explains the circumstances under which the university may be able or obligated to disclose their information. The easiest way for parents to have access to student records is for the student to agree and provide that access. The Registrar's website contains forms that can be used to facilitate parent's access to these records and links to additional FERPA information.

# PLANNER (JR. & SR. YEARS)

| September | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| October | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| November | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| December | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| January | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| February | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| March | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| April | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| May | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| June | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| July | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| August | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| September | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| October | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| November | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| December | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| January | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| February | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| March | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| April | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| May | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| June | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| July | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

| August | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

# To Do

| Task | Deadline | ☑ Done |
|---|---|---|
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |
| | | ☐ |

# NOTES

# FINAL NOTES

*Final Note to Parents,*

*Thank you for taking the time to read this far is this rather long handbook. Hopefully you found the information in it useful. This handbook was originally going to have information on the privacy practices of and procedures for parents to obtain information from all of the offices named in it. Doing so would have resulted in a much longer handbook and would have included practices too flexible to list as policies. Instead, information was only included for the offices which had developed a specific policy and procedure for doing so. For all others, please review the page with FERPA information and understand that all offices at Texas State want your student to succeed. If you call, they will gladly answer any general questions you may have about their services, processes or procedures. Most will not be able to disclose specific information about your child directly to you unless it is deemed necessary to maintain your child's safety or if your child had authorized them to do so. And, if university officials feel it is necessary to contact you to ensure your child's safety they will not hesitate to do so. Outside of these circumstances, it is generally best for parents to communicate directly with their students. If necessary, conference calls or in person visits may be possible. Having the student available for the call or appointment will make it easier for university personnel to share information with you. Ultimately, students seeking services or answers to their questions on their own and sharing information with parents will contribute to students' growth process and will help students take responsibility for their decisions. Encourage your student to learn to resolve their challenges rather than resolving the challenges for them. All this can contribute to the student-parent dialogue.*

*Thank you for trusting your child to go off to college. Most parents will say that their children are the most important people in the world to them and understandably will want to protect them as much and as long as possible. But, part of growing up and healthy development involves the ability for young adults to be able to make decisions for themselves and face the consequences of their actions. College life will be an exciting time for your child and we hope that it will also be an exciting time for you.*

*Thank you for trusting Texas State. Whether your student attending Texas State will put 6 city blocks or over 600 miles between you, Texas State will do whatever reasonably possible to keep him/her and the other more than 30,000 students safe. Please think of us not just as the school your child is attending but your partner in an exciting journey.*

*But, most importantly, thank you for supporting your child in achieving the goal of completing a college education. Without your support, achieving that goal would be very difficult.*

Final Note to Students: Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. Hopefully you will use it often as you prepare to go to college (Texas State!) As you embark on your journey to establishing a new family tradition, know that there are many people supporting you – your family and friends at home and many here at Texas State (many themselves FGCSs) who one day you will also call family and friends. Together, we look forward to your success.

Texas State University-San Marcos is an equal opportunity educational institution.


The Texas State University System Board of Regents

Ron Blatchley, Chairman, Bryan-College Station
Charles Amato, Vice Chairman, San Antonio
Kevin J. Lilly, Houston
Ron Mitchell, Horseshoe Bay
David Montagne, Beaumont
Trisha S. Pollard, Bellaire
Michael Truncale, Beaumont
Greg Wilkinson, Dallas
Dona N. Williams, Arlington
William Patterson, Student Regent, Texas State
Charles R. Matthews, Chancellor


This information is available in alternate format upon request from the Office of Disability Services.

# Sponsor Info

(The printing of this handbook was made possible thanks to the generous support of…)