Programs For Academic Student Support (PASS) Newsletter

Purpose of PASS

Programs for Academic Student Support (PASS) is comprised of eight federally funded United States Department of Education (DOE) academic support programs and one state-funded grant program. The PASS programs serve the needs of low-income, first generation, and underrepresented high school and college students. The major goal of PASS is to increase student retention and graduation; each grant program provides a pathway to student academic success.

PASS provides a myriad of services to serve faculty, staff, students and families to include skills workshops, faculty development opportunities, undergraduate research, STEM Supplemental Instruction, family engagement activities, TSIA resources, and college awareness and readiness activities in Coastal Bend high schools.

Since the inception of PASS in May 2013, the grant-funded opportunities for TAMU-CC have grown exponentially and in 2017 alone, TAMU-CC received two Upward Bound grants and a continuation award for the McNair Scholars Program. Faculty and staff support are critical to the success of these programs and awareness of services offered increases the likelihood that the TAMU-CC campus community will take advantage of the available resources.
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has gained two Upward Bound Programs; Upward Bound North and Upward Bound Central. Upward Bound North serves a total of 60 students; 30 from Miller H.S. and 30 from Coles H.S.. Upward Bound Central serves a total of 60 students; 30 from West Oso and 30 from Moody.

Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants in preparation for their college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their pre-college performance and, ultimately, in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete their secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education.

Upward Bound is instrumental in helping students transition between secondary and postsecondary education. It comprises of two components: academic year component and summer component. The academic year component includes after-school tutoring and college preparatory workshops. The summer component includes a six-week academic enrichment program as well as college preparatory workshops. Occasional educational field trips will take place in-town, out-of-town, and out of state.
McNair Scholars Program

McNair Scholars Program is a federally funded TRIO program through the United States Department of Education (DOE) and is committed to identifying, attracting, and graduating students who are low-income (LI) and first-generation (FG) college students, especially those from groups who have been historically underrepresented in higher education.

The program emphasis is on students who aspire to pursue doctoral degrees. McNair Scholars Program provides participants with research opportunities, faculty mentoring, and the opportunity to engage in scholarly activities in preparation for postgraduate study. McNair Scholars Program also provides research funding and conference travel.

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FITW STEM-OSIP

The Department of Education (DOE) First In The World (FITW) Program provided TAMU-CC the opportunity to establish a new Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) Online Supplemental Instruction Project (STEM-OSIP). The purpose of this project is to test the relative effectiveness of two different types of delivery of Supplemental Instruction (SI)—face-to-face SI and online SI—for undergraduates taking historically difficult STEM courses (i.e., STEM courses where typically 30% or more of enrolled students earn a grade of D or F or withdraw prior to the end of the semester). Supplemental Instruction is an academic assistance program that utilizes regularly-scheduled, informal review sessions in which students compare notes, discuss readings, develop organizational tools, and predict test items. Students learn how to integrate course content and study skills while working together. The sessions are facilitated by “SI leaders”, students who have previously done well in the course and who attend all class lectures, take notes, and act as model students. The purpose of SI is to increase STEM course retention and STEM graduation rates.
Go Centers Mentors work at area Coastal Bend high schools promoting college awareness and readiness. The Mentors help in the transition from high school to college, including registering for standardized tests, researching colleges and universities, applying and filling out scholarships, FAFSA assistance, and career exploration. Mentors work one-on-one with students who seek help in finding out more information regarding educational and career goals. The GO Centers currently serve 12 high schools throughout the Coastal Bend area:

- Carroll High School
- Collegiate High School
- Flour Bluff High School
- Gregory Portland High School
- Harold T Branch Academy
- Incarnate Word Academy
- John Paul II High School
- King High School
- London High School
- Ray High School
- Tuloso-Midway High School
- Veteran’s Memorial High School

The GO Centers Mentors pride themselves on maintaining an excellent rapport and partnership with the counselor at their designated high school location and strive to serve as a role model for high school students.”

The GO Center Mentors always have their hands in exceptional events at their various locations, but their hard work and dedication is amplified when they work in teams. This team dynamic was seen over the summer when our GO Center Mentors successfully took on the role of Island Ambassadors, giving campus tours to perspective students. GO Center Mentors even collaborated with a GO Center program housed at UTRGV that bussed 138 students to our campus to experience the Islander community. Our Mentors successfully represented our university through splitting students up based on interest - allowing students to see all of the campus, while focusing on the disciplines that the prospective students were interested in. For example, students interested in TAMU-CC’s robust nursing program were led by nursing students who coordinated with the nursing lab coordinator, allowing the visiting high school students to tour their labs. Our GO Center Mentors are known for going above and beyond the call of duty, and it was apparent in this event, as with everything they do!
Project GRAD

Project GRAD is a federally funded program that provides targeted interventions to improve student retention, enhance faculty and staff resources, and create an enriched campus experience. The objective of Project GRAD is to create a seamless pipeline that will increase the number and proportion of high-need students who are academically prepared for, enroll in, and complete college on time. This is done through three components:

**Component One: Summer Prep Academy** strives to decrease the number of students who need to take developmental coursework. Students in the cohort participate in a five-week bridge program, taught by TAMU-CC faculty, geared towards passing the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA). Students are given a peer mentor and are required to meet monthly throughout the first year. Participants report an increased sense of belonging on campus and better understanding of the college experience.

From Summer Prep Academy last summer, 52% of student participants successfully passed the TSIA and are now in credit-bearing, college-ready courses.

**Component Two: Engage and Interact** focuses on providing opportunities for students and their families to participate in activities on campus and creating a culture of inclusion. Activities include Ask an Islander series, Social Media presence, Financial Information Series, and the ever-popular painting classes. Family events will be the focus for the upcoming year.

There were more than 100 students who participated in at least one Project GRAD engagement activity last year and the Ask an Islander series had over 1000 views collectively.

**Component Three: Resources and Development** provides faculty and staff with a myriad of professional development opportunities, to include the Faculty Workshop Series, Blackboard Certification stipends, and funding to create fully online undergraduate degree programs. In addition, Project GRAD has partnered with the Bell Library to upgrade certain multimedia spaces and serve the Library’s needs in any way possible.

The upcoming Faculty Workshop Series will be on Blackboard Gradebook and providing ample feedback to students throughout the semester. This event will be held on Friday, November 17, 2017, from 9:00am – 12:00pm in the University Center, Lonestar Ballrooms.

The overarching goal of Project GRAD is to increase student retention and graduation rates by enhancing campus resources and faculty development.
Student Support Services - Teacher Prep

Student Support Services-Teacher Prep (SSS-TP) is a TRIO program, funded through the United States Department of Education. This program supports first-generation, low-income, and students with documented disabilities who want to become teachers. SSS-TP offers an array of services to help preservice teachers obtain their goal of graduating and becoming a licensed teacher. These services include Texas State Initiative (TSI), content exam, and Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities exam preparation; help with academic advising and registration; a computer and study lab with free printing; career exploration; financial economic literacy; FAFSA assistance; graduate school information; and scholarship information. The program also helps students gain a sense of belonging at the university, and helps them succeed in college. SSS-TP works closely with the other TRIO programs on campus, and has a well-established relationship with the College of Education and Human Development. The goal is to ensure that each member of SSS-TP is well-equipped to persist, and ultimately graduate from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

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Recently, SSS-TP joined forces with SSS-STEM, and SSS-Regular for a Summer Bridge Program for incoming freshmen. The participants of the bridge spent two weeks learning how to become an effective college student. The first half of each day included tours, department overviews, and workshops designed to prepare the students for college life. Some of the highlights from the morning section were an in-depth and detailed tour of the campus, workshops on how to interact with professors, and departmental overviews. These were conducted by SSS staff, as well as various departments across campus. The second half of the day was dedicated to math and English preparation.

Both sections were taught by qualified graduate students, and helped them get an idea of what to expect in their upcoming classes. The participants declared the bridge a success, noting that they feel more confident and ahead of their peers as they begin their first semester at the Island University.
Student Support Services

Student Support Services is a program offered through the TRIO program, which is federally funded through the United States Department of Education, and is committed to identifying, attracting, and graduating students of high potential. Student Support Services primarily focuses on students who have been historically under-represented in the Texas higher education system. Student Support Services provides a special environment for students to gain assistance with meeting their academic, personal, career, cultural awareness, and social needs.

The program offers members with the following:
- Academic Coaching & Support
- Applying for Financial Aid & Scholarships—Information & Assistance
- Limited Grant Aid Stipend
- Private Computer Lab with Free Printing
- Recommendation Letters for Employment or Scholarships
- Skill Improvement Workshops & Information
- Graphing Calculator Lending Program
- Occasional Educational/Cultural Trips & Activities
- Connecting Students with Resources both on Campus and/or within Our Community
- Assistance in applying for graduate or professional schools

Student Support Services is committed to improving the retention and graduation rates of the students. Student Support Services improves academic success by providing support services designed to assist students in their educational goals and plans, and by providing program participants with cultural and educational opportunities to instill holistic growth and development.

“A special thank you……”

Student Support Services (SSS) helped a few incoming freshmen through the Summer Bridge Program (SBP), which provides a sneak peek into college life before their first semester here at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. These students have committed to joining SSS and to gaining their bachelor’s degree from our university. A special thank you to program members and staff for all your help in making this year’s SBP a huge success!
Student Support Services -STEM

Student Support Services-STEM is a federally funded TRIO program that supports low-income, first-generation, and or students with documented disabilities majoring in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and Health Science. SSS-STEM offers a variety of free services to qualifying participants. SSS-STEM helps students by providing the appropriate tools and resources necessary to succeed in post-secondary education. SSS-STEM closely monitors participants’ academic progress and reaches out to students when alerted by appropriate faculty and staff. SSS-STEM staff assists students with making a connection with their peers and find a sense of belonging at the university. The staff also assists students with problem solving, critical thinking, and most importantly, provides strategies to succeed and excel in college. Our staff provides holistic approach advising to students from entry to completion of a first bachelor’s degree. We strive to make the transition to college smoother and together help our students reach their goals of a post-secondary education.

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Program Highlight

State Representative Abel Herrero hosted the 5th Annual School Supplies Giveaway.

State Representative Abel Herrero hosted the 5th Annual School Supplies Giveaway for all students in need of supplies on Tuesday, August 1st. Thousands of students and their family members packed Robstown High School’s Auditorium eager to get a backpack.

Volunteers from the TRIO Islanders Organization helped guide people into the auditorium to receive backpacks full of school supplies. The line of people stretched from the inside stage area to the outside of the auditorium. Backpacks were filled the week prior to the event with paper, pens, pencils, markers, and other supplies necessary for school. The TRIO Islanders also helped hand out more than 1,000 backpacks to students. All items for the event were generously donated by various businesses throughout the Corpus Christi community. Stuffed backpacks were available to all students from the K-12 grade levels. “Now parents can worry a little less about the coming school year.”

- Emmanuel Guadarrama

“Now parents can worry a little less about the coming school year.”
The McNair Scholars Program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi hosted McNair Day on April 18, 2017 to recognize McNair Scholars that conducted research in the Spring/Summer of 2016 in honor of Dr. Ronald E. McNair.

Twelve McNair Scholars presented the following poster presentations:

**Clyde Avalos:** “Development of Portable Power Supply for Plasma Actuated UAV’s.” Mentor was Dr. Magesh Thiyagarajan.

**Alfonso Cohuo:** “Condition Factors of Fish in Response to Hypoxia Exposure.” Mentor was Dr. Benjamin Walther.

**Rose Heilman:** “It’s Okay If I Do It: Self-Serving Bias in Perceptions of Sexual Morality.” Mentor was Dr. Steve Seidel.

**Corbin Lewis:** “Investigation of Micelle Formation with Molecular Modeling and NMR.” Mentor was Dr. Eugene Billiot.

**Anthony Matheson:** “Plasma Actuator Controlled UAV.” Mentor was Dr. Magesh Thiyagarajan.

**Michelle McGaha:** “Water Bears: Identification of Marine Tardigrada Within Corpus Christi Bay, A Texas Coastal Waterway.” Mentor was Dr. Xavier Gonzales.

**Jermeka Morrison:** “Examining Distracted, Aggressive, and Improper Driving Behaviors in Nueces County.” Mentor was Dr. Phillip Rhoades.

**Melissa Pena:** “Assessment of Historical Oil-Field Brine Discharge Influences on Sediment-supported Radionuclide Activities.” Mentor was Dr. Dorina Murgulet.

**Zoe Ramos:** “Effect of pH and Counterion Choice on the Chiral Separation of Binaphthyl Derivatives by L-Undecyl-Leucine Surfactants.” Mentor was Dr. Fereshteh Billiot.

**Elisa Silva:** “I’m Not Some Weirdo! Stigma Management Among Consumers of Japanese Media.” Mentor was Dr. Michael Ramirez

**Shane Smith:** “Integration of a Supercontinuum Laser with a Hyperspectral Imaging System.” Mentor was Dr. Ruby Mehrubeoglu.

**Stephanie Tiet:** “Hub of the Classroom of Just a Place to Store Books?: An Analysis of Elementary Classroom Libraries.” Mentor was Dr. Bethanie Pletcher.