

3.4.9

Educational Programs: All:Academic support services

The institution provides appropriate academic support services.

Judgment

Compliant Non-Compliant Not Applicable

Narrative

Note: Text for all linked documents below can be increased/decreased for ease of reading by pressing your keyboard's Ctrl key while rotating the mouse wheel.

In accordance with its mission and goals, Angelo State University strives to maintain a supportive, helpful environment and promotes innovation in its academic support services. This learning-centered environment is evident in the broad range of academic support services available to students and faculty, as outlined below.

STUDENT-CENTERED ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

Student-centered academic support services at ASU include the following:

- Services coordinated by the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
- Services coordinated by the Center of Academic Excellence
- Academic advising
- Mentoring
- Tutoring and academic skills workshops
- Targeted support for specific student populations

Following is a brief summary of each of these services.

Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (SAEM) focuses on developmental co-curricular programming for students that provides opportunities for engaged participation and learning to broaden students' skills and perspectives. Program areas coordinated through SAEM include the following: Student Life and Student Services, including Student Involvement, Student Government, and Counseling Services; Career Development; Housing and Residential Programs; University Recreation and Intramurals; and Enrollment Management, including Financial Aid, Admissions, and the Registrar's Office. Each of these program areas is described in Core Requirement 2.10, Student support services, and selected examples of SAEM services that specifically target students' academic success are provided below.

Disability Services—The Student Life office is responsible for administering the institution's disability services in accordance with ASU OP 10.15, Providing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. The mission of the disability support services program is to improve the educational development of ASU

students with disabilities by encouraging them to develop skills that will help them communicate effectively, conduct realistic self-appraisals, enhance levels of self-esteem, make appropriate career choices, work independently and collaboratively, become self-advocates, and achieve personal goals. The program also works to enhance understanding and support of students with disabilities throughout the campus community, to ensure that qualified students with disabilities have equal access to all institutional programs and services, and to advocate responsibly for the needs of students with disabilities. Available accommodations include building accessibility, hearing and vision impairment assistance, and assistance for students with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (Disability Accommodations). Disability services are available for distance education students in accordance with ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education. Information about disability services is published on the institutional website (Disability Services; Policy Statement on Disability Services) and in the university catalogs (ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 299; ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 42).

Center for Counseling Services—The Center for Counseling Services is co-located with the University Health Clinic, and both entities provide free, confidential services to ASU students. Counseling services are provided by one part-time and three full-time Licensed Professional Counselors, who are members of the Student Life professional staff. The counselors help students deal with a variety of issues that often affect academic performance, such as depression and anxiety, problem solving, decision making, relationship issues, adjustment problems, test anxiety, family problems, alcohol or substance abuse problems, and stress management. Students are informed about counseling services through the University Health Clinic and Counseling Services home page, which includes links to several online resources (Student Wellness and Substance Abuse Resources). Information about counseling services is also published in the university catalogs (ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 298; ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 42).

A health fee is automatically assessed each semester to full-time ASU students attending on campus. Students enrolled only in online courses are not automatically charged the health fee, but they may use the clinic if they choose to pay the fee. The fee allows students access to the University Health Clinic and Center for Counseling Services.

Career Development—The Career Development Office offers a number of services designed to help students explore career paths and create a plan to achieve their academic and employment goals. Services include career assessments, a career resource library, information on connecting majors to relevant jobs, and assistance in developing a four-year plan for academic success. The Career Development Office also offers resume critiquing services, Jobs4Rams (an online career management system), individual and online career counseling, on-campus job fair opportunities, job search assistance, and workshops on various career-related topics, such as dressing for success and preparing for job interviews. Information about career development services is published on the institutional website (Career Development Services) and in the university catalogs (ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 378; ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 39).

Housing and Residential Programs—The ASU Housing and Residential Programs department supports the ASU mission by fostering opportunities for personal development, academic success, and student engagement in a living-learning community. Many of the activities coordinated by the Housing and

Residential Programs staff are directed toward student retention and success. For example, during academic years 2009–2011, the Housing and Residential Programs staff administered a MAP-Works survey instrument designed to identify at-risk students. The survey was administered three weeks into the fall semester, mid-semester, and again early in the spring semester to identify self-reported academic support needs related to topics such as learning styles and time management. Working in collaboration with other academic-support resources on campus, such as the SMART program, the Enhancement Programs Coordinator from Housing and Residential Programs helped provide tailored programming in response to student-reported needs, focusing on academic support and academic skills acquisition. Approximately 80 programs with an attendance of 2,900 were provided during academic year 2011. Area coordinators and resident assistants also used MAP-Works data to provide one-on-one or floor-level academic support services. Due to budget cuts, the use of MAP-Works and the Enhancement Programs Coordinator position were discontinued in academic year 2011. The Housing and Residential Programs staff, however, continue to plan and assess academic support programs and to promote the campus-wide academic support resources to all resident students. Study halls are hosted in residence halls around campus Mondays through Thursdays throughout the semester, and a variety of educational programs are also planned each semester. Additional information about Housing and Residential Programs, including a discussion of the division's unified, student-development-focused programming model, is provided in Core Requirement 2.10, Student support services.

Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration—The Office of Admissions hosts the annual Student Orientation, Advising and Registration (SOAR) program designed to help students make the transition to college. At this one-day program, advisors assist new students in selecting their fall semester courses and introduce students to available resources, including academic support services and the ASU Student Handbook 2011–2012, which provides general information regarding the policies, rules, and regulations concerning student activities, academic issues, and expected standards of student behavior. In addition, current students, administrators, and staff members are available to answer questions of incoming students and their families. Information about the program is available on the institutional website (SOAR program web page).

Student Support Center—The Student Support Center (SSC) is a student-centered resource established in fall 2011 through ASU's Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI) grant. The SSC is designed to facilitate students' transition to campus life by helping them connect personally with members of the ASU community and with available services. The center reflects the university's commitment to student learning, persistence, and success by providing effective information, service, and support to students. It also strengthens retention efforts by promoting personal development, successful transition, and academic progression toward graduation. Staff members help students better identify campus resources; understand learning expectations and the culture of higher education at ASU; and develop skills and strategies to become more confident, independent, and active learners. The SSC is located in a high-traffic area in the Houston Harte University Center (Student Support Center home page).

Center for Academic Excellence

In addition to the services outlined above, ASU offers a broad range of academic support services to meet the needs of all students. These services are coordinated by the Dean of the Freshman College, a recently created college that has responsibility for supervising the Center for Academic Excellence, which coordinates ASU's student-centered academic support services. The Center for Academic Excellence encompasses several academic support programs and offices designed to help ASU students at all levels achieve academic success, including the First-Year Experience Program, Honors Program, Office of Pre-declared Advising, Supplemental Instruction, Tutor Educate Advise Mentor (TEAM) Office, and the Tutoring Center.

First-Year Experience—The First-Year Experience (FYE) Program was created in the fall of 2008 to help students successfully adapt to university life. On the First-Year Experience home page, all ASU students, including distance education students, can access the tools and resources they need to be successful, including tips for success, study skills resources, the First-Year Experience Guidebook, information about academic advising, and the Student Support Resource Guide (online version and sample page; hardcopy is available in the First-Year Experience office), which informs students about available student support services. The major component of the FYE Program is the University Studies Program course, USTD 1201: Critical Thinking, which is available on-campus and online. This course focuses on fundamental skills to help students become independent and lifelong learners. The FYE Program also oversees USTD 1101: Learning Strategies, a mandatory course for all freshmen on academic probation in their first semester (GPA below 2.00 but above 1.35; ASU OP10.07, Undergraduate Academic Status). The course helps student to develop self-evaluation and critical thinking skills and to identify and implement goals that lead to academic success. In addition, the FYE Program is involved in USTD 1202: Career Exploration and Planning, which is an interactive course designed for any student who is undecided about their major or career choice.

Honors Program—The ASU Honors Program is designed to provide an enriched learning experience that will enhance the education of academically talented and motivated ASU students. At the heart of the program is a learning community of capable and intellectually curious students who seek breadth and depth in their education and commit to becoming well-rounded students and citizens. The program challenges students to delve deeply into their academic studies, to develop their critical thinking and analytical skills, and to engage actively in university and community life. The Honors Program offers a variety of courses, cultural events, and community engagement activities designed to foster community and help individual students maximize their intellectual and personal talents (Honors Program home page and ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, pp. 294–295).

Pre-declared Advising—The Office of Pre-declared Advising provides professional academic advising services for students who have not yet declared their major. Advisors assist students in assessing academic goals, understanding requirements, navigating university policies and procedures, identifying a course of study, and selecting a major. Students are encouraged to develop meaningful educational plans that are compatible with their academic and career goals. To further enhance student success, the university has enacted an administrative requirement (effective fall 2010) that requires students to declare a major before or upon earning thirty semester hours. Students who have reached this milestone

are then referred to their major department for advising. Pre-declared advisers are available by phone and email to distance education students (Predeclared Student Advising home page).

The Office of Pre-declared Advising also advises students based on requirements of the Texas Success Initiative (TSI). TSI was established by the State Legislature to assess the readiness of entering college students to enroll in college-level academic course work and to assist students who are not yet ready to enroll in that course work by providing advising and educational support necessary for college success. TSI requires students to be assessed in reading, writing, and math skills prior to enrolling in college, and to be advised based on the results of that assessment (Texas Success Initiative web page and ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, pp. 311–312). Additionally, ASU has established minimum competency standards based on ACT and SAT scores. A full-time academic advisor works with students to explain the course of study that must be taken to meet developmental requirements in math and English in order to prepare for college-level work. The advisor also answers inquiries about exemptions and refers students to additional resources.

Supplemental Instruction—Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic assistance program that uses student-led group study sessions to assist students in traditionally difficult courses. The typical SI session—an hour-long meeting held in a classroom on campus—offers ASU students an opportunity to engage actively with the course content by participating in discussions about the lecture, clarifying notes, practicing problem-solving techniques, and developing effective study skills strategies (Supplemental Instruction home page).

Tutor Educate Advise Mentor (TEAM) Office—The TEAM Office advises students who may be experiencing difficulty transitioning into college life, providing structure and assistance to at-risk students through the Tutor Educate Advise Mentor (TEAM) program. TEAM is a campus-wide program that is coordinated among members of the faculty, transitional services, and college advisors. The program assists students whom faculty or staff have identified as at-risk based on observed behaviors, such as excessive or frequent absences, low grades or incomplete assignments, lack of participation, lack of basic skills, or expressed desire to withdraw from school. The TEAM staff assesses the student's situation, offering support and providing referrals to resources on campus. The program currently focuses on first-year students (TEAM Program home page).

Tutoring Center—The ASU Tutoring Center offers academic support for a variety of subjects and disciplines, such as accounting, anatomy, biology, business, chemistry, economics, history, nursing, physics, and physiology. In addition, it offers broad-based study-skill strategies and techniques to promote critical thinking and time management (ASU Tutoring Center home page).

Academic Advising

In 2010, ASU restructured its existing advising services to create centralized advising centers, including the Office of Pre-declared Advising in the Center for Academic Excellence (described above) and advising centers in each of the four undergraduate colleges—College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Education, and College of Health and Human Services. The Office of Pre-declared Advising provides professional academic advising services for students who have not yet declared their major.

Advising for all other students is provided by professional advisors and faculty in the appropriate college and academic department. Academic advising is a major support service offered to both undergraduate and graduate students. All but three academic departments require undergraduate students to be advised each semester prior to registration until they graduate. The three exceptions allow students to be self-advised after they have completed a prescribed number of hours (more than 90 hours in Computer Science, more than 60 hours in Management and Marketing, and more than 60 hours in Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work). Advising requirements for undergraduate students are published by department in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012 p. 376, and the Academic Advising web page provides links to contact information for the Office of Pre-declared Advising and each of the college advising centers. Graduate students in all programs are advised by program faculty through the relevant department, and contact information for graduate advisors is published on the Graduate Programs web page. Distance learners are accommodated in all colleges and in the Office of Pre-declared Advising in accordance with ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education, section 6.

The advising centers serve the core function of organizing and monitoring student advising and performance. All advising centers conduct developmental advising programs for students on academic probation. The colleges have adopted blended advising systems, providing centralized and decentralized advising services according to the disciplinary needs within each college, as summarized below.

College of Arts and Sciences—In the College of Arts and Sciences, academic advising is conducted by advisors in the College of Arts and Sciences Advising (CASA) center and by faculty members in each department. Established in fall 2011, the CASA center is a centralized advising resource for the college. As of spring 2012, CASA began advising all freshmen in the college. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors in good standing are advised by faculty in their respective departments. When faculty members are not available, particularly between semesters, advising is provided by the CASA center. The center also provides developmental advising to students on probation. CASA advisors invite all freshmen and transfer students to a brief meeting early in the semester to welcome students to the university, direct students to campus resources, and establish a point of contact for the student. Prior to pre-registration, CASA advisors hold informational meetings about advising, registration, and degree planning. CASA also advises students in the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies Degree program, and both CASA and faculty advisors are available by phone and email to distance learners. Contact information for CASA advisors is published on the college website (College of Arts and Sciences Advisors web page), and department-specific advising requirements are summarized in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012 (p. 376). Additional advising information is available through individual departments, and links to departmental websites are provided on the College of Arts and Sciences home page.

In addition to serving as academic advisors for departmental degree programs, College of Arts and Sciences faculty members also serve as mentors, and each department provides discipline-specific academic support through departmental activities, programs, and student organizations.

College of Business—Academic advising in the College of Business is conducted by advisors in the Center for Student Success and by faculty. Each of the academic departments—Accounting, Economics, and Finance; Aerospace Studies; Management and Marketing; and Security Studies and Criminal Justice—

uses an advising model best suited to the needs of the department and its academic disciplines. Departments also provide academic support through faculty mentorship, activities, programs, and student organizations. Academic advisors are available to distance learners by phone, email, Skype, or online chat.

All undergraduate majors in the College of Business, including all transfer students, begin in the pre-business program, and coordinators in the Center for Student Success advise all pre-business students. Students must meet program-specific requirements prior to applying for advanced standing and/or taking upper-level courses. Success coordinators help students navigate this process and assist them with their application for advanced standing. Success coordinators also meet multiple times each semester with business students who are on probation, guiding them to campus support resources and monitoring their academic progress (College of Business Center for Student Success home page).

Following first-year advising in the Center for Student Success, students in advanced standing receive advising in accordance with departmental policies. Undergraduate majors in the Department of Accounting, Economics and Finance continue to receive advising from the Center for Student Success. ROTC cadets in the Department of Aerospace Studies must review their academic plan every semester with a faculty advisor. In the Department of Management and Marketing, students may be advised by a faculty member or by an advisor in the Student Success Center. Contact information for faculty advisors is published on the department's website (Department of Management and Marketing Advising). In the Department of Security Studies and Criminal Justice, security studies majors are advised by a professional advisor, and faculty members are available for questions regarding course selection. Criminal justice majors are advised by criminal justice faculty. Between semesters, when faculty members are not available, the security studies professional advisor is available to assist students in the criminal justice programs (Department of Security Studies and Criminal Justice Academic Advising).

College of Education—The Educator Preparation Information Center (EPI Center) provides academic advising services to undergraduate and graduate students in the College of Education as well as certification advising for students with secondary certification degree plans in the College of Arts and Sciences. EPI Center advisors work closely with faculty and university support services to enhance academic and career advising (EPI Center home page). Additionally, the advisors meet with students on academic probation throughout the semester supporting their efforts to return to good academic standing. Academic advisors are available by phone and email to distance learners (EPI Center advising contacts). The two departments in the College—Curriculum and Instruction and Teacher Education—also provide additional academic support through faculty mentorship, departmental activities, programs, and student organizations.

College of Health and Human Services—Academic advising in the College of Health and Human Services is conducted by advisors in the college's Welcome Center and by departmental faculty. The college offers professional education in a variety of health care, rehabilitation, and human service disciplines and consists of the following departments and professional programs: Department of Kinesiology; Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Services, which includes the Athletic Training Program and Doctor of Physical Therapy Program; and the Department of Psychology, Sociology, and

Social Work. Each of these academic departments uses an advising model best suited to the department and its academic disciplines. Departments also provide academic support through faculty mentorship, activities, programs, and student organizations. Academic advisors are available by phone and email to distance learners.

In the Department of Kinesiology, a professional advisor provides advising for first- and second-year students and for students on academic probation. Upperclassmen are advised by faculty members in the department. Contact information for the departmental advisor is published on the department's website (Department of Kinesiology Academic Advising).

In the Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Services, students are advised according to program-specific policies, as follows:

- Undergraduate pre-nursing students are advised by professional advisors in the department's Welcome Center, and students in the nursing program are assigned a faculty advisor. Advising information is published on the departmental website, which includes links to advising plans for each program (Nursing Program Undergraduate Information) and contact information for departmental advisors (Nursing Program Undergraduate Student Advising).
- Graduate nursing students are advised by faculty members, and the list of assigned advisors is available through the Master of Science in Nursing Programs home page. The list is vetted for students who have opted out of having FERPA-defined directory information published. Additional information about advising is published in the Nursing Graduate Student Handbook, which is available on the Nursing Graduate Information web page and general Nursing Student Resources web page.
- The Director of the Athletic Training Program advises all students in the program, as outlined in the Athletic Training Student Policy and Procedure Handbook (p. 6).
- Students in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program are advised by faculty members in the program. Faculty in the physical therapy program also are available to advise pre-physical therapy students regarding prerequisites and admissions policies for the doctoral program (ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 89).

Students in the Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work are advised regarding degree requirements prior to registration. Freshmen, sophomores, new students, and new transfer students are required to see an advisor each semester; advisement is optional for students classified as juniors or seniors. Psychology and sociology majors are advised by faculty during the prescribed advising period preceding registration, and are otherwise advised by professional advisors in the College of Health and Human Services Welcome Center. Pre-social work students are advised by professional advisors in the Welcome Center, and students who have been accepted into the social work program are advised by faculty. Information about the department's advising policies is published on the Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work Advising web page.

Online Curriculum Advising and Program Planning Tool—In addition to the advising services described above, students have access to the Curriculum Advising and Program Planning (CAPP) online

degree evaluation tool, which can be used to monitor progress toward degree completion. Once a student has declared a major, CAPP will generate a degree evaluation that reflects the student's current major, minor, specialization area, and degree requirements (as published in the catalog under which the student entered the program). The degree evaluation shows courses in progress, courses required, cumulative grade point average (GPA), major GPA, and grades. All students have access to CAPP through RamPort, and the information in CAPP is automatically updated via the student information system. To ensure compliance with mandatory advising, the CAPP system uses online registration holds that must be lifted by the student's advisor before the student can register.

Mentoring

Mentoring students is an integral part of ASU's faculty teaching responsibilities. In addition to advising students, faculty members are expected to devote time to aiding, guiding, and counseling students outside the classroom (ASU OP 06.14, Faculty Responsibilities and Duties, p. 2, Part 1.c). Many faculty publish their availability for consulting with students outside the classroom on their course syllabi, and all current course syllabi are posted on the ASU website (Courses and Faculty web page and syllabus example). Departments also facilitate mentoring opportunities through departmental activities, programs, and student organizations. For example, the Department of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work began offering a Psychology Major First-Year Experience Program in fall 2010 in which all freshman psychology majors are paired with an upper-level psychology major mentor. The mentors help freshmen academically and socially adjust to college by leading study groups and encouraging participation in campus and community activities (Psychology Mentors web page).

Tutoring and Workshops

ASU SMART (Students Mapping a Right Track) is the umbrella program that coordinates ASU's tutoring resources to help improve student persistence and academic success. Resources coordinated through the SMART program include tutoring services offered through the Center of Academic Excellence as well as discipline-specific tutoring services available through various academic departments. Specifically, the SMART program coordinates the following resources:

- **Accounting Lab**—During the fall and spring terms, the Accounting Lab is open two hours a day, five days a week to help students with accounting concepts and homework assignments. The lab is led by accounting graduate students or upper-level, skilled accounting students and is administered by the Accounting Department.
- **ASU Tutoring Center**—The ASU Tutoring Center provides one-on-one and small group peer tutoring in a variety of subjects and disciplines. It is operated through the First-Year Experience and is open year-round. The center is staffed by multi-disciplined, multi-talented students who are highly recommended by academic departments across campus.
- **Math Lab**—The Math Lab is available to all ASU students enrolled in a math class. ASU students, faculty members, and a full-time lab coordinator provide help with homework assignments and offer additional explanations of concepts and procedures. The Math Lab is open year-round and is operated through the Mathematics Department.

- **Modern Language Tutoring**—Student tutors offer free help to students who want to work on their foreign language skills outside of class. Modern language tutoring is offered during the fall and spring terms only and is administered by the Department of English and Modern Languages.
- **Supplemental Instruction**—ASU began a program of Supplemental Instruction (SI) in fall 2005 in an effort to improve student retention and academic achievement by helping students pass difficult courses. The support is based on peer-led study groups that help foster independent learning. The SI website lists the SI-supported courses offered each semester (partial screen shot of spring schedule, Spring 2012 Study Jam Schedule, and Study Jam home page). Analysis of the ASU SI program reveals significant differences between SI and non-SI participants, indicating that many students who use SI improve their final class standing by one-half to one full letter grade. SI is operated through the First-Year Experience.
- **Writing Center**—The Writing Center is a tutoring service staffed by trained graduate assistants and peer tutors who offer one-on-one conferences to improve students' writing and reading skills. The Writing Center serves ASU undergraduate and graduate students from any discipline, at all skill levels, and at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center offers traditional face-to-face tutoring, synchronous ("real time") online tutoring, and electronic submission of papers (asynchronous online tutoring). The Writing Center is administered by the Department of English and Modern Languages (ASU Writing Center website).

All SMART services are free to ASU students. In addition to tutoring, the SMART program provides academic and study skills workshops and online tutoring. The SMART workshops focus on topics such as note-taking skills, reading strategies, time management, and exam preparation (SMART Workshop Descriptions). The workshops are coordinated through the First-Year Experience.

SMART Online provides the same academic tutoring assistance that is available face to face in a virtual environment (SMART Online). Blackboard Collaborative is the University's platform for online academic support and resides in the University's Blackboard Course Management System, providing access to all ASU students. Through SMART Online, students interact with and obtain help from academic assistance units like the ASU Tutor Center, Supplemental Instruction, the Writing Center, the Math Lab, and the Accounting Lab. Types of support available include live online chat sessions, ask-a-tutor options, and access to various online resources and exercises.

Each of the SMART tutoring units operates autonomously and collects data according to discipline and subject matter. SMART student usage is tracked by SMART TRAC, academic-center management software developed by Information Technology at ASU. Reports are made available to administration, academic advisors, faculty, and athletic coaches.

Targeted Support for Specific Student Populations

In addition to the broad-based academic support services outlined above, ASU provides targeted support services for specific student populations.

Students with Disabilities—As previously described, the Student Life office administers the institution's disability services program, which is intended to improve the educational development of students with

disabilities (see Disability Services under Student Affairs and Enrollment Management above for more information).

First-Generation and Diverse Students—The ASU Multicultural Center sponsors and provides support for several programs that focus on recruiting, retaining, and graduating first-generation and diverse students. The Up and Coming Scholars Program , for example, allows high school students of good academic ability the chance to plan for, prepare for, and pursue a college degree. The program includes a number of activities designed to support students' self-exploration and development, including summer programs, Financial Aid Night, welcome events, Midterm Madness, and Graduation Celebration (Up and Coming Scholars Program web page). The center also oversees the RAMS (Raising and Meeting Standards) program, which was developed to equip first-generation students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in higher education. Students are connected with peer mentors, faculty and staff, organizations, events, and programs that enrich their college experience. Mentees are first-generation students who are first-semester freshmen enrolled full-time at ASU and who commit to the program. Mentors include first-generation students who have been enrolled at ASU for at least two long semesters, are enrolled full-time, and who also make a commitment to the program (RAMS Mentor Program web page). Participation records are kept, and a student evaluation focus group makes recommendations for future programming. Records of recommendations and resulting actions are kept in the Multicultural Center.

International Students—ASU's Center for International Studies administers the English Language Learners' Institute, a non-credit program to help non-native English speakers develop English language competence. The institute delivers high-quality English language programs to international students, including those living in the San Angelo area. A priority is to prepare students for future study at ASU and other US universities, but the institute also welcomes students who need English for social and professional purposes (English Language Learners' Institute home page).

Student-Athletes—Student-athletes are responsible for meeting with their academic advisors and their designated athletic academic coordinator before registering for classes each semester. The athletic academic coordinator encourages student-athletes to use the SMART tutoring units on campus as a first resource for academic support. The coordinator tracks each student-athlete's usage of tutoring units. The Athletic Department also provides a "Study Center" where student-athletes can come to work independently on schoolwork. The department currently uses the GradesFirst software program to obtain academic progress reports for every student-athlete approximately three times during the semester. This ensures that student-athletes and coaches are aware of grades and that National Collegiate Athletic Association eligibility standards are being met. Coaches may request that "at-risk" student-athletes attend weekly academic progress meetings with an athletic academic coordinator. During these weekly meetings, the coordinator discusses current grades and future assignments, helps the student make study plans, and refers the student to campus support services. Academic procedures for ASU student-athletes are published in the ASU Student Athlete Handbook (pp. 14–16).

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES BENEFITING STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Academic support services that benefit both students and faculty include the following:

- Services provided through ASU's Hispanic Serving Institution grant program
- Research support from the Office of Sponsored Projects
- Educational technologies, including information technology services and discipline-specific research laboratories and facilities
- Learning and information resources available through the Porter Henderson Library
- Computer-based testing services provided by the Office of Extended Studies

Following is a brief summary of each of the above services. Additional information about each service is available on the ASU website, as indicated in the links provided below.

Hispanic Serving Institution

ASU has been designated as a Hispanic serving institution (HSI), and has been awarded an HSI grant to better recruit and retain undergraduate students, especially those of Hispanic descent. To achieve this goal, grant-funded projects focus on improving the academic support structure at ASU (HSI Funded Areas and Projects). For example, prior to HSI funding, ASU tutoring areas were fragmented across campus. With the use of grant funds, the new Academic Resource Center was established on the third floor of the library, allowing the Writing Center, Math Lab, Supplemental Instruction, and Tutoring Center to be housed in one central location. Another benefit of the HSI grant is the Student Support Center (SSC), which opened its doors in June 2011 and serves as a student-centered resource area (see description under Student Affairs and Enrollment Management above). Grant funds have also been used to establish the HSI Speaker Series, which supports faculty and staff development by providing educational sessions, workshops, and webinars related to student development, teaching, technology, cultural awareness, inclusion, diversity, and academic support.

Office of Sponsored Projects

The Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) promotes faculty and student research, programs, and initiatives by providing assistance and guidance in finding, obtaining, and managing external sources of funding. The OSP website provides information to ASU faculty, staff, and students about externally and internally funded grants and research, including information about research compliance and intellectual property and technology transfer. OSP began publishing a monthly e-Funding Alert in June 2008 to update faculty and graduate students on available funding opportunities. Back issues from November 2010 to the present are available on the OSP website (OSP Newsletters & Funding Alerts web page). Through FY 2012, the OSP sponsored the annual Student Academic Showcase, which affords undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to present a poster on their research projects. The Showcase will be replaced in FY2013 with two Research Symposiums—one for undergraduates and one for graduate student research.

Educational Technologies

The Information Technology Office manages the university's computer infrastructure, providing technical resources and support to ASU students, faculty, and staff. In addition, individual departments develop and

maintain discipline-specific technologies and laboratories, many of which are supported in part by external funding sources, such as grants. An overview of available educational technologies, laboratories, resources, and services, including information about available training and support, is provided in Comprehensive Standard 3.4.12, Technology use.

Learning and Information Resources

ASU's Porter Henderson Library provides library facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support the needs of ASU faculty and students. The total library holdings surpass 1,500,000 items in a variety of formats, including books, journals, government documents, audiovisual materials, and others. Detailed information about library services and resources is provided in Core Requirement 2.9, Learning resources and services and in Comprehensive Standard 3.8.1, Learning/information resources.

ASU Testing Center

The ASU Testing Center supports the university's academic departments by providing secure course-related testing using the Blackboard course management system. Additionally, the Testing Center meets the needs of ASU students and members of the San Angelo community for national standardized testing, both paper-based and online (ASU Testing Center home page).

FACULTY-FOCUSED ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

In addition to the resources that serve both faculty and students, ASU has a Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research (CITR) that provides faculty-focused academic support services, including programs that foster teaching, research, mentoring, and service. The center provides assistance in the use of instructional design and multimedia tools in the classroom to improve teaching and student learning, and the center coordinates with the Office of Sponsored Projects to update faculty on research opportunities. In accordance with ASU's distance education policy, the center provides a number of services to increase faculty members' awareness of distance education methodologies and improve their instructional skills. These services include consultation, training, implementation, and evaluation support from instructional design and delivery staff to assure effective, efficient use of the chosen delivery system (ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education, p. 4). The CITR website provides links to online faculty resources such as HSI faculty development information and instructional technology resources.

The Office of Institutional Research and Accountability provides services and resources to faculty and staff to support their participation in institution-wide outcomes assessment processes, including the effective use of the Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) software. Additionally, the office facilitates administration of the IDEA Survey, which provides faculty assessment data based on student evaluation of instructional methods and achievement of learning outcomes (Institutional Research and Accountability home page).

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

As described in Core Requirement 2.5, Institutional effectiveness and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.3, Institutional effectiveness: Academic and student support services, ASU engages in ongoing, integrated,

and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes. Each academic and student support services unit at ASU engages in a systematic annual assessment process to promote continuous quality improvement, and each unit documents the assessment process, outcomes, and corresponding improvements in the SPOL system. Unit leaders, such as directors, deans, or appropriate designees, define the objectives for their respective areas. These objectives are tied to institutional goals and to the planning priorities of the university, as defined by the institutional mission and strategic plan (Vision 2020 Update 2012, for example Master Goal 4, Objective 3). Examples of the data-collection tools that are used to ensure that academic support programs and services are adequate and appropriate to the needs of ASU students and faculty include the following:

- **Student Opinion Survey**—One of the tools used to evaluate the effectiveness of ASU student services is the American College Testing Program’s Student Opinion Survey (SOS). This survey is administered every three years, and the most recent data available are from the SOS 2009. In the SOS, college services are rated on a five-point scale from (1) very dissatisfied, (3) neutral, to (5) very satisfied. A recent longitudinal summary of average rankings on the Student Opinion Survey for college services at ASU indicates consistent student satisfaction with ASU student services (2009 Student Opinion Survey Results and Cumulative Results 2000-2009, Tables: Introduction to the Statistics, and Table B: Longitudinal Summary of College Services Averages—ASU Data Only). The ASU mean ranking on college services (3.80) is significantly above the public college mean (Table C: ASU-Public College Differences for College Services Items).
- **National Survey of Student Engagement**—ASU administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) every other year. The NSSE measures student satisfaction and evaluates results based on benchmarks of effective educational practice in five areas—Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment. The Supportive Campus Environment benchmark measures student satisfaction based on statements such as “Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically” and “Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.).” The NSSE 2011 Benchmark Comparison Report for ASU reflects a level of satisfaction among ASU students regarding the campus environment that is consistent with major comparison groups (NSSE 2011 Benchmark Comparison Report for Supportive Campus Environment).
- **Faculty Surveys**—Faculty were surveyed in spring 2012 regarding ASU’s Tutor Center. Thirty faculty responded to items about various aspects of the Center such as use of tutors, hours of service, and satisfaction with tutoring support for their courses. Eighty percent of respondents encouraged their students to take advantage of tutoring services. Approximately one-third of the respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the tutoring schedule and support.

Sixteen faculty were surveyed in spring 2011 regarding the Supplemental Instruction (SI) student leaders assigned to work with the students in the instructors' course section(s). Survey items asked faculty to rate the professionalism of SI leaders (e.g., did they regularly attend class, keep in touch with faculty to whom they were assigned, and treat students with respect), their opinion of SI as helpful, their willingness to work with the SI leader again, and whether or not they would recommend the SI leader for another term. Professionalism and opinion items were rated on 5-

point Likert-type scales. Willingness to work with an SI leader again and recommendation were both yes/no items. All aggregate means for the professionalism items were greater than 4.0. The mean regarding the helpfulness of supplemental instruction was 3.7. Less than one-third responded to the yes/no items. Therefore, results for those two items are not reliable.

- **Usage Data**—Each support unit tracks faculty and student usage of academic support services. For example, student use of the SMART resources is tracked by SMART TRAC, academic-center management software developed by Information Technology at ASU. Reports are made available to administration, academic advisors, faculty, and athletic coaches.

For specific examples demonstrating how survey data are used in assessment processes that lead to improved academic and student support services, see Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.3.