

2.10

Student Support Services

The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that are intended to promote student learning and enhance the development of its students.

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.

Angelo State University offers a wide variety of student support programs, services, and activities to promote student learning and enhance the development of students at all levels. These programs are regularly assessed to evaluate their effectiveness and guarantee their alignment with the ASU mission (see Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.3, Institutional effectiveness: Academic and student support services).

CONSISTENCY OF STUDENT SERVICES WITH INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

As stated in the institutional mission, ASU “delivers undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines” (ASU mission statement). The majority of these degree programs are residential programs offered on the ASU campus in San Angelo, Texas. The institution also offers online degree programs through the Departments of Security Studies and Criminal Justice, Curriculum and Instruction, Nursing, Education, and Psychology. In fall 2011, ASU had 6,267 undergraduate and 817 graduate students; 5,218 of the undergraduate and 314 of the graduate students were full time. Approximately 10 percent of the student body, including undergraduates and graduates, took only online courses, and most of these courses were in education or nursing. Of the undergraduate students, 96 percent were from Texas, 55 percent were women, and 45 percent were men. In terms of race and ethnicity, 59 percent of undergraduates were White, 27 percent were Hispanic, and 9 percent were African American. The average age of undergraduates was 20, and 17 percent were 25 or older. To serve this diverse community of learners, ASU provides a wide variety of support services to encourage the scholarship, intellectual growth, and personal development of all students. In this learning-centered context, co-curricular experiences are designed to support students’ personal and academic development so that they can maximize their potential to “be responsible citizens and to have productive careers” (ASU mission statement). The university’s student support programs, services, and activities directly relate to the following Master Goals of the ASU strategic plan, Vision 2020:

- Master Goal 2. The university provides and maintains facilities and services appropriate for the university’s academic and co-curricular programs (Vision 2020, p. 5).

- Master Goal 3. The university recruits, retains and graduates, in numbers consistent with increased goals for enrollment and retention, an academically qualified student body reflecting the diversity of the region, the state, and the nation (p. 7).
- Master Goal 4. The university offers undergraduate and graduate curricula and co-curricula to support students' intellectual and personal growth, to address issues relevant to society, and to meet the demands of State of Texas initiatives and the marketplace (p. 9).
- Master Goal 5. The university maintains a supportive, helpful environment for students, faculty, staff, community, and alumni (p. 15).

ASU's co-curricular programming for students supports these goals by providing a variety of opportunities for students at all levels to broaden their skills and perspectives through engaged participation and learning. The majority of ASU's student support services fall under the purview of the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. Additional services are provided through university-wide social and cultural programming, the University Health Clinic and Center for Counseling Services, and a variety of academic support units, as outlined below. More information about ASU's academic support services for students and faculty is provided in Comprehensive Standard 3.4.9, Academic support services.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS

In accordance with the Commission's policy on "Distance and Correspondence Education," ASU is committed to providing distance education students with "reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their successful completion of course work" (ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education, p. 3 number 6) in accordance with the principles of best practice defined in ASU OP 04.11, Attachment C (p. 2). Many student services are made available through the ASU website and the campus technology portal, RamPort, which can be accessed at any time and from any place and facilitates access for all students, including those enrolled in distance education programs. Users only need to log in once to access a wide range of information and services including, for example, library resources, curriculum reference materials in Blackboard, web-based email, and web-based calendars. Because the portal is integrated with the institution's information-management systems, it also allows students to manage their registration online and provides them with convenient access to up-to-date personal records, including, for example, grades, transcripts, billing information, and library reminders. For additional information regarding ASU's commitment to providing reliable access to the learning and information technology resources needed to support distance education students, please see Core Requirement 2.9, Learning resources and services and Comprehensive Standard 3.4.12, Technology use.

Specific examples regarding ASU's delivery of appropriate student support services to both on campus and distance education students are included in the narrative below.

STUDENT AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (SAEM) offers programs and activities aimed at recruiting and retaining ASU students. The vice president for student affairs and enrollment management manages, supervises, and directs the following areas and activities: 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.

Student Life

The Student Life office supports and implements services to foster the holistic development of students and to assist them in learning and practicing those qualities that will enable them to enrich their personal lives, improve their abilities to serve and contribute to society, and become good citizen leaders in their professions and in their communities. The office publishes information about its services on the Student Life website, which is accessible to students on and off campus and includes targeted information for special student populations, such as non-traditional students and students with disabilities, as well as a link to the ASU Student Handbook 2011–2012. The student handbook provides general information regarding the policies, rules, and regulations concerning student activities, academic issues, and expected standards of student behavior. 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, and the Executive Director of Student Life has primary authority and responsibility for implementing student disciplinary procedures (see also Comprehensive Standard 3.9.1, Student rights). The Student Life office also oversees the Center for Student Involvement, the Student Government Association, and the Center for Counseling Services.

Center for Student Involvement—The Center for Student Involvement provides ASU students with opportunities to expand their education outside the classroom through leadership programs, membership in student organizations, and fun events. Program areas administered through the Center for Student Involvement include the following:

- Student organizations—Students are encouraged to participate in one or more of ASU's 100-plus student organizations, which include five Greek-letter social organizations. Participating in such organizations is an excellent way for students to develop skills that may not be taught directly in the classroom, such as budgeting, interpersonal relations, delegation, motivation, hands-on problem-solving techniques, long-range planning, program evaluation, and personal evaluation (Student Organizations home page).
- Student programs and activities— The University Center Program Council (UCPC) is a student-governed organization that plans, presents, and evaluates cultural, educational, social, and recreational programs for the students of ASU and the ASU and San Angelo communities (UCPC Event Schedule). These events, which are intended to promote the best interests of the university and contribute to the advancement of ASU's educational goals and objectives, are organized and led by students under the direction of the Center for Student Involvement professional staff. The UCPC is funded by the University Center Fee, which is paid each semester by every ASU student.
- Greek life and community service—For almost 40 years, ASU's Greek-social organizations have played an active role on campus, providing opportunities that enhance student learning and contribute to the development of leadership, intellect, service, and life-long friendships. Based on ideals of academics and scholarship, Greek Life (also see Go Greek page) offers students

outstanding opportunities in leadership, community service, and personal development. The Coordinator for Greek Life and Community Service helps connect ASU students and student organizations, including ASU's Greek organizations, with service opportunities that benefit San Angelo and surrounding areas while promoting civic responsibility in the greater community. Many of these opportunities involve campus-sponsored programs (Community Service home page). The annual Community Volunteer Fair, for example, brings local agencies to the campus to promote their organizations and solicit student volunteers. In addition, many ASU student organizations have ongoing relationships with local and national causes and philanthropies. In 2010–2011, ASU students reported approximately 4,000 hours of community service involvement. Currently, Greek life does not sponsor community service for distance education students. However, the annual volunteer trip, Project Spring Break, is offered to all full-time ASU graduate and undergraduate students.

- Leadership development—The Center for Student Involvement implements a series of programs to help prepare ASU students for leadership roles and responsibilities, including, for example, the annual Student Organization Leadership Summit, which is designed for students who have leadership roles and responsibilities in ASU student organizations (Leadership Development web page).

Student Government—ASU's Student Government Association (SGA) is the governing organization of the ASU student body. All legislative powers granted to the SGA are vested in the Student Senate, which is composed of members chosen by the ASU student body. Senators serve one-year terms with elections in April, and the senate meets once a week. Specific terms of membership and appointment for the Student Senate are defined in the Student Body Constitution, and policies and procedures governing the Student Senate are established in the Student Body Bylaws. Each year, about 50 students, including 30 senators, serve on campus committees and give their input about new ASU projects and initiatives in all areas, including parking, facilities, housing, food, finance, health services, and academic programs. Through this committee work, students who participate in SGA projects and initiatives get real-world experience working with ASU administrators, faculty, and staff. The Student Senate is advised by one faculty advisor and by the Executive Director for Student Life.

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, as summarized below under Health Services.

Career Development

The Career Development office provides a variety of services designed to help ASU students explore their career options, identify internship and part-time work opportunities, and find full-time positions in their chosen fields (Career Development Services). Career Development offers counseling and career assessments at no charge to all undergraduate and graduate students, as well as alumni, and sponsors job fairs to connect students to employment opportunities. Other activities sponsored by the office include mock interviews, resume critiques, on-campus recruiting interviews, and a variety of presentations on topics such as career fashion, social media, and etiquette. All of these presentations are designed to

prepare students for a successful transition away from college and into their chosen careers. Students enrolled in distance education can contact Career Development Services via telephone or online and are otherwise eligible to receive assistance in every type of career service offered.

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 (see Residential Programs mission statement in Residence Hall Handbook 2011-2012, p. 5). Residential programs are developed based on a unified, student-development-focused programming model that has evolved in response to student feedback, benchmarking data, institutional changes, and industry best practice. This model, which reflects recent national trends and best practice, is based on the seminal work "Learning Reconsidered: A Campus Wide Focus on the Student Experience" (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2004). This approach has been endorsed by all the major Student Affairs professional organizations, including the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Association of College and University Housing Officers - International, American College Personnel Association, National Association for Campus Activities, National Academic Advising Association, and National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association. The model, which is grounded in current student-development theory and practice, emphasizes learning objectives and outcomes in a holistic, collaborative approach to student learning. Under this model, learning objectives for student programming are developed around the following dimensions: cognitive complexity; knowledge acquisition, integration, and application; humanitarianism; civic engagement; interpersonal and intrapersonal competence; practical competence; and persistence and academic achievement.

During a typical year, the Housing and Residential Programs department plans and implements approximately 275 programs. In the 2010–2011 academic year, participation averaged approximately 50 people per event with more than 14,000 total attendances at all programs. Over the past three years, attendance has steadily increased. Moreover, in accordance with student development theory, which suggests that students form communities quickly at the beginning of the fall semester—typically within the first six weeks—the staff "frontloads" programming during this important timeframe. The staff also specifically targets academic and cultural programs alongside the more typical social programs. Each residential area attempts to offer multiple events each week throughout the first six weeks. Example programs, along with corresponding learning dimensions, include the following:

- Meals for the Elderly Bag Decorating (Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement)
- RAINN Day, bringing awareness to rape and sexual abuse (Interpersonal Competence and Cognitive Complexity)
- Texan Hall Paper Drive (Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement)
- Children's Cancer Awareness (Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement)
- Alcohol Awareness Memorial Stakes, decorating stakes for people who have died or been negatively affected by alcohol related incidents (Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement)
- Blood Drive (Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement)

The residence hall program is an integral part of ASU's overall educational objective of providing the best possible environment for the mental, physical, and emotional development of ASU students. Single undergraduate students with less than 60 semester credit hours of college level work who enroll at ASU and carry a total of 12 or more semester credit hours at ASU and who do not live at the full-time established residence of their parent(s) are required to reside in university-owned housing (ASU OP 60.02, Housing). As of the fall 2011 semester, ASU housed 28 percent of its total enrollment of students (or 32 percent of undergraduates) in eight residence halls. Demographically, of those living on campus during the fall 2011 semester, 36 percent were freshmen, 36 percent were sophomores, 17 percent were juniors, 10 percent were seniors, and 1 percent were graduate students. As for gender distribution, 46 percent were male and 54 percent were female.

University Recreation and Intramurals

The University Recreation department (UREC) is primarily concerned with the physical well-being of ASU students. Its mission is "to engage the campus community with recreation and wellness programs designed to stimulate growth and development by enhancing healthy lifestyles through participation opportunities, educational experiences, and supportive services." Its offerings include the Ram X fitness program, which provides a variety of free, ongoing fitness classes to students, faculty, and staff (Fitness Classes web page). These classes provide a friendly environment in which students can actively engage in an exercise program while learning safe and effective exercise methods. More than 4,000 students participated in RamX fitness classes in the 2010–2011 academic year.

UREC also offers personalized, one-on-one fitness training for students and UREC pass holders wishing to improve their level of overall health and fitness. Participants in this program gain valuable knowledge and skills needed to improve their fitness level, while the students leading the program develop personally and professionally. The program exclusively hires ASU students and trains them to become Personalized Fitness Trainers. Students are trained in-house according to the American College of Sports Medicine Personal Trainer curriculum, and they are encouraged to seek professional, nationally recognized personal training certifications upon completion of the program.

Intramural sports activities coordinated by UREC are intended to afford an opportunity for experiential learning through athletic participation for the entire ASU community. The intramurals program strives to cultivate lifetime recreational skills, integrate students socially in a sports setting, develop leadership abilities, and foster a spirit of sportsmanship and fair play among participants and spectators (Intramurals web page).

UREC's Outdoor Adventures program promotes student learning and development through outdoor activities, such as rock climbing and backpacking. Participation in such activities allows students to learn experientially the cause and effect of various decisions made within a controlled environment. The outdoor activities also include teambuilding experiences to promote healthy group structures and dynamics. Outdoor Adventures specifically fosters student development in the following areas: accountability, communication, leadership, metacognition, open-mindedness, problem solving, professionalism, and various technical skills.

Other UREC programs include health fairs, swimming lessons, and extramural sports.

Enrollment Management

The associate vice president for enrollment management oversees the offices of Admissions, Financial Aid, and the Registrar. To provide online services to distance education students in accordance with ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education, each of these offices provides information regarding its services and related resources on the institutional website, as noted in the narrative below. In addition, current ASU students can access their personal records, including registration and payment information, via the campus technology portal, RamPort.

Admissions—The Office of Admissions is responsible for undergraduate recruitment. Admissions counselors make periodic visits to high schools, community colleges, and other sites to present information about the university and its undergraduate programs to interested students and their families. Representatives from the office also meet with prospective students and families who visit the ASU campus. The office hosts a variety of events at which prospective students are encouraged to explore the campus and visit with faculty in the department of their anticipated major. One such event, Discover ASU, is offered three times per year. This program brings prospective students and their families to ASU to introduce them to faculty and current ASU students and to connect them with various support services. The Admissions office also 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. In addition, current students, administrators, and staff members are available to answer questions (SOAR program web page). Information regarding ASU admissions policies, procedures, and related resources, including contact information for admissions staff, is accessible via the Office of Admissions home page.

Financial Aid—The ASU Financial Aid Office assists students who need help meeting the cost of attending the university. ASU offers need-based and non-need-based financial assistance to students. Financial aid personnel make regular presentations to prospective and current students regarding financial aid services, and they assist admissions personnel with recruiting events. The Financial Aid home page also provides links to useful information, including information about costs of attending ASU, types of financial aid available, eligibility requirements, and contact information for ASU's financial aid personnel.

Registrar—The Office of the Registrar assists students, faculty, and staff with all aspects of student records, including registering for classes, dropping classes, verifying enrollment, receiving credit for examination, checking grades, and requesting transcript copies. Information regarding these services is provided on the Office of the Registrar home page, and access to these services is available through RamPort. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintaining official student academic records and protecting the security, confidentiality, and integrity of those records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (see also Comprehensive Standard 3.9.2, Student records).

UNIVERSITY-SPONSORED SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to the programs and services directed by the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, other university departments and organizations sponsor social and cultural activities for the ASU community. For example, the University Planetarium provides one of the largest community outreach programs on campus, offering weekly shows on a wide range of space-related topics. About 9,700 students in kindergarten through grade 12 attend programs at the planetarium each year. ASU also offers a campus-wide fitness and wellness program, ASUFit, which serves faculty, staff, and students. In addition to providing fitness activities for the ASU community, part of the ASUFit mission is to disseminate information related to healthy lifestyles. To encourage participation by all sectors of the university community, including offsite students, ASUFit actively markets its programs and services online via the ASUFit website, Facebook and Twitter postings, and through email newsletters and weekly email updates.

HEALTH SERVICES

A health fee is automatically assessed each semester to full-time ASU students attending on campus. Students enrolled only in online courses are not charged the health fee. 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. Confidential examination, diagnosis, and consultation services are available at no charge. A full-time board-certified doctor, a nurse practitioner, and three registered nurses provide medical care. Counseling services are provided by one part-time and three full-time Licensed Professional Counselors, who help students deal with a variety of issues, including depression and anxiety, problem solving, decision making, relationship issues, adjustment problems, test anxiety, family problems, alcohol or substance abuse problems, and stress management. The University Health Clinic and Center for Counseling Services also provide educational programs and services on a variety of health-related issues. Example programs include the following:

- Girls Night Out—a collaborative effort with the Laura Bush Institute for Women’s Health promoting women’s health and personal safety
- Health Fair—promoted in collaboration with the university-wide ASUFit program to provide information about many different aspects of health and physical fitness
- Flu education—providing yearly flu vaccines in collaboration with the nursing department and the Student Nurses Association
- AIDS/HIV education and free testing
- Breast cancer awareness, including information about the need for screening
- Diabetes education, including information about blood glucose levels and the onset of disease
- Successful strategies for exam taking, handling stress, and relaxation techniques
- Personal safety and stalking awareness
- Health-related programs on issues such as diet, exercise, and smoking

Health Services maintains a Facebook page, and health postings are shared via Twitter. The University Health Clinic and Counseling Services home page also includes links to several online resources, including Student Wellness and Substance Abuse Resources.

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 provost and vice president for academic affairs, who is responsible for the academic and research administration of the four undergraduate colleges and the College of Graduate Studies. The provost also 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, the Tutor Educate Advise Mentor/Achieving Collegiate Excellence (TEAM/ACE) Office, and the Tutoring Center. Each of these programs and offices provides services, tools, and resources to promote students' academic success. Summary information about these programs and services is provided on the Center for Academic Excellence home page, and additional information is provided in Comprehensive Standard 3.4.9, Academic support services.

ASU SMART:STUDENTS MAPPING A RIGHT TRACK

The Center for Academic Excellence provides tutoring services through the Supplemental Instruction program and the ASU Tutor Center. In addition, discipline-specific tutoring services are available through various academic departments. Departmental tutoring resources include the Math Lab, Writing Center, Modern Language Tutoring, and Accounting Lab. ASU SMART (Students Mapping a Right Track) is the umbrella program that coordinates these tutoring resources to help improve student persistence and academic success. All SMART services are free to ASU students (SMART home page). In addition to tutoring, the SMART program provides academic and study skills workshops (SMART Workshop Descriptions), and online academic support for all students, including distance education students (SMART Online). Students have around-the-clock access to SMART Online, which offers academic support for the ASU Tutor Center, Writing Center, Math Lab, and Supplemental Instruction. Types of support available include live online chat sessions, ask-a-tutor options, and access to various online resources and exercises.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

The Office of Pre-declared Advising housed in the Center for Academic Excellence provides professional academic advising services for students who have not yet declared their major. Advising for all other students occurs in the appropriate academic departments. For detailed information about the academic advising services available to undergraduate and graduate students, both on and off campus, please see Comprehensive Standard 3.4.9, Academic support services.

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. 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. A division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, 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 (Student Support Center home page, SSC Goals and Learning, and SSC Resources). 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.

LEARNING AND INFORMATION RESOURCES, SERVICES, AND TECHNOLOGY

ASU's Porter Henderson Library provides students and faculty members with access to the information resources and services they need to fulfill their learning, teaching, and research responsibilities. Through the campus proxy server, distance learning students and students living away from campus are able to connect to RamPort to access all of the library's electronic information resources. More information regarding learning and information resources is provided in Core Requirement 2.9, Learning resources and services. The ASU Information Technology (IT) department also offers a wide range of services to students and faculty. For the students, IT offers mobile services, tech support, free antivirus software, and multimedia support. For more information regarding information technology services, see Comprehensive Standard 3.4.12, Technology use.

ENSURING QUALITY OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

ASU is committed to providing the best possible educational experience, and its student support programs and activities are of the highest caliber. Student support staff are carefully selected and trained to guarantee that the quality of ASU programs remains consistently high (Comprehensive Standard 3.9.3, Qualified staff). Additionally, ASU regularly evaluates its student support programs to guarantee their ongoing effectiveness and alignment with the ASU mission. 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 approximately 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 summary of average rankings on the Student Opinion Survey for college services at ASU indicates consistent student satisfaction with ASU student services (Student Opinion Survey 2009 Report p. 5, 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). Examples of specific changes that have been made in student services based on assessment data are provided in Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.3, Institutional effectiveness: Academic and student support services.