

**Project South Texas
Academic Administration Working Groups
FINAL Report**

Working Group	Academic Support Services
Co-Chairs	Janna Arney (UTB), Kristin Croyle (UTPA)
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristin Croyle, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of the University College (UTPA) • Janna Arney, Associate Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs (UTB) • Jonikka Charlton, Associate Vice Provost for Student Success Initiatives (UTPA) • Ethel Cantu, Associate Vice President for Student Success (UTB) • Virgil Pierce, Associate Professor of Mathematics (UTPA) • Russell Adams, Associate Professor of Marketing (UTPA) • Selma Yznaga, Director of Academic Advising (UTB) • Marilyn Hagerty, Director, University Academic Advising Center (UTPA) • Richard Treviño, Executive Director of Student Support Services (UTPA) • Leslie Jones, Co-director of Learning Enrichment (UTB) • Angelica Corona, Student (UTB) • Evertado Ibarra, Student (UTPA)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

Introduction, Framework, and Philosophy

This committee began by considering two questions: “what should a successful student be able to do at graduation” and “what does a student need at different points in their development.” We generated three skill sets as a result of those discussions (see Appendix A for further details) that framed all of our subsequent deliberations. The skill sets are as follows:

- *UTRGV graduates are scholars* with a thirst for life-long learning and academic grit and resilience in the face of challenges. They are skilled in the use of language and quantitative knowledge and 21st century digital literacies. They are critical thinkers who are aware of the role of culture in a global world.
- *UTRGV graduates are civically engaged* individuals who recognize their responsibility and role in their communities and the world. They invest their talents and gifts in their communities and act as global citizens and skilled leaders. They are ambassadors that the university is proud to recognize.
- *UTRGV graduates are prepared to solve real-world problems* with skills that have been honed through experiential learning opportunities. They are sought after for their capabilities and skill sets.

Throughout our discussions, we have also been guided by our beliefs about the necessary characteristics of successful interventions:

- *A foundation in the classroom.* Interventions that occur on the periphery of coursework are not as valued or as effective as ones that are centered within the curriculum and direct instruction (Tinto, 2012).
- *A personal touch.* We believe that students more highly value messages and assistance that comes from identifiable personal sources who can communicate in a caring and individualized way. For example, students are

more responsive to messages that come from their individual advisor whom they have met than they are to messages that come from a faceless advising center.

- *Timeliness.* Student supports and interventions should be delivered as close as possible to the point that the student demonstrates need or the university can anticipate that a student would have that need. For example, academic supports that are tied to an early warning system need to be able to be delivered at the point that the warnings are provided by faculty, not weeks or months later.
- *A smooth integration with the wealth of data that we have to predict and characterize student success.*

Recommendations

Taking into account the characteristics of successful graduates and how to construct programming that can meet their needs, as well as best practices of universities across the country, our recommendations are as follows:

- *Transition to the University.* To facilitate students' successful transition and integration to the university, we recommend 1) a three stage orientation, 2) a required common first year course such as UNIV 1301 Learning Framework, and 3) individualized advising and mentoring for all first year students led by the faculty instructors of the common course. A smooth transition to the university and strong start in the first year builds student retention, success, and graduation rates throughout the four years of a student's undergraduate career. The use of the Learning Framework course as a common first year course provides a strong foundation to university-level studies, facilitates self-understanding and academic major selection which can save the student time and money in the future, and provides a nurturing peer and faculty environment to smooth adjustment for new students. The Learning Framework course at UTPA has contributed to strong first year retention rates in comparison to other UT schools, even with our higher risk student population.
- *Advising Beyond the First Year.* The committee recommends adoption of a "declared and prepared" split advising model in which students who first enter the university are advised by dedicated faculty (their UNIV 1301 instructors) and then transition to major-specific advising staff when they have firmly declared a major and have cleared all TSI requirements. An important component of this model is that all students will be provided with a supportive advising relationship in all stages of their undergraduate degrees, regardless of risk or need. Offering individualized support to students only after academic need is demonstrated, such as academic failure, guarantees that students will have difficulties that could have been prevented by a supportive proactive advising relationship. Advising information and services should also be available face to face at a central location, as well as at all significant instructional locations and online.
- *Success in First Year Writing Classes.* To facilitate student success in first year English classes, we recommend the creation of a multilingual University Writing Program, which would bring together the First-Year Writing Program (including developmental reading/writing), the Writing Center, and an arm which would be responsible for providing campus leadership on writing across the curriculum and writing in the disciplines initiatives. This would make UTRGV one of a very few, if not the only, university-wide multilingual writing program which integrates all of our university's writing programs and initiatives into a single, cohesive unit. We also propose continuing UTPA's highly successful co-requisite model for delivery of developmental reading and writing, in which students enroll simultaneously for credit-bearing English courses and their developmental courses.
- *Success in First Year Math Classes.* To facilitate student success in first year math classes, we recommend 1) differentiated developmental pathways leading to core level math courses that are tailored to students' major needs and 2) self-paced computer-assisted courses with embedded undergraduate/graduate student classroom facilitators. This builds on recent success in developmental math courses at UTPA.
- *Academic Supports Beyond the Classroom.* The committee recommends a centralized structure that would oversee tutoring and academic support services. An important and innovative focus of the proposed center is to both support students in self-initiated tutoring in areas of academic difficulty *and* to support academic departments and faculty in selection of the best course-based learning assistance model for their particular program and student needs. Rather than delivering a "one size fits all" approach, the center staff would be well versed in various research-based academic support models and would work with departments and faculty to

design appropriate interventions based on that research. This builds on successful models being implemented at UTB and UTPA.

- *Clear Pathways for Success.* The committee strongly recommends clear funneling of students into successful career paths through the following academic structures and benchmarks: admission of first year students to meta-majors (or to an undecided major), guidance to a specific major in the first year in the Learning Framework course, course milestones in the second and third year with focused just-in-time advising, and an academic internship or other capstone experience at the fourth year level. These structures and benchmarks echo emerging best practices in student success across the country.
- *Technological Supports for Student Success.* The committee recognizes the critical role that cutting edge technology solutions serve in a 21st century academic setting. With that view, we particularly recommend the following technological supports: 1) an integrated academic and advising record that facilitates advising and student support case management, 2) continuation of DegreeWorks as a degree auditing solution, 3) a robust early warning system that is integrated with the learning management system, and 4) expanded computer lab/classroom facilitates to support math instruction.

FINDINGS

Innovative Initiatives Currently In Place

Each of the following initiatives is designed to reduce time to graduation by providing the necessary support at the right time in a student's college experience. Initiatives are at different stages of development at UTB and UTPA or may be in place at only one institution. Some are highly innovative in comparison to other institutions of higher education. Others are considered best practices in higher education and are at different levels of adoption across the country.

- *Two Stage Orientation (UTPA).* New student orientation at UTPA involves two steps prior to the beginning of classes, a 1.5 day on-campus more traditional orientation (moving to 1 day in Summer 2014) and a 2 day on-campus freshman camp called Bronc Round Up (moving to 1 day in Summer 2014). The addition of the freshman camp in 2011 has smoothed student transition to campus, increased student affiliation to UTPA, and built peer relationships on campus. Each of these builds first year retention. A third stage in orientation, the UNIV 1301 Learning Framework class, is described below.
- *UNIV 1301 Learning Framework course for the majority of incoming students (UTPA).* UNIV 1301 Learning Framework is required for the majority of incoming first-year students at UTPA. First offered in 2004, UNIV 1301 has contributed to steadily rising first year retention rates at UTPA that are now third in the UT System (behind UT and UT-Dallas). This course has been recognized by *Excelencia in Education* and receives excellent student evaluations. Additional detail on UNIV 1301 is found below and in Appendix B.
- *Student Employment Initiative (UTB).* Initiated in Fall 2005, the Student Employment Initiative (SEI) is part of a retention and timely graduation strategy that recognizes the compelling need of students to work while attending college. The SEI was designed to integrate students into the campus environment and to help control the variables that could hinder academic progress because of off-campus work obligations through a rigorous, incentive-based model requiring accountability for academic performance, which includes enrolling for at least 15 semester credit hours and maintaining a minimum 2.75 GPA. The SEI also provides on-campus paid internship opportunities in a student's program of study above and beyond traditional work-study. The SEI adds value to students' educational experiences and places them in positions where they can grow as professionals and gain early exposure to a career or research in a field of interest. That success was recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Star Award in December 2008 and at the national level by *Excelencia in Education* in 2013. Further, UTB is taking the lessons learned from the program and implementing them into a campus-wide initiative, turning all part-time positions into internships for students.

- *Developmental education co-requisite model (UTPA)*. Students enrolled in developmental writing or reading at UTPA have been simultaneously enrolled in *ENGL 1301 Rhetoric and Composition I* since 2010. UTPA's pass rates for developmental reading/writing classes in 2012-2013 reached 88%, in part because of this highly successful model. Developmental math at UTPA has also recently begun incorporating a co-requisite model with some success.
- *Structured Learning (mandatory tutoring) for students enrolled in high DFW first-year courses (UTB)*. UTB implemented a full scale structured learning initiative in Fall 2013 entitled *Link2Success (L2S)* that targets high failure-rate first year core courses. L2S is a student-centered structured learning assistance program that supplements course lecture with mandatory 2-3 hour per week study sessions that are built into the course schedule and facilitated by peer L2S leaders. The L2S leaders attend the course lectures along with the students, communicate with faculty on a weekly basis, and design lesson plans accordingly. The study sessions are designed with collaborative learning and students' active engagement in mind. The goal is to scaffold students toward becoming active, strategic, and independent learners. L2S leaders serve a multi-purpose role in that they are tutors, role models, and peer mentors that help incoming freshmen transition, both academically and socially, to college life. Student pass and completion rates have significantly increased in several of the L2S courses.
- *Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction (optional learning support) widely available for high DFW courses (UTPA and UTB)*. UTPA provides face to face tutoring services for courses in which students often struggle, particularly in the first two years of the curriculum, including tutoring in areas such as math, chemistry, physics, biology, history, political science, economics, etc. Both UTPA and UTB have a long history of providing supplemental instruction services for high failure rate courses. For example, in FY2013, UTPA supported supplemental instruction in 122 courses.
- *Advising prior to need/mandatory (UTPA)*. Currently UTPA advises all undergraduate students every semester using both faculty and staff as advisors. This is intended to provide support to students and help them to stay on track prior to problems emerging. Models in which advising is only provided to students who have already experienced academic difficulty ensure that students will experience stress and failure that may have been prevented with a more aggressive advising approach.
- *Early warning system integrated with advising case management (UTB)*. Insight CARE is a web-based software solution that allows users to apply a real-time case management approach to an institution's Early Alert system. UTB has received feedback indicating a need for better communication between the referring faculty member, academic advisors, and campus resources. The Insight CARE software module allows for all stakeholders in the student's success team to follow up on the referral at any time, ensuring that the student receives attention. Communications regarding Early Alert (e.g. e-mail and Insight portal announcements) can be analyzed to determine if a student has opened and clicked through to any instructions or recommendations.
- *DegreeWorks degree audit system (UTPA)*. DegreeWorks has been recently implemented at UTPA as the degree planning and auditing technological tool. All undergraduate degree plans are now fully available in DegreeWorks and graduation audits are run through that system. DegreeWorks is user-friendly, available to students, faculty, and staff, and is particularly useful in advising and degree planning.
- *Boot Camp or Bridge Program for incoming students (math/engineering/science and developmental education; UTB and UTPA)*. Short-term summer bridge programs and boot camps are offered prior to enrollment in courses where students may lack prerequisite skills, or prior to courses that may be particularly difficult for selected students. Bridge courses and boot camps increase success rates when the student subsequently is enrolled in the course. UTB has experience in offering a successful summer bridge program for developmental education students, a boot camp for students interested in testing out of College Algebra or Pre-Calculus, and a summer bridge program for engineering students. UTPA has a funded effort (NSF-STEP) to support development of a summer bridge effort for incoming engineering students to move them into Calculus at a faster than normal pace.
- *Student Success Collaborative predictive analytics and benchmarks (UTB)*. The Student Success Collaborative, available through the Education Advisory Board, has been in use at UTB since 2013. The Student Success Collaborative provides powerful predictive analytics that consider historical student success patterns at UTB in

evaluating areas of concern and opportunity in an individual student's performance. The platform's algorithm also includes faculty input regarding critical courses, temporal parameters, and threshold grades. It is useful for both individual student advising and for programmatic decision-making.

- *Major maps (UTB, UTPA just starting).* Major maps are informational tools originally created at Georgia State University to help guide a student both through academic benchmarks throughout their undergraduate career and through other areas of important development, such as professional integration or career preparation. Major maps have been designed for all undergraduate majors at UTB. UTPA had initiated major map design, but has put it on hold while planning for UTRGV with the intention to use the UTB major maps in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Recommendations

Transition to the University

To facilitate students' successful transition and integration to the university, we recommend 1) a three stage orientation, 2) a required common first year course, and 3) individualized advising and mentoring for all first year students led by the faculty instructors of the common course.

We recommend a three stage orientation and transition to the university including 1) a high quality one day on-campus orientation focused on welcoming the student to campus, increasing their feelings of affiliation and commitment to UTRGV, and helping them enroll, 2) a high energy one to two day freshman camp just before fall semester focused on helping the students to feel socially and academically connected to the university, and 3) a freshman course required for all students that transitions the student more deeply into their academic work and provides a firm foundation for further study. Students with particular risks or other indicators may have additional transition experiences, such as boot camps for students who are not fully academically prepared for university-level study.

A required first year course for all students has many advantages. It facilitates a smooth transition to the university, provides a strong academic foundation to university-level studies, facilitates self-understanding and academic major selection which can save the student time and money in the future, and provides a nurturing peer and faculty environment for new students who may be without other interpersonal supports. When these courses are kept relatively small (20-40 students per section), it facilitates close peer relationships and significant engagement with material. Innovative and engaged teaching strategies would be required.

A common first year course also provides an opportunity to institute a course-based foundation for the students' first year advising and mentoring. Noel-Levitz has strongly recommended that UTPA shift their currently adopted *UNIV 1301 Learning Framework* course to this model, where current instructors also begin to serve as their students' first year advisor of record and serve in a mentoring role as well. This leverages the power of the classroom experience and the connections that students form with these dedicated instructors. To be successful, this course needs a dedicated group of faculty who provide the instruction and mentoring/advising for first year students.

The Learning Framework course, first implemented at UTPA in 2004, is designed to help students understand the principles of learning and motivation and to apply them to their own university experience, easing their transition to a university setting and preparing them for success in their remaining core curriculum classes and majors. In the 10 years since UNIV was adopted, first year retention at UTPA has increased by a remarkable 10%. While not all of that increase is due to the implementation of UNIV 1301, data indicate that success of students in this course has contributed significantly to the overall retention increase. In recognition of this success, the course was recently named by *Excelencia in Education* as one of 16 national finalists among 195 competitors for its 2011 Examples of Excelencia award, which honors higher education institutions that increase degree completion among Latinos. As it has evolved over the years, a stable full-time cohort of faculty with Master's degrees or higher in Educational Psychology or Psychology has been hired to provide instruction. Criteria have been established for students to take the course based on a combination of high school class rank and ACT/SAT scores. At this time, approximately 70% of the UTPA entering freshman class takes UNIV 1301. See Appendix B for additional information on the UNIV 1301 Learning Framework course currently in place at UTPA.

Advising Beyond the First Year

The committee recommends adoption of a “declared and prepared” split advising model in which students who first enter the university are advised by dedicated faculty (their UNIV 1301 instructors; see above) and then transition to major-specific advising staff when they have firmly declared a major and have cleared all TSI requirements. Advising information and services should be available face to face at a central location, as well as at all significant instructional locations and online.

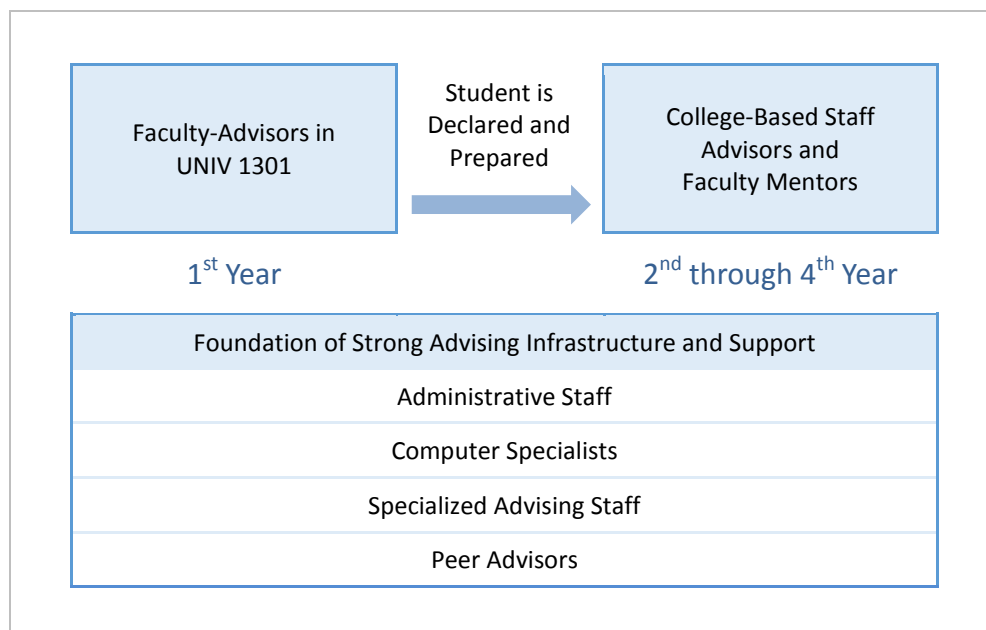
During the first year, dedicated faculty will teach a Learning Framework course and provide focused advising and mentoring. Faculty-advisors will support first year students until they have 1) cleared all TSI requirements and 2) selected a major. When faculty-advisors are not teaching, they will provide traditional advising services in a centralized Main Advising Center location to serve freshman students who are not TSI-met or are undeclared.

Academic advisors, who will be located at the Main Advising Center, will provide advising services for student populations who need targeted support to progress toward degree completion. In addition to providing traditional advising services, Academic Advisors focus on outreach strategies for academic success. Academic Advisors coordinate and implement workshops, major and career fairs, information campaigns, and communicate regularly with students who are classified at all levels beyond freshman. Academic advisors collaborate with faculty and the campus community to offer a network of support to students who have more than 30 credit hours but have not selected a major, are on academic probation or suspension, have more than 90 credit hours but lack requirements for degree completion, or who have transferred from another institution.

For the second year and beyond, students who are “declared and prepared” would be transitioned to staff advisors within departments/colleges/schools no earlier than their sophomore year and no later than their junior year. Staff advisors within academic colleges would provide prescriptive advising and would also be charged with tracking student success and working with departments in constructing strong programming for advisement.

In addition to faculty-advisors, academic advisors, and staff advisors, faculty will mentor students on an individual level in high impact practices such as undergraduate research and transition to the profession. Peer advisors will be available throughout the student’s enrollment in various capacities to help students with transition, information, and academic and career planning. This model is summarized below in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A Proposed Advising Model for UTRGV



An overarching aspect of this model is that all students will be provided with a supportive advising relationship in all stages of their undergraduate degrees, regardless of risk or need. Offering individualized support to students only after academic need is demonstrated, such as academic failure or going “off-track” on the degree plan, guarantees that students will have difficulties that could have been prevented by a supportive proactive advising relationship.

The range of activities included in the proposed advising model are summarized below in Table 1. A more elaborated proposal for advising at UTRGV, including proposed staffing levels, is provided in Appendix C.

Table 1. Proposed Advising Activities Throughout the Student Life Cycle

Pre-Entry	1 st Year and Undeclared/ Underprepared	2 nd and 3 rd Year	4 th Year
Two Step Orientation	Learning Framework Course with Faculty Mentors/Advisors	On-Line Advising Hub (Self-Directed and Chat Advising)	On-Line Advising Hub (Self-Directed and Chat Advising)
Meta-Majors	Career Assessment and Development	Program Admissions Assistance/Advising	Career Services
Career – Major Connection	Major and Career Fairs	Career/Major Curriculum Adjustment Assistance	Career Launching and Launching to the Discipline
Online Pre-Advising	Introduction to On-Line Self-Directed Advising	Targeted Support Using Predictive Analytics	Graduation Completion Advising
Identification of Academic Needs with Use of Predictive Analytics	Targeted Support of First Year Transfer Students	Major Maps and Referrals for Service Learning, Internships, and Undergraduate Research	Professional Organizations and Networking
High School Counselor Online Advising Hub	Peer Mentors	Faculty and Peer Mentors	Faculty Mentors

Success in First Year Math and Writing Classes

To facilitate student success in first year math classes, we recommend 1) differentiated developmental pathways leading to core level math courses that are tailored to students’ major needs and 2) self-paced computer-assisted courses with embedded undergraduate/graduate student classroom facilitators.

To facilitate student success in first year English classes, we recommend the creation of a multilingual University Writing Program, which would bring together the First-Year Writing Program (including developmental reading/writing), the Writing Center, and an arm which would be responsible for providing campus leadership on writing across the curriculum and

writing in the disciplines initiatives. We also recommend continuing UTPA's highly successful co-requisite model for delivery of developmental reading and writing, in which students enroll simultaneously for credit-bearing English courses and their developmental courses.

Organizational Structure

The committee recommends different organizational structures for the developmental and core level math and English courses. For math courses, which are linked from one course to the next in a tight progression (e.g. College Algebra -> Pre-Calculus -> Calculus), we recommend that developmental and core curriculum level math courses be overseen by a Math Department with strong internal leadership focused on student success in first year math courses (such as a Director of First Year Math). For the developmental and first-year writing courses in English, skill sets taught in those areas are primarily then applied within majors across the university. For this reason we recommend that these courses be organized under a multilingual University Writing Program outside of an English Department that will focus on building success both in first year courses and throughout the curriculum, both horizontally across majors and colleges and vertically from first to fourth year in the undergraduate curriculum.

Math-Specific Recommendations

The Math Department at UTPA has seen great success for students in developmental and core curriculum level math courses primarily with two initiatives. The committee recommends that these initiatives be continued for UTRGV. A more complete description of these significant initiatives, as well as additional math-focused initiatives, is found in Appendix D.

- *Differentiated developmental pathways leading to core level math courses that are tailored to the students' major needs.* A number of institutions in Texas are implementing a system of differentiated developmental mathematics pathways, based upon the ultimate credit bearing mathematics course a student's degree plan calls for. Specifically students heading towards Statistics courses are placed into and sent through a separate sequence of developmental mathematics courses focusing on preparing them for Statistics. A key part of this effort is the "New Mathways Project" organized by the Dana Center at UT Austin. UTPA has created a course, pre-Statistics, which is an implementation of differentiated developmental pathways. It differs in some important ways from the New Mathways Project, however, philosophically, is founded upon the same guiding principle that a student's developmental course work should prepare them for the mathematics course they need to take. The UTPA effort makes use of Computer Assisted Classrooms (see below). Additionally both UTPA and UTB already have in place core-level math courses that are designed to meet the needs of different majors, including College Algebra, Statistics, and Contemporary Mathematics, which should facilitate a broader adoption of differentiated developmental pathways.
- *Self-paced computer-assisted courses with embedded undergraduate/graduate student classroom facilitators.* UTPA, like a number of other institutions of higher education in the state and country, has begun conducting developmental mathematics courses in a computer lab using software which allows students to work on the course material at their own pace. This effort is successful at other schools, has had success at UTPA, and is now a component of an NSF-funded project for the summer bridge to Calculus at UTPA. ALEKS software is currently being used, with plans to continue exploring other software options as they are developed. Students in these courses receive one-on-one instruction from faculty and other classroom facilitators. It is important that students in these courses receive one-on-one help as soon as they encounter a difficulty. This assists them in moving rapidly through material they find easy and allows them to focus on learning and practicing material they find difficult.

Writing-Specific Recommendation: A Multilingual University Writing Program

UTPA currently has an innovative and highly effective developmental reading/writing program with strong pass rates, excellent professional development, and committed faculty; it has been held up as a model both within the state and nationally. The committee would like to see that program continue as the basis of developmental reading/writing interventions at UTRGV. While UTB currently does not offer developmental courses, UTB did develop and implement a co-requisite model and reported strong success rates from 2008-2011. The design and results were presented at the National Center for Academic Transformation and two faculty were recognized as NCAT Redesign Scholars. UTB currently has a

successful academic support program, Link2Success, which provides course-based assistance through mandatory study sessions for ENGL 1301 and 1302 led by CRLA certified tutors.

Building on the significant strengths already present at UTPA and UTB, we propose the creation of a multilingual University Writing Program, which would bring together the First-Year Writing Program (including developmental reading/writing), the Writing Center, and an arm which would be responsible for providing campus leadership on writing across the curriculum (WAC) and writing in the disciplines (WID) initiatives. We would also like to eventually create a Writing Fellows program, which is similar to supplemental instruction (SI), where a writing tutor is embedded in a writing or writing-intensive class. The creation of this new university-wide program would enable us to have a single, shared vision for helping our students become better writers and scholars who know how to use language to accomplish meaningful goals for themselves and their communities.

We imagine a program which works both horizontally, as well as vertically, beginning with a strong First Year Writing Program which provides students with foundational knowledge in the discipline about how reading/writing/research works, as well as gives students opportunities to work on meaningful projects for a variety of audiences and purposes and in a variety of genres. We will also provide leadership to help faculty across campus, especially those teaching first and second year students, learn how they can use writing to help their students learn course material (writing to learn). Additionally, we want to help interested faculty learn how to teach their upper-level students how to read/write/think like professionals in their disciplines. This is part of a four-year vertical model (Kinneavy, 1983) which begins with teaching students about writing and language and how they work, develops to introduce students to disciplinary differences with reading/writing/research, moves them into learning how to write in the discipline for their disciplinary peers, and culminates with learning how to write about disciplinary issues for non-specialists (taking your disciplinary knowledge to the community, essentially).

Strong models for university writing programs exist across the country (University of Florida, Denver University, University of Central Florida, among others), but what would make our program innovative and unique is a focus on multilingual writing, which would operate from a strengths perspective regarding language difference. Few faculty understand the length and complexity of the language acquisition process and how our students' language diversity affects their development as learners/readers/writers (see Matsuda's work in this area). This program would enable us to provide campus-wide leadership, particularly in faculty development, to help build more supportive learning environments for our multilingual students. While a few models exist for multilingual writing centers/peer tutoring programs, **we would be one of a very few, if not the only, university-wide multilingual writing program which integrates all of our university's writing programs and initiatives into a single, cohesive unit.** A more extensive description of the proposed multilingual University Writing Program is included in Appendix E, including a description of resources needed.

Academic Supports Beyond the Classroom

The committee recommends a centralized structure that would oversee tutoring and academic support services. This structure would provide both student-initiated tutoring services and would work with faculty and departments in selection and development of course-based learning assistance programming that best meets their students' needs.

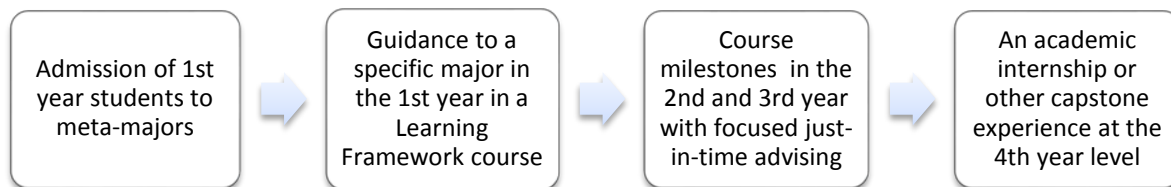
The committee is in agreement that UTRGV should create a supportive learning environment for all students by infusing academic support designed to target specific discipline, program, and/or student needs throughout the academic experience. A centralized structure to oversee academic supports, including tutoring, would serve all instructional sites and all students in both face to face and online formats. The working name of such a structure for the purposes of this report is the Learning Enrichment Center (LEC). The LEC would provide and manage tutor hiring, training, and supervision; assess the effectiveness of tutoring services; and evaluate student success for program improvement.

An important and innovative focus of the proposed LEC is to support academic departments and faculty in selection of the best course-based learning assistance model for their particular program and student needs. Rather than delivering a "one size fits all" tutoring approach, the LEC staff would be well versed in various research-based academic support models and would work with departments and faculty to design appropriate interventions based on that research. Examples of course-based learning assistance models currently in use include Accelerated Learning Groups (USC), Emerging Scholars Program (UC Berkley), Peer-Led Team Learning (CUNY), Structured Learning Assistance (Ferris State University), Supplemental Instruction (UMKC), and Video-Based Supplemental Instruction (UMKC). Research suggests that carefully coordinated and managed course-based learning assistance can increase student retention, support student aspirations, and increase

institutional revenue. Both UTPA and UTB have a long tradition of successfully implemented Supplemental Instruction, and, during Fall 2013, UTB implemented a full scale Structured Learning Assistance program. A more elaborated proposal for the Learning Enrichment Center activities is found in Appendix F.

Clear Pathways for Success

The committee strongly recommends clear funneling of students into successful career paths through the following academic structures and benchmarks:



Admitting students to meta-majors in the first year enables them to engage in structured exploration without loss of credits. Meta-majors are academic groupings of courses and course sequences that may meet the requirements of multiple programs of study. UTB is currently constructing meta-majors that extend through the first 30 hours of the curriculum that can serve as a jumping off point for construction of 6 to 9 meta-majors for UTRGV. After 30 hours, students will be required to select a more specific major. Entering students who are unable to identify a meta-major of interest will be encouraged to instead select an undecided major option so that specialized advising services can be provided to them. A Learning Framework course with faculty-advisors serving as instructors provides an ideal setting for students to explore their major choices and select a path that best fits with their strengths and interests.

Course milestones in the second and third year should be identified that are critical for success in the major. Students who cannot successfully negotiate these milestones should be offered focused just-in-time advising. This may include a combination of identification and provision of appropriate academic supports (such as tutoring) and may extend to advisement into a different major path that better fits the student's academic strengths. Use of course milestones will enable UTRGV to identify and intervene with students who might eventually struggle within their majors in the third and fourth year of study with the goal of preventing that difficulty rather than attempting to remediate it after the fact.

Finally, we recommend that an academic internship or other capstone experience at the senior level be required to help transition students from their university life to their chosen career path or graduate education. Application of the cumulative learning experiences of an undergraduate course of study can be challenging for students without support. Capstone courses with experiential components and academic internships provide that final support while also providing connection to potential employers or specific preparation that may lead to successful graduate study.

The working group is also enthusiastic about the development of major maps as an advising and decision-making tool for students, as pioneered by Georgia State University, and in development at UTB and UTPA (see Appendix G). These major maps provide a visual display of important milestones throughout the undergraduate years.

Technological Supports for Student Success

The committee recommends the following technological supports: 1) an integrated academic and advising record that facilitates case management, 2) continuation of DegreeWorks as a degree auditing solution, 3) a robust early warning system that is integrated with the learning management system, and 4) expanded computer lab/classroom facilities to support math instruction.

The working group aspires to have technological solutions that integrate a student's academic and advising record, including case notes, and data-based recommendations for the student through a single portal accessible to all staff and faculty who are directly involved in the student's success. Though we are familiar with several products, none provide full integration into a single portal, and each product varies according to the emphasis on what data is provided and who can easily access it.

We are in close agreement that excellent degree planning/auditing software will be critical from the point of student registration on. DegreeWorks has been implemented successfully at UTPA, and we are hopeful we can continue the progress we have made with that platform.

We recognize the importance of a close integration between academic support services and student academic performance throughout the semester. Support services are best offered to students when they begin to show need in a course (or before), not long after such need is demonstrated. Although early warning systems triggered by faculty reports of student performance can be useful in this regard, it is difficult for faculty to find the time to report on all students at regular intervals. This requires technological solutions that can ease the reporting burden for faculty. A robust early warning system that is integrated within the learning management system can facilitate interim grade reporting.

With the emerging success of computer-adaptive instruction in developmental math at UTPA, we also anticipate the need for increased computer lab spaces in both Edinburg and Brownsville. The success of that model depends heavily on having face-to-face instruction and support available in real time so that students do not become frustrated and give up when they confront a situation that they believe is too confusing or difficult for them.

Required Actions for Implementation – Fall 2015

Below are critical steps necessary for implementation of the major recommendations of this report. Additional, more specific actions and timelines associated with implementation of the advising recommendations are found in Appendix C while those associated with implementation of the University Writing Center are found in Appendix E.

Spring 2014	Solidify meta-majors so they can be used in curriculum planning for UTRGV.
Fall 2014- Spring 2015	Jointly plan a UTRGV orientation program including one-day on-campus summer orientation and August freshman camp.
Fall 2014- Spring 2015	Identify qualified and interested advising staff that can be retrained as Learning Framework faculty-advisors, hiring additional faculty-advisors as necessary. Train those new to the role through an apprenticeship model to develop strong teaching skills.
Fall 2014- Spring 2015	Identify administrative and leadership structure for the advising and tutoring services, the University Writing Program, and a University College or similar structure to provide over-arching organization and leadership.
Fall 2014- Spring 2015	Select and begin implementation of technological supports for student success for UTRGV including degree auditing software (DegreeWorks recommended), predictive analytics, an integrated academic and advising record that facilitates case management, and a robust early warning system that is integrated with the learning management system selected for UTRGV.
Fall 2014- Spring 2015	Identify/develop success pathway tools for UTRGV students, including course milestones in the 2 nd and 3 rd year of major curricula, major maps, four-year road maps, and other advising materials that can be used by students in an online self-advising hub.
Fall 2014- Spring 2015	Develop capacity for offering excellent developmental coursework instruction in math and reading/writing at the Brownsville campus, which does not currently offer it. This may involve faculty hiring.

Possible Consultations

UTB currently subscribes to the Student Success Collaborative and UTPA is currently contracted with Noel-Levitz for undergraduate recruitment and retention planning. Both resources use institutional data for shaping student success programming. Both institutions also subscribe to the Educational Advisory Board and have access to their extensive resources. Further consultation with any of these groups would be useful, as they are already familiar with our existing institutional programming and structures.

Appendices

- A. Characteristics and Learning Goals for Successful UTRGV Graduates
- B. Background Information on UNIV 1301 Learning Framework as Implemented at UTPA
- C. Academic Advising at UTRGV
- D. A Plan for Developmental Math at UTRGV
- E. A Proposal for a Multilingual University Writing Program
- F. A Review of Current Tutoring Services and a Proposal for Tutoring Services at UTRGV
- G. Example Major Maps from UTB and UTPA

Appendix A
Characteristics and Learning Goals for Successful UTRGV Graduates

	First Year	Second and Third Year	Fourth Year	
Self-Awareness and Self-Direction	Hone self-awareness and self-direction -- why students are here and where they want to go.	Focus and refine direction in major and career	Focus on transitions beyond graduation, into the workforce and/or graduate study.	
	Skill Sets for Academic and Professional Contexts	Understand university culture and skills needed to be a successful college student, such as independent learning skills, discipline, and decision making.	Develop the professional behaviors and skills necessary for success in the chosen discipline/career	Understand their own skills within the chosen discipline/career and how to promote those skills for success beyond graduation.
		Literacy and Scholarship	Apply those literacies in the field -- how to read, write, and think in the chosen discipline.	Develop an understanding of the chosen discipline as a developing body of knowledge from which they can draw and to which they can contribute.
	Interpersonal Connection	Develop literacy levels necessary for university-level performance (reading/writing, language, research, and quantitative skills).	Develop stronger relationships with faculty and affiliate with peers in the same field through disciplinary organizations.	Connect with support structures in their discipline outside of the university, such as future employers or scholars with similar interests.
		Build interpersonal support structures for college life (peer, faculty, and advisors).	Develop an appreciation of how cultural and personal history interacts with local, regional, and world culture and history.	Connect personal and cultural understanding with application to real-world problems within a broader cultural context.
Cultural Awareness and Connection	Develop a stronger sense of self-awareness in terms of cultural and personal history.			

UTRGV graduates are scholars with a thirst for life-long learning and academic resilience in the face of challenges. They are skilled in the use of language and quantitative knowledge and 21st century digital literacies. They are critical thinkers who are aware of the role of culture in a global world.

UTRGV graduates are civically engaged who recognize their responsibility and role in their communities and the world. They invest their talents and gifts in their communities and act as global citizens and skilled leaders. They are ambassadors that the university is proud to recognize.

UTRGV graduates are prepared to solve real-world problems with skills that have been honed through experiential learning opportunities. They are sought after for their capabilities and skill sets.

Appendix B

Background Information on UNIV 1301 Learning Framework as Implemented at UTPA

“This course has shown me things I never thought I had... It helped me discover a variety of skills, intelligences, and values I never thought I possessed.”

“The portfolios helped me plan out the rest of my college career and helped me figure out what I plan to do after college.”

“Before I took your class I was never social with anyone, and I disliked doing presentations in front of the class.”

Student comments after taking UNIV 1301

UNIV 1301 Learning Framework was first implemented at UTPA in 2004. The course is designed to help students understand the principles of learning and motivation and to apply them to their own university experience, easing their transition to a university setting and preparing them for success in their remaining core curriculum classes and majors. As it has evolved over the years, a stable full-time cohort of faculty with Master’s degrees or higher in Educational Psychology or Psychology has been hired to provide instruction. Criteria have been established for students to take the course based on a combination of high school class rank, ACT/SAT scores, and progress in the first semester (for those students who do not enroll in UNIV 1301 in their first semester). At this time, approximately 70% of the UTPA entering freshman class takes UNIV 1301.

In the 10 years since UNIV was adopted, first year retention at UTPA has increased by a remarkable 10%. While not all of that increase is due to the implementation of UNIV 1301, data indicate that success of students in this course has contributed significantly to the overall retention increase. In recognition of this success, the course was recently acknowledged by *Excelencia in Education* as one of 16 national finalists among 195 competitors for its 2011 Examples of Excelencia award, which honors higher education institutions that increase degree completion among Latinos. Student evaluations of UNIV 1301 indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the instructors.

Course Goals

The course content of UNIV 1301 focuses on the psychology of learning and emphasizes a connection between theory, research, and application at the individual level. At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate comprehension and application of characteristics of successful adult learners.
2. Demonstrate comprehension and application of self-discipline and self-management behaviors.
3. Apply knowledge about self to make decisions about career path.

In support of those learning goals, high engagement, active, and collaborative instructional techniques are used. Courses are kept relatively small (20-40) so that students form close supportive peer-to-peer and student-instructor ties. Students are grouped into sections by incoming college (major) of choice to facilitate these peer connections and better focus course content on areas that are of interest and value to the students.

All UNIV 1301 courses also target other selected skill sets and areas of knowledge, such as critical thinking and research skills, developing a clear career path by using knowledge about self and different careers, academic integrity and ethical codes of conduct, developing autonomy as college students, reading strategies to decode the meanings of texts and analyze textual information critically, awareness and appreciation of human diversity, and an introduction to college of choice and university services. Beginning Spring 2014, UNIV 1301 is also integrating service learning experiences into the majority of the sections offered at UTPA.

Sample UNIV 1301 Syllabus

Welcome to UNIV 1301, Learning Framework! The purpose of this course is to help you become a better student. We will read about education and learning and reflect on your own educational experiences and how those experiences have shaped who you are as a person, a learner, and a student. More importantly, I want us to talk about what we believe about education and learning and what we believe about our own abilities.

Learning Framework is NOT a study skills class. Will you learn to take notes? Sure. Will you learn about study skills? Definitely. But these and other skills are only a small part of the course. These skills also only make up a fraction of what you need in order to be a successful student and learner. As an instructor, I have taught Learning Framework for over 10 years. What I have learned working with students is, in order to be the kind of student you would like to be or the kind of student you need to be, we need to have some serious conversations about the kind of student you think you are. Why do you have certain beliefs about your abilities as a student? Where did those beliefs or ideas come from? I want us to talk about your strengths and definitely your weaknesses. And I want you to get better. When you leave my class I want you to feel as though you are closer to becoming the student you would like to be. I hope you leave feeling like you are that student, but sometimes it takes longer than one semester to get there. The goal is to help you find the path that will get you there.

Course	UNIV 1301 Learning Framework	Instructor	Jose L. Saldivar
Semester	Fall 2013	Office	EDCC 2.628
Office Phone	665-7368	Cellphone	650-4997
Email	jlsaldivar@utpa.edu	Office Hours	M,W: 10:45 – 11:45 am T,R: 2:30 – 3:30 pm

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, the student will:

1. Demonstrate comprehension and application of characteristics of successful adult learners.
2. Demonstrate comprehension and application of self-discipline and self-management behaviors.
3. Apply knowledge about self to make decisions about career path.

TEXTBOOK/MATERIALS

Readings will be made available on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Assignment	Description and Due Date	%
Participation and Attendance	This includes participating in daily class discussions, leading class discussions, and completing the assigned readings. You must be in class in order to fulfill any of these responsibilities.	10%
Instructor Meetings	You are required to meet with me during the first two weeks of the semester and during the final two weeks of the semester. Appointments are not necessary; students are encouraged to meet during office hours and meetings generally last between 10 – 20 minutes. The first meetings should be completed prior to Week 5 and the second meeting will occur during the final four weeks of the semester.	10%
Midterm Examination	This exam will occur midway thru the semester and will cover everything we have covered in class including, readings and projects. The exam will be comprised of two parts. The first 3 questions will be	10%

	<p>short answer questions and then the final two questions and answers will be provided by the student.</p> <p>Due: Week 8</p>	
Educational Autobiography	<p>This is a unique assignment in that what you turn in may vary from student to student. What I am looking for is your ability to tell me your story. Use the following questions to serve as your guide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you get here? • Was college always in your plans? • Is education important to you, why or why not? • What role did your parents play in your success? • Do you believe you can be successful in school, why or why not? <p>You do not have to answer all of the questions; use them as a guide. Your product might be a paper, a video/digital story, a painting, etc. I will leave this up to you.</p> <p>Due: Week 10</p>	10%
College and Career Portfolio	<p>This will be a collection of assignments tied to your major and career aspirations. It will be comprised of the following assignments.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Myers Briggs Type Indicator (personality test) 2. Resume 3. Degree Plan 4. 4 – 5 Year Roadmap outlining the courses you plan on taking while at UTPA. 5. Career Inventory 6. Career Interview <p>Due: Week 13</p>	10%
Video Project	<p>Option 1 – Identify a resource on campus and create a 30 second to 3 minute commercial advertising the resource. Students must also create a mock poster, advertising the location.</p> <p>Option 2 – Create a brief 3 – 5 minute short film on a social issue relevant to college students. The film should be entertaining and informative. Remind us why we should care about your issue. Students should also create an informational brochure on the issue.</p> <p>Option 3 – Create a short film 5 – 10 minutes in length addressing one of the themes discussed throughout the semester. Some prominent themes will be financing education, “ganas” and motivation, access to information, social networks, college enrollment and completion.</p> <p>Due: Week 14</p>	15%
Major’s Presentation	<p>Student groups are required to deliver a 5 to 10 minute formal presentation on a major of their choosing. The presentations should include a discussion of any prerequisites, degree plans, and admissions requirements for entrance into said major.</p> <p>Due: Week 15</p>	15%
Self-Change Project	<p>You are expected to identify a semester long goal at the beginning of the semester. Throughout the semester you will monitor your progress and</p>	

	<p>the changes you have said you would make in order to reach your goal. At the end of the semester you will share your results with the class via a five minute presentation.</p> <p>Due: Finals Week</p>	20%
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COURSE CONTENT/OUTLINE

Week 1 August 26 - 30

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
<p>You are a university student; so what? Road to Autonomous Learning</p> <p><i>Guiding questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Why are you here?</i> 2. <i>Did you always know you would go to college?</i> 3. <i>Why did you choose UTPA?</i> 4. <i>What are your biggest fears or questions about college?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, syllabus overview, class discussion on in class reading. • Group assignments, discussion on Lopez, M. H. (2009). Latinos and Education: Explaining the Attainment Gap. Pew Hispanic Center Report • Autonomous Learner, Teacher Directed Learner and Quality World

Week 2 September 3 - 6

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
<p>First Year Experiences and What I need to survive, no thrive!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion on Reyes, R. (2011) Reflexiones Pedagogicas Potential almost lost: A Chicana's story from the margins in her first year of college. <i>Latino Studies</i> 9, 336–343. doi:10.1057/lst.2011.33 • Thriving your first year...tools to help you have a successful first year.

Week 3 September 9 - 13

Content/Concepts	Activities and Activities
<p>Dreams, Goals, Motivation and Ganas How did we get here and what is it that drives us?</p> <p><i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What drives you?</i> 2. <i>Do YOU want a college degree?</i> 3. <i>Why do you want a college degree?</i> 4. <i>What do you hope to accomplish in your lifetime</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion on Easley Jr. N. & et. al. (2012) Ganas: A qualitative study examining Mexican heritage students' motivation to succeed in higher education <i>Journal of Hispanic Higher Education</i> 11: 164 – 178 and Cabrera, N. and Lopez, P. (2011). • <i>Ganas: From the Individual to the Community, and the Potential for Improving College Going in the "Land that Texas Forgot."</i> • Class lecture on dreams, goals, and motivation and in class activity on goal setting.

Week 4 September 16 - 20

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
<p>Dreams, Goals, Motivation and Ganas Cont. Where are we going and how do we get there?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss key terms and concepts: action plan, self-regulation, will, values, needs and expectations • Introduce the self-change project. • Time management project

Week 5 September 23 - 27

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments

<p>What do I need to know and how do I get there? Learning and Memory</p> <p><i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>How do we learn?</i> 2. <i>What can we do to maximize our learning?</i> 3. <i>What do our professors want us to know?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group activity - developing a Theory of Learning • Examining prominent theories of learning (Each group will offer a brief description of a learning theory.)
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Week 6 September 30 – October 4

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
<p>What do I need to know and how do I get there? Learning and Memory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class lecture on what I need to know and Bloom’s taxonomy, review “What I need to know” handout. • Discussion on note taking and developing efficient and productive study skills.

Week 7 October 7 - 11

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
<p>Learning, Self-Confidence and Self-Efficacy</p> <p><i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What kind of learner are you?</i> 2. <i>What are your learning strengths and weaknesses?</i> 3. <i>What are your learning beliefs?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on assigned articles. • Examining our beliefs about our abilities.

Week 8 October 14 - 18

Content/Concepts	Activities and Activities
<p>Human Development and Individuality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Perry’s Theory of Cognitive and Moral Development and Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences and Delgado Bernal (2001) Learning and living pedagogies of the home: the mestiza consciousness of Chicana students.

Week 9 October 21 - 25

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
<p>Social Capital and Human Networks</p>	<p>Johnson, S. (2010). <i>Where Good Ideas Come From The Natural History of Innovation.</i></p>

Week 10 October 28 – November 1

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
<p>TBA</p>	

Week 11 November 4 - 8

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
<p>TBA</p>	

Week 12 November 11 - 15

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
<p>College and Career Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBTI – Administration and discussion on results.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a four or five year plan. • Discussion on finding the right major. • Group presentations on colleges and majors.
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Week 13 November 18 - 22

Content/Concepts	Activities and Activities
College and Career Information Cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by Career Services • Develop and prepare a working resume • Discussion on marketing on packaging oneself

Week 14 November 25 – 27 No classes on November 28 or 29 in observance of Thanksgiving

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
Student Video Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will spend the week viewing your video projects and formal presentations.

Week 15 December 2 – 4

Content/Concepts	Activities and Assignments
Bringing closure to class and Final Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will deliver their presentations on their chosen majors.

Week 16 December 9 – 13 Finals Week

Section	Final Exam Day
1301.11 (MWF 8:45 – 9:35)	Wednesday, Dec. 11th @ 8:00 – 9:45 a.m.
1301.13 (MWF 9:45 – 10:35)	Friday, Dec. 13th @ 8:00 – 9:45 a.m.
1301.50 (MW 1:10 – 2:25)	Friday, Dec. 13th @ 10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
1301.12 (TR 9:10 – 10:25)	Thursday, Dec. 12th @ 8:00 – 9:45 a.m.
1301.07 (TR 1:10 – 2:25)	Thursday, Dec. 12th @ 10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and the only way to meet the class expectations is by being in class. If for some reason you cannot be in class, please notify me via email or phone. If you are absent please contact me regarding any missed assignments. Points will be deducted for any late work unless prior arrangements are made.

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism/Copyright Infringement: The University of Texas-Pan American’s policy on academic integrity can be found at http://portal.utpa.edu/utpa_main/dsa_home/bronc_honor_code. Cheating, plagiarizing or using another person’s work without properly citing the source or allowing someone else to complete your assignments or project may result in failure of the course. It is therefore important for you to visit with me if you have any questions regarding these issues. Additionally, the University Writing Center can also help answer any questions you may have regarding academic integrity issues.

Classroom Conduct: The classroom is a shared space, as such, it is important that you treat your classmates with a level of respect, the same you would like to receive. I understand the necessity of our cell phones but in class please place your cell phone on vibrate or turn it off. If you must take a call please do so out of class. Also, please refrain from texting in class and unless otherwise instructed, you should refrain from using your phone in class for any non-class related purposes.

Enrollment in the Course: Please make sure your name is on the class roster. If you are not on the roster please refer to ASSIST to make sure you are enrolled.

Documented Disability: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Disability Services office for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Texas-Pan American to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Disability Services office (DS), University Center #108, 665-7005 or disabilityservices@utpa.edu.

Drops: If you have missed an excessive amount of class meetings do not assume I will drop you. If for whatever reason you believe it is in your best interest to drop the class then you must visit the registration office to get a drop form. Also, if you miss an excessive amount of days and do not drop the class then you will receive the grade you have earned.

In accordance with Texas Education Code, 51.907, students may not drop more than a total of six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six course drop limit. A student may appeal a drop if he/she shows good cause. Contact the Office of the Registrar for details concerning the appeals limit.

TSI Information: If you are TSI-affected, you must enroll in, attend, and complete the course or face severe consequences, such as withdrawal from the university. If you have any questions regarding this policy, contact the Advisement Center, located in the University Center (UC) room 215 or call 956-381-2529.

Appendix C Academic Advising at UTRGV

Academic Advising Program Mission

The mission of the Academic Advising Center for The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) is to empower and encourage students to take charge of their educational plans through collaborative efforts among advisors, faculty, and campus staff to maximize students' scholarly achievement and professional preparation. Academic Advising Center staff are committed to engaging students in developing educational plans based on clear career decisions and lifelong learning goals.

Key Components of the Model

Transition/Adjustment. Given the high percentage of first generation college students entering UTRGV, the first year is key to student academic success and progress towards graduation. Therefore, the initial transition into the university will be supported by a freshman orientation and a first year Learning Framework course. These two strategies will ensure that students new to the college environment learn the habits and have exposure to campus resources that will support their academic success. Students who do not meet Texas Success Initiative requirements will participate in developmental coursework using a co-requisite model. Innovative technology in the initial transition will be required to support student success, including automated degree audits, a platform for online advising, customer relations management (CRM) software, and electronic student files available to both faculty and staff advisors.

Education/Information. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) promotes academic advising as a teaching and learning process. Therefore, advising must be based on learning outcomes, use effective collaborative teaching models, and capitalize on innovative educational technology. At UTRGV, advising will be embedded within the Learning Framework course and delivered by faculty dedicated to first year students' academic success. After the first year, academic advising services and targeted outreach will be delivered via online, group, and face-to-face opportunities for teaching and informing students about university policies, degree requirements, strategies for academic success, and preparation for transition into desired careers.

Targeted support. After the first semester, students who are experiencing difficulty adjusting to the high academic standards of the university will be identified and supported with the aid of predictive analytic software. Students who are identified as "at-risk" or as members of vulnerable populations (e.g. students who are not declared in a major, on financial aid or academic probation/suspension, or have recently transferred), will be provided additional support via peer advisors, outreach campaigns, career advising and mandatory academic advising addressing particular student needs.

Degree/career planning. On a national level, there is a driving force towards integrating career and academic advising. A compelling reason for this shift is to provide career advising support to students as they are making meaning of their curricular and co-curricular activities. These related services have traditionally been delivered in different academic units, resulting in little connection between them. Upon application, students will select a meta-major, a group of academic programs that share 30 early common credit hours during which a student can explore programs. Students who are confident in their major choice can declare the major at freshman orientation, while those who are still exploring major choices will be required to complete a career assessment and attend mandatory career development sessions coordinated by academic advising.

Empowerment of lifelong learners. During a student's first year on campus, he or she will be introduced to the online self-directed advising hub. The advising hub will provide self-serve information on meta-majors, road maps, major maps and advising support to keep students on track for graduation. Student self-directed advising will be promoted while providing traditional advising services and faculty mentoring to targeted populations throughout a student's academic progression to graduation. All students will be encouraged to utilize the self-directed tools for developing educational/graduation plans. The academic advising staff will assist students needing additional support to develop educational/graduation plans which fit their specific abilities and needs.

Delivery of Academic Advising Services

Split Advising Model. According to The Carnegie Foundation’s classification system for size and setting, UTRGV’s projected enrollment of approximately 27,500 is similar to a “large, four-year, primarily non-residential” institution. As such, the “declared and prepared” split advising model that houses professional academic advisors in a central location as well as within each academic college is recommended in addition to the faculty-advisors charged with the first year Learning Framework course.

Faculty Advisors. The UTRGV advising program should provide centralized, decentralized and online advising for its students. During the first year, dedicated faculty will teach a Learning Framework course and provide focused advising and mentoring to students in their classes. The power of this model is that students will see their faculty-advisor on a frequent basis both in and out of class, forming strong mentoring relationships during the crucial first year. These faculty-advisors will support first year students until they have 1) cleared all TSI requirements and 2) selected a major. When faculty-advisors are not teaching, they will provide traditional advising services in a centralized Main Advising Center location to serve freshman students who are TSI affected or are undeclared. Faculty-advisors provide services primarily in the Transition/Adjustment and Education/Information components of the advising model.

Academic Advisors. Academic advisors, who will be located at the Main Advising Center, will provide advising services for student populations who need targeted support to progress toward degree completion. In addition to providing traditional advising services, Academic Advisors focus on outreach strategies for academic success. Academic Advisors coordinate and implement workshops, major and career fairs, information campaigns, and communicate regularly with students who are classified at all levels beyond freshman. Academic advisors collaborate with faculty and the campus community to offer a network of support to students who are on academic probation or suspension, have more than 90 credit hours but lack requirements for degree completion, or who have transferred from another institution. Academic advisors are charged with the Targeted Support component of the advising model.

Staff Advisors. For the second year and beyond, students who are “declared and prepared” would be transitioned to staff advisors within departments/colleges/schools, no earlier than their sophomore year and no later than their junior year. Staff advisors within academic colleges would provide prescriptive advising and would also be charged with tracking student success and working with department faculty in constructing strong programming for advisement. In addition to the staff advisors, a full time clerk is needed in each college to assist academic advisors with scheduling and clerical duties. Staff advisors assist students in the Empowerment of Lifelong Learning.

Faculty Mentors and Peer Advisors. In addition to first year faculty-advisors, academic advisors, and staff advisors, faculty will mentor students on an individual level in high impact practices such as undergraduate research and transition to the profession. Peer advisors will be available throughout the student’s enrollment in various capacities to help students with transition, information, and academic and career planning.

Administrative Staff. In order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, a campus/associate director, a coordinator, a computer specialist, an administrative assistant, and front desk staff will facilitate operations of the Academic Advising Center. The campus/associate director will report to the director of academic advising for UTRGV and be charged with the oversight and supervision of all campus advising staff. Advising coordinators will assist in day-to-day operations, analyze data, and serve as supervisors in the absence of the director. The computer specialist will configure, implement, and maintain software and hardware and will ensure the implementation of high quality online advising services.

Current and proposed staffing levels are outlined below in Tables C1 and C2 based on student enrollment at UTPA and UTB in FY2014, under current admissions standards. A proposed organizational chart for UTRGV advising follows in Figure C1.

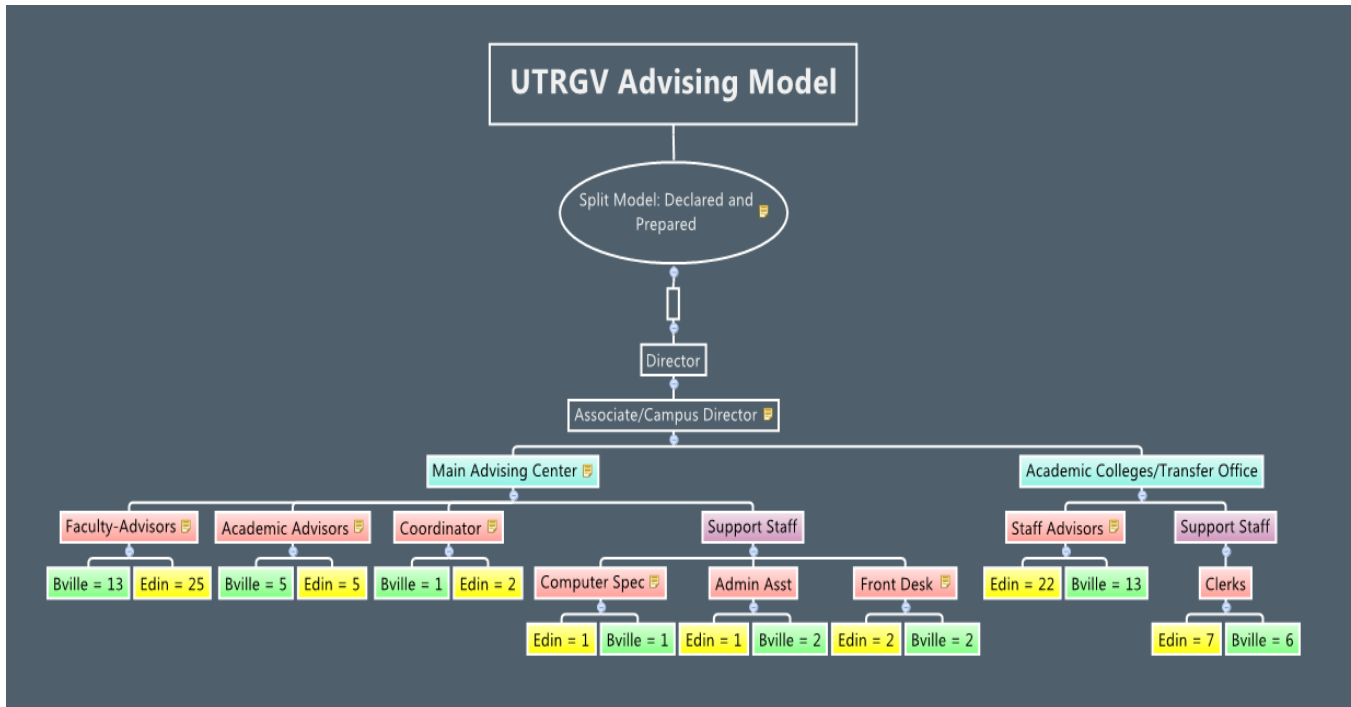
Table C1. Current Academic Advising Staff for UTPA and UTB

Title	UTPA	UTB	Total
Administrative Staff (Directors/Associate Directors)	2	1	3
Coordinators	0	2	2
Faculty-Advisors (Learning Framework Course)	9	0	9
Academic Advising Staff (Central, College and Transfer Office)	35	10	45
Computer Specialist	0	0	0
Administrative Assistant II	1	0	1
Administrative Assistant	1	2	3
Front Desk Clerks (Main Office)	2	2.5	4.5
Front Desk Clerks (Colleges)	0	0	0
Totals	50	17.5	67.5

Table C2. Summary of Projected Academic Advising Staff for UTRGV

Title	Reorganized Staffing Required		
	Edinburg	Brownsville	Total
Director (location to be determined)			1
Campus/Associate Directors	1	1	2
Coordinators	2	2	4
Faculty-Advisors (Learning Framework Course)	25	13	38
Academic Advisors (Central location)	5	5	10
Staff (Academic College) Advisors	21	12	33
Transfer Advisor (located in a University Transfer Center)	1	1	2
Computer Specialist	1	1	2
Administrative Assistant II (for Director)			1
Administrative Assistant (Main Office)	1	1	2
Front Desk Clerks (Main Office)	2	2	4
Front Desk Clerks (Colleges)	7	6	13
Totals	66	44	112

Figure C1. A Proposed Organizational Chart for UTRGV Advising



Academic Advising Implementation Needs and Timeline (see Table C3)

- 1) By Spring 2015, UTRGV will have two systems analysts for academic advising to provide technical support, implementation and maintenance expertise in implementing up-to-date and integrated online academic advising services.
- 2) By Summer 2015, UTRGV will fully implement a two-step orientation process for orientation. Step One: a one-day orientation throughout the summer focused on developing stronger affiliation, providing foundational advisement and registering for Fall 2015 classes. Students who are underprepared and/or undeclared will be admitted through the University College and advised using meta-majors. Step Two: One to two day freshman conference on the Friday/Saturday before Fall classes to provide more specific information for successfully beginning the academic year.
- 3) By Fall 2015, UTRGV will have the University College as an academic college. The Academic Advising Department and the Learning Framework Course will be located within the University College. All students who are undeclared and/or not college ready would be in this college until they declare their major and are college ready (prepared).
- 4) By Fall 2015, UTRGV advising department will identify, purchase and implement an integrated predictive analytics software package for targeted academic advisement support on all UTRGV campuses. The academic advising department will utilize this system along with early warning systems and benchmark courses to identify students who are "off track".
- 5) By Fall 2015, UTRGV will identify and implement one automated customer relationship management (CRM) software package integrated throughout the UTRGV for online communication, advisement appointment scheduling, chat advising and other online advising services.
- 6) By Fall 2015, UTRGV will provide a Learning Framework course for all first time-full time students. This will require curriculum development and the hiring and training of required faculty and support staff to supplement faculty already in place at UTPA.

- 7) By Fall 2015, UTRGV will have DegreeWorks as the degree audit software with PeopleSoft for self-service degree monitoring and planning purposes.
- 8) By Fall 2015, UTRGV will have an “On-Line Advising Hub” for students, faculty and high school counselors. The advising hub will provide online meta-majors, advising notes, four year road maps, and major maps to provide advising support to keep students on track for graduation.
- 9) By Fall 2015, UTRGV will have advising centers within each academic college on all UTRGV campuses to provide academic advising support for prepared and declared students (sophomore through seniors). Each advising center would house 3 to 4 advisors (depending upon the size of the college) and an office clerk for administrative support. The college advising center staff would report to the University College Advising Associate Director (or designated coordinator).
- 10) By Spring 2016, the UTRGV advising unit will implement an academic recovery non-credit course for students on probation and for upper-level students needing additional academic support.
- 11) By Fall 2016, UTRGV will have a peer advising program. A training program for peer advisors will have been developed, and peer advisors will be available throughout the student’s enrollment in various capacities to help students with transition, information, and academic and career planning.

Table C3. Summary of Academic Advising Implementation Needs and Timeline

Activity	Timeline
Begin hiring process for additional staff, prioritizing first year faculty-advisor as that role requires significantly more training than most advising roles.	Fall 2014
Implement a two-step process for orientation.	Summer 2015
Provide a Learning Framework course for all first time-full time students.	Fall 2015
Identify, purchase and implement an integrated predictive analytics software package for targeted academic advisement.	Fall 2015
Identify and implement one automated customer relationship management (CRM) software package.	Fall 2015
Establish the University College as an academic college for UTRGV.	Fall 2015
Develop an “online self-directed advising hub” for students, faculty, and high school counselors.	Fall 2015
Integrate DegreeWorks as the degree audit reporting system.	Fall 2015
Create advising centers within each academic college.	Fall 2015
Implement an academic recovery non-credit course for students on probation or needing additional academic support.	Spring 2016
Implement a peer advising program.	Fall 2016

Appendix D

A Plan for Developmental Math at UTRGV

Developmental mathematics presents both opportunities and challenges for the university and the mathematics department. Outlined below are significant components of a recommended plan for developmental mathematics at UTRGV.

1. **Organizational Effort:** An important feature of these courses is that both the instructors and leadership of the program be drawn from the population of instructors who will be teaching and coordinating the credit bearing courses the students are heading towards, particularly the College Algebra-Pre Calculus-Calculus sequence, Elementary Probability and Statistics, and Contemporary Mathematics. It is not enough that just the first year courses are included in the umbrella, as significant portions of developmental mathematics students ultimately intend to take Calculus or a more advanced mathematics course. Leadership and instruction for the developmental mathematics and entry-level mathematics courses needs to be part of the effort for the department as a whole. Also the department includes a number of specialists in Mathematics Education and anticipates continuing to hire in this specialty. These are faculty who could contribute to developmental mathematics education at UTPA in a potentially strong way.

That being said, the effort necessary for the design and implementation of the developmental mathematics and core-level mathematics courses is significant. The effort to experiment with and initiate institutional change is also significant. The department should be provided with sufficient resources and incentives to compensate for this.

Recent efforts at UTPA and other schools in Texas have highlighted the importance of having the instruction and leadership of these courses drawn from a pool of instructors of higher-level mathematics courses. A number of the efforts highlighted below rely on this feature.

2. **Underlying Principle:** A key principle is to make the greatest effort to accommodate students whose performance on placement exams such as the New TSI Assessment does not accurately reflect their abilities. Across the United States, but particularly in underserved regions like South Texas, test anxiety and mathematics anxiety play a significant role in some students' performance on placement tests.

Courses and developmental mathematics initiatives should be designed to allow students multiple chances to finish the course requirements, to do so when they are ready rather than at the end of the semester, and to proceed at their pace (if that pace is faster) through the course requirements. Our courses see a broad spectrum of placed students and should as often as possible provide individualized instruction based upon each student's abilities.

3. **Differentiated Developmental Pathways:** A number of institutions in Texas are implementing a system of differentiated developmental mathematics pathways, based upon the ultimate credit bearing mathematics course a student's degree plan calls for. Specifically students heading towards Statistics courses are placed into and sent through a separate sequence of developmental mathematics courses focusing on preparing them for Statistics. A key part of this effort is the "New Mathways Project" organized by the Dana Center at UT Austin.

The University of Texas – Pan American has created a course, Pre-Statistics, which is our implementation of differentiated developmental pathways. It differs in some important ways from the New Mathways Project, however philosophically, is founded upon the same guiding principle that a student's developmental course work should prepare them for the mathematics course they need to take. Our effort makes use of computer assisted classrooms (see below).

4. **Computer Assisted Classrooms:** The University of Texas – Pan American, like our sister university in El Paso and a number of other institutions of higher education in the state and country, has begun conducting our developmental mathematics courses in a computer lab using software which allows students to work on the course material at their own pace. This effort is successful at other schools, has had success here, and is even a portion of an NSF funded project in a more advanced course at UTPA. ALEKS software is currently being used, with plans to continue exploring other software options as they are developed.

Students in these courses receive one-on-one instruction from the faculty and other classroom helpers. The university

will need to provide sufficient computer laboratories to accommodate these classes. Computer laboratories at UTB are likely insufficient in number and size to accommodate the demand that developmental courses may have there; at UTPA current efforts by the department have filled existing lab space, and additional labs will be necessary to expand our effort or student offerings. Without additional lab space we will be in a position of having to offer some courses as computer assisted and some as traditional lecture format, a situation that tends to breed disaffection among both students and instructors.

5. **Undergraduate/Graduate Student Classroom Facilitators:** Computer assisted classrooms do require significant institutional support in the form of classroom facilitators to assist the instructor. It is important that students in these courses receive one-on-one help as soon as they encounter a difficulty. This assists them in moving rapidly through material they find easy and allows them focus on learning things they find difficult.
6. **Early Completion/Self Paced Courses:** In alignment with goals set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas State Legislature, course designs should be implemented which allow for and encourage students to complete their developmental coursework early and proceed to the credit bearing courses they need as soon as success can be assured. This philosophy enforces design decisions on both the developmental mathematics and entry-level courses.

Computer assisted classrooms at both the developmental mathematics and entry-level mathematics levels (College Algebra, Statistics, and Contemporary Mathematics) make this goal a reality. It is feasible that there are other techniques that could also accomplish this goal, and the door should be left open for them to be tried.

7. **Co-Requisite Developmental Mathematics and NCBOs:** The university should continue to offer co-requisite mathematics courses, particularly ones that involve non-course based options (NCBOs). Credit requirements should be kept low (six or less) and the option should be restricted to students who have demonstrated likely success. Texas State University has had a successful program, and UTPA and UTB have both had implementations.
8. **College Algebra Workshops:** The above efforts, particularly differentiated developmental pathways, are not without their perils. According to current state law, allowing a student to attempt an entry-level course like Statistics makes the student eligible in future semesters to attempt any entry level mathematics course (by allowing the student to attempt Statistics, we will have certified them as college ready in mathematics). Further, this is a rule which would apply to other schools; a student who joins us from another institution which allowed them to attempt Statistics would be allowed to enroll in any entry level mathematics course at UTRGV.

If we are to implement differentiated pathways, and as we will be accepting students from schools implementing the New Mathways Project or another form of differentiated pathways, we can anticipate having a few college ready students who will wish to take College Algebra even though they may not have completed the most appropriate developmental mathematics coursework. Therefore, we need a mechanism in place that can warn a student who may not be truly ready for College Algebra, even when the state says that we must declare them to be ready, that they are at risk AND provide them with a support structure to fill in the missing knowledge and skill.

There are a number of mechanisms that we could try, and the Department of Mathematics should find the one(s) that are most effective. Ideas include the use of free and open software like WebWork, the use of paid software like ALEKS, workshops conducted by instructors or graduate teaching assistants, or other non-course-based options (NCBOs). These could, in fact, be the very co-requisite NCBOs used for College Algebra in a co-requisite model.

9. **Core Level Mathematics Courses:** The three basic core level mathematics courses, College Algebra, Elementary Probability and Statistics, and Contemporary Mathematics, should be tailored to the relevant populations. College Algebra should be closely tied to and integrated with the pre-Calculus-Calculus sequence of courses and prepare students for further studies in mathematics and science. Contemporary Mathematics should give students an experience differing significantly from their previous mathematics courses and aimed at providing them instruction on mathematics in contexts closely connected to their interests and degree plans. Core Mathematics and developmental mathematics must be aligned and coordinated so that students receive the appropriate mathematics training for their abilities, chosen academic programs, careers, and interests.

10. **English Language Learners (ELLs) in Developmental and Entry Level Mathematics:** At this time there is not much data about the extent to which ELL students are impacted and served by the developmental and entry level mathematics courses. The institution should aim to study this issue and work with other language and ELL units on campus to address the special needs of our population. It is worth noting here that technology used in classrooms, such as the ALEKS program for computer assisted classes, may give students the ability to switch between English and Spanish delivery of course material.

Appendix E

A Proposal for a Multilingual University Writing Program

We propose the creation of a multilingual University Writing Program, which would bring together the First Year Writing Program (including developmental reading/writing), the Writing Center, and an arm which would be responsible for providing campus leadership on writing across the curriculum (WAC) and writing in the disciplines (WID) initiatives. We would also like to eventually create a Writing Fellows program, which is similar to supplemental instruction (SI), where a writing tutor is embedded in a writing or writing-intensive class. The creation of this new university-wide program would enable us to have a single, shared vision for helping our students become better writers and scholars who know how to use language to accomplish meaningful goals for themselves and their communities.

We imagine a program which works both horizontally, as well as vertically, beginning with a strong First Year Writing Program which provides students with foundational knowledge in the discipline about how reading/writing/research works, as well as gives students opportunities to work on meaningful projects for a variety of audiences and purposes and in a variety of genres. We will also provide leadership to help faculty across campus, especially those teaching first and second year students, learn how they can use writing to help their students learn course material (writing to learn). Additionally, we want to help interested faculty learn how to teach their upper-level students how to read/write/think like professionals in their disciplines. This is part of a four-year vertical model (Kinneavy, 1983) which begins with teaching students about writing and language and how they work, develops to introduce students to disciplinary differences with reading/writing/research, moves them into learning how to write in the discipline for their disciplinary peers, and culminates with learning how to write about disciplinary issues for non-specialists (taking your disciplinary knowledge to the community, essentially).

Strong models for university writing programs exist across the country (University of Florida, Denver University, University of Central Florida, among others), but what would make our program innovative and unique is a focus on *multilingual writing*, which would operate from a strengths perspective regarding language difference. Few faculty understand the length and complexity of the language acquisition process and how our students' language diversity affects their development as learners/readers/writers (see Matsuda's work in this area). This program would enable us to provide campus-wide leadership, particularly in faculty development, to help build more supportive learning environments for our multilingual students. While a few models exist for multilingual writing centers/peer tutoring programs, **we would be one of a very few, if not the only, university-wide multilingual writing program which integrates all of our university's writing programs and initiatives into a single, cohesive unit.**

Developmental Reading/Writing:

UTPA currently has an innovative and highly effective developmental reading/writing program with strong pass rates, excellent professional development, and committed faculty; it has been held up as a model both within the state and nationally. The committee would like to see that program continue as the basis of developmental reading/writing interventions at UTRGV. While UTB currently does not offer developmental courses, UTB did develop and implement a co-requisite model and reported strong success rates from 2008-2011. The design and results were presented at the National Center for Academic Transformation and two faculty were recognized as NCAT Redesign Scholars. UTB currently has a successful academic support program, *Link2Success*, which provides course-based assistance through mandatory study sessions for ENGL 1301 and 1302 led by CRLA certified tutors. Combining these programs results in the following specific recommendations:

- *Developmental reading/writing should be offered using a co-requisite model either by pairing course-based or non-course-based interventions with the credit-bearing course, ENG 1301. We also recommend the creation of developmental interventions designed specifically for multilingual students who have high levels of literacy in their first language as these students have different needs from multilingual students with low levels of literacy in each of their languages.*
- *Developmental reading/writing should utilize a STUDIO model that supports students critically thinking, reading, writing, revising, and peer reviewing during class in a writing-intensive environment designed to engage students with smart classroom design and technology, including the use of white board tables. We believe our students,*

especially, need time in class to write and get real-time, face to face feedback from their teachers, peers, and tutors.

- *An embedded student intern (tutor) should be present in each developmental reading/writing class.* This will enable students to get additional help from a near-peer who has been trained to work with students on their reading/writing, as well as issues of language acquisition and multilingual writing.
- *Leadership of developmental reading/writing should remain with or directly reporting to the Director of the First Year Writing Program.* We recommend adding at least one Assistant Director of the First Year Writing Program (two assistants would allow for one in Edinburg and one in Brownsville) ; with more than sixty faculty and teaching assistants (TAs), there will be more than enough work for one person to manage curriculum development, professional development, TA education, teaching observations, etc.
- *Developmental reading/writing courses should be staffed with our best instructors and tutors.* Too often, developmental courses are staffed with the least qualified instructors, based on the mistaken notion that what's being taught are "basic skills." However, it is well-known in the discipline that students who enter the university less prepared in reading and writing need instructors who are among our most qualified and most dedicated. They should be well-educated in the discipline of rhetoric and composition, disciplinary literacy and the relevant theories and practices associated with multilingual writing. We should provide robust, discipline-specific professional development for them to continue to grow.
- *Finally, we recommend that there be a strong link and coordination between the First Year Writing Program, which will oversee developmental reading/writing interventions, and the English Language Institute.* On many campuses, these two programs operate oblivious to the existence of the other, and opportunities for alignment and collaboration go unnoticed. Stronger coordination between the two would allow for a more seamless transition for our international students.

Implementation Needs

For Fall 2015:

We currently have the core faculty/staff leadership to begin to implement this vision of a multilingual University Writing Program by Fall 2015. Our specific recommendations are as follows:

- First-Year Writing Program (including developmental)
 - *Move the First Year Writing Program, including developmental reading/writing, under the auspices of the University Writing Program.* This will enable us to ensure that curricular decisions for courses/interventions in the First-Year Writing Program are made by faculty teaching in the program, and will enable us to leverage our relationships with other writing-related initiatives on campus to create the best reading and writing education possible for our students. Because the number of faculty and teaching assistants teaching in the program will rival (and, in some cases, dwarf) the size of other academic departments at the new university, we believe this move makes good sense. Faculty teaching in the program could also teach in other programs/departments. This recommendation can be implemented without delay.
 - *Choose a single director of the First-Year Writing Program, who will provide leadership for both credit-bearing and developmental reading/writing courses and interventions.* Directors of first year writing programs lead efforts in curriculum development, professional development (including TA preparation), faculty evaluation, program assessment, articulation and alignment with other programs/institutions, among other roles. To do this work well, this person should have authority over budgets, staffing, and scheduling. The director should be given adequate release time from teaching and support (in line with Council of Writing Program Administrators guidelines).
 - *Provide the director with one or more associate/assistant directors to help with faculty observations and professional development, particularly in the area of multilingual writing.* We already have at least two additional faculty on the Edinburg campus who could fulfill this role, one of whom works in the area of multilingual writing. The Brownsville campus has three Rhetoric and Composition specialists able to assist as well. Release time would be necessary for these positions; graduate assistants in our MA in Rhetoric,

- Composition, and Literacy Studies program or our proposed PhD in Developmental Education program who are interested in program leadership could also be employed in one of these positions.
- *Prepare for developmental reading/writing to be offered at both the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses.* Currently UT Brownsville does not offer developmental courses, so faculty at both sites will need to spend 2014-2015 meeting to develop a shared program.
 - *Hire writing interns who will be embedded in every developmental reading/writing course at UTRGV.* UTPA was awarded a Developmental Education Demonstration Project grant by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for innovations in their developmental programs. In English, one of the innovations was the use of embedded student interns (preferably students who successfully completed the program themselves). UTPA's pass rates for developmental reading/writing classes in 2012-2013 reached 88%, in part because of these interns.
 - Interns could be hired at the rate of \$2850 per semester (\$10/hr, 19 hrs/wk). For the Edinburg campus, we could staff all of our developmental courses with an intern for part of the class time for \$17,100 per semester. These interns could also be responsible for working with students who are in non-course-based interventions. Currently, in Edinburg, we have no dedicated instructors for these students, so the coordinator of our writing program has been working with them without compensation, which is not sustainable, particularly if the numbers grow. Additionally, as there are fewer developmental courses offered in the spring, the interns could be utilized as peer mentors for the students, who are often at higher risk in the spring because they are either repeating the course or beginning school mid-year.
- **Writing Center**
 - *Choose a single Director of Writing Centers, who would be responsible for working with her staff to create a vision and philosophy that would guide the centers' work, including a robust plan for tutor education.* We should also have at least one assistant director at the other site. We currently have staff in director positions at both campuses, so this should not be a problem for implementation by 2015.
 - **Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)/Writing in the Disciplines (WID)**
 - *Choose leadership for both campuses during 2013-2014.* Implementation of a robust Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines Program will take time, so the first step should involve choosing faculty who have rhetoric and composition experience and background in working with faculty from other disciplines to begin to create a vision and five-year plan for engaging faculty across campus in these initiatives. On the Edinburg campus, we already have excellent potential leaders for this program. At UTB, they have already planned a requirement for two Writing Intensive Courses (WIC) in every major. UTB also created a WR designation for student transcripts to show evidence of the WID courses they have taken. UTB also created a faculty certification in using paragraph writing as an integral part of WAC. In addition, this paragraph writing group representing several disciplines has experience delivering workshops on developing and teaching writing assignments in courses across the curriculum. With this expertise and experience, we should be ready with leadership and a plan by Fall 2015.
 - **Central Leadership**
 - *Ideally, the Director of the First Year Writing Program, along with the leadership of the other areas of the Multilingual University Writing Program, should report to a single person with writing program expertise, who can help to coordinate the work of the various groups and ultimately be responsible for budgeting for the entire program. This person would then report to leadership in a University College or other unit responsible for first-year initiatives.* In the interim, the leadership of the arms of the Multilingual Writing Program could form a collaborative advisory group, and each Director would control his/her own budget.

Related Material: Writing Centers/Programs with a Multilingual Focus

These are innovative programs, which make explicit attempts to work with multilingual students.

- **The Center for Writing and ESL** at the Berklee College of Music helps students, staff, and faculty with written work related to courses, other academic purposes, or career development. They provide a staff of trained writing experts, who have experience in academic and creative writing, as well as publishing. The Center also provides a

home for tutoring in English as a Second Language, Spanish, Japanese, French, Mathematics, Acoustics, and other Liberal Arts Courses. They provide a unique program of peer tutoring to assist non-English speaking students with their coursework, and to supplement foreign language classes with regular support sessions conducted in target languages.

<http://www.berklee.edu/writing-center>

- **The Multilingual Writing Center** at Dickinson College supports the mission of the foreign language departments to develop students' critical thinking skills and fluency in writing. The MWC assists writers of all levels and abilities who are working on essays written in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, or Spanish. Trained tutors and Overseas Assistants will work one-on-one with writers on a variety of concerns, including developing ideas; understanding genres; organizing material; crafting sentences; analyzing and correcting patterns of error; and building vocabulary.
<http://www.dickinson.edu/academics/resources/writing-program/content/Multilingual-Writing-Center/>
- **The Collaborative for Multilingual Writing and Research (CMWR)** at DePaul University was founded to develop the University Center for Writing-Based Learning initiatives to reflect DePaul's growing multilingual community. The CMWR values the individual perspectives of all writers and promotes greater recognition of different linguistic backgrounds in the classroom. They work to complement the goals and day-to-day efforts of DePaul programs and offices that interact with the multilingual writing community. Through forging new partnerships and strengthening existing ones, they provide a space for all members of DePaul's multilingual writing community to collaborate on writing projects and primary research, to further their language skills through conversation and workshops, and to share their experiences with a wider audience. This is part of **The University Center for Writing-Based Learning**, which houses a Writing Center, a Writing Fellows program, writing groups, faculty development, etc.
<http://condor.depaul.edu/writing/what/CMWR/cmwr.html>
- **The Oasis Language and Writing Program** at the University of California-San Diego offers workshops and tutoring for ESL students and for students who need help with Spanish for their classes.
http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/_organizations/oasis/language-writing/index.html#622:921:tf_ZkjAqEeO-hum8b_8_qQ

Appendix F

A Review of Current Tutoring Services and a Proposal for Tutoring Services at UTRGV

The Mission and Role of a Tutoring Center at UTRGV

As an institution of the 21st century that serves primarily underserved students in a border region, it is recommended that UTRGV choose to create a very supportive learning environment for all students by infusing academic support designed to target specific discipline, program, and/or student needs throughout the academic experience. The following is taken from the UTB Learning Enrichment Center mission statement and is in alignment with the mission statement of UTPA's Learning Assistance Center: "The mission of the Learning Enrichment Center should be to provide a supportive learning environment in which students can strive for academic excellence, through the use of a variety of resources that promote active learning and encourage collaboration among the culturally diverse members of our academic community." Based on this reasoning, it is logical that a tutoring center should be included in the organizational structure under Academic Affairs. The working name Learning Enrichment Center (LEC) is used throughout this report for this tutoring structure.

The role of the Learning Enrichment Center is to provide and manage tutor training (including CRLA tutor and CRLA peer mentor training) and supervision, assess the effectiveness of tutoring services, and evaluate student success for program improvement. Learning Enrichment Center staff should be well voiced in various research-based academic support models and communicate with academic departments and faculty to design appropriate interventions based on identified need. The collaboration of academic departments and faculty with the LEC to implement academic support programs would also require close collaboration and communication with the faculty teaching development center.

Recommended Tutoring Services

(1) Face to Face Tutoring

Face to face tutoring services are strongly preferred by students and can offer individualized support that is closely tailored to the student's needs. Two tutoring centers are proposed that could be located separately or co-located: a Math and Science Learning Center and a Foreign Language and Social Science Learning Center. Writing and reading tutoring are also recommended but are separately addressed in the University Writing Program proposal. Face to face tutoring should be offered at all significant instructional sites, beginning with Brownsville and Edinburg and expanding to other sites as instructional demand dictates.

(2) Online Tutoring

With the continuing expansion of online courses and degree programs anticipated with UTRGV, online tutoring should also be supported by the LEC to serve students who are geographically distant or prefer an online interface. A number of vendors and platforms are available for online tutoring. UTB has been piloting ASK Online with success to offer online tutoring on an individual basis for math and science courses. UTB is in its second semester piloting online supplemental instruction for College Algebra and Contemporary Mathematics. Blackboard Collaborate is being piloted in one hybrid Composition II course this semester as this is a designated *Link2Success* course, and study sessions, like the course, will be offered both in person and online. Results of these efforts will be evaluated in the coming semesters for broader implementation.

(3) Course-based Learning Assistance (CLA)

"Throughout the whole enterprise, the core issue, in my view, is the mode of teaching and learning that is practiced. Learning 'about' things does not enable students to acquire the abilities and understanding they will need for the twenty-first century. We need new pedagogies of engagement that will turn out the kinds of resourceful, engaged workers and citizens that America now requires" (Edgerton, R. 2001).

Course-based learning assistance is identified through the various forms of peer collaborative learning that supplement a specific course. Characteristics of CLA models include: (1) activities may occur outside of class or may be embedded within the course, (2) student participation may be voluntary or mandatory, and (3) CLA programs may or may not award academic credit. Examples of CLA models include Accelerated Learning Groups (USC), Emerging Scholars Program (UC

Berkley), Peer-Led Team Learning (CUNY), Structured Learning Assistance (Ferris State University), Supplemental Instruction (UMKC), and Video-Based Supplemental Instruction (UMKC). Peer collaborative learning is not new to the field of education. However, “increased attention has been placed on this practice due to claims by some programs that carefully coordinated and managed learning programs with specific protocols can increase student persistence rates toward graduation, supporting student aspirations as well as bolstering institutional revenues” (Arendale, D. 2012). Both UTPA and UTB have a long tradition of successfully implemented supplemental instruction. During Fall 2013, UTB implemented a full scale Structured Learning Assistance program. It is recommended that UTRGV not only maintain and grow the successful CLA programs that have been established, but also design and pilot additional CLA models that target specific disciplines or courses.

Specific Approaches to Course-Based Learning Assistance

(1) Supplemental Instruction (SI)

Supplemental Instruction (SI) was developed at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1973 and has been adopted by hundreds of institutions in the U.S. and abroad. SI was designed to help students in historically difficult courses. The focus of the program is to help students master content while they also develop and integrate learning and study strategies. The goals of SI include (1) improve student grades in targeted courses, (2) reduce the attrition rate within those courses, and (3) increase graduation rates of students. Student participation is voluntary, and there is no stigma attached to participation because the focus is on courses with high failure rates rather than on specific students who may be at risk of failing.

(2) Structured Learning Assistance (SLA)

Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) was first initiated at Ferris State University in 1993 and has been recognized through several national awards. Results indicate that SLA can significantly improve students’ success rates, including at-risk students. Structured Learning Assistance workshops assist students in developing the background needed to connect to the course content and to develop and apply the learning strategies most appropriate to the content area. Structured Learning Assistance provides both an academic and affective support system. Structured Learning Assistance targets courses that are considered high-risk for failure, academically rigorous gateway courses for academic majors, or historically difficult upper-division courses. Workshops are formally scheduled for 2-4 hours weekly in the student schedule. Attendance is required of all students until the first major grade. Following this first course assessment, attendance is required only for students whose current grade in the course falls below a C. Students passing the course may continue to come voluntarily. Faculty and SLA leaders (tutors) regularly communicate concerning student progress, concerns, and ways of better connecting with students. Workshops provide explicit information and application of learning strategies. Structured Learning Assistance also includes a faculty development component which supports higher academic achievement for students.

Link2Success*—First Year Academic Support Initiative a **Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) Model*

The University of Texas at Brownsville implemented a full-scale freshman student success initiative in Fall 2013. *Link2Success* (L2S) is an academic support initiative designed to target traditional high failure-rate freshmen core courses. The program is research based and was piloted for two years followed by an implementation on a larger scale in the STEM areas through Title V from Fall 2010 until present with tremendous success. With a primary goal of expanding interest in the STEM areas, the Title V program did not target exclusively STEM students, but rather introductory STEM courses, in order to encourage success, persistence, and student engagement. As a result of the successes from the smaller scale implementation of Title V, along with the support found in the review of literature, the endorsement of implementing this model by Complete College America, *Link2Success* (SLA model) was implemented to full scale in Fall 2013. *Link2Success* is currently a *Growing What Works* initiative in collaboration with Excelencia in Education and American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

This innovative program takes academic support directly to the students within the courses where the learning is collaborative, contextualized, and relevant to students. *Link2Success* is a student-centered **structured learning assistance** program that supplements course lecture with mandatory 2-3 hour per week study sessions that are built into the course schedule and facilitated by peer L2S leaders (tutors/peer mentors). The L2S leaders attend the course lectures along with the students, communicate with faculty on a weekly basis, and design lesson plans for their study sessions accordingly. The study sessions are designed with collaborative learning and students’ active engagement in mind. The goal is to scaffold students toward becoming active, strategic, and independent learners. L2S leaders serve a multi-purpose role in that they

are tutors, role models, and peer mentors that help incoming freshmen transition, both academically and socially, to college life.

Link2Success is a research-based high impact practice that serves approximately 1200-1500 students (duplicated headcount) per semester. Targeted courses in Fall 2013 were Composition I, U.S. History to 1877, College Algebra, and Contemporary Mathematics. Composition II and U.S. History since 1877 were added in Spring 2014. In addition to offering targeted academic support services to thousands of students per year, *Link2Success* offered student employment for approximately 70 L2S Leaders during the Fall 2013 semester and 115 during Spring 2014. The ratio of leader to student is 1:12 in History and Composition while it is 1:22 in College Algebra and Contemporary Mathematics. Large lecture classes have break-out study sessions designed to have approximately 24 students per room working with 2 L2S leaders. College Algebra and Contemporary Mathematics were offered with a modified version of the *Link2Success* model as the program is being transitioned from its traditional Emporium model design. Therefore, three L2S leaders worked with 67 students in one room in a computer lab setting. Investigating decreased leader to student ratio and incorporating more collaborative learning in the math courses will occur in Spring 2014. Both students and tutors reported a positive impact of their academic and personal development.

As a student success initiative, *Link2Success* is expected to result in increased passing rates, decreased withdrawal rates, and increased retention rates. In general, the initiative was a success with 3 of the 4 courses demonstrating significant increases in passing rates and decreases in withdrawal rates. The data below illustrates the impact of the *Link2Success* program on passing, withdrawal, and retention rates.

Passing Rates		
	Fall Averages for 2007-2012	Fall 2013 L2S
History U.S. to 1877	53%	74%
Composition I	61%	78%
College Algebra	45%	61%
Contemporary Mathematics	50%	51%

Withdrawal Rates		
	Fall Averages for 2007-2012	Fall 2013 L2S
History U.S. to 1877	9%	4%
Composition I	10%	5%
College Algebra	17%	6%
Contemporary Mathematics	12%	2%

Retention Rates of Students Enrolled in History U.S. to 1877, Composition I, College Algebra, and Contemporary Mathematics		
	Fall 2012 to Spring 2013	Fall 2013 to Spring 2014 (L2S)
First-Time Freshman	87%	93%
Full Population (approximately 50% freshmen and 40% sophomores)	79%	87%

Benefits in addition to increased success and retention rates include:

- 3000 students per year are served.
- Students experience increased engagement and team work,
- The program costs approximately \$500,000 per year..
- Almost all funds are used to cover student wages to employ approximately 125 tutors/peer mentors.

- The tuition from increased retention helps offset the cost significantly.

Future:

While supplemental academic support programs have proven to be successful with students in the RGV, a truly student-centered institution would also develop embedded peer collaborative learning programs within the course. Emerging Scholars Program (ESP), Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL), and Process-Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL) are three models that have been designed specifically with math and/or science in mind.

(3) Emerging Scholars Program (ESP)

The Emerging Scholars Program (ESP) was developed at the University of California, Berkeley in the early 1980s by Uri Treisman and has also been known as the Calculus Workshop Program and the Treisman Model. Treisman designed a program that created a system based on the informal student-driven sessions created by Asian students in challenging calculus courses. The ESP program can be designed to address most math and science courses and is designed to address the cognitive and affective domains of learning. Most ESP programs share the following elements:

- Build a cohort community of first-year students that is academically oriented and a source of peer support
- Provide the cohort with an extensive orientation to the institution and with ongoing academic advising
- Advocate the interests of the cohort
- Monitor their academic progress and adjustment to the environment
- Provide the cohort with ongoing adjunct instructional sessions that promote cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies needed for independent learning

Students are typically committed to attending two additional lab sessions weekly. At some institutions students are required to attend the sessions based on pre-entry test scores while at other institutions students are encouraged to make a commitment through creation of a perception that ESP is an honors program.

(4) Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL)

Peer-led team learning (PLTL) is a nationally recognized model of teaching and learning. The City College of New York (CUNY) first implemented PLTL in 1991. Many institutions across the U.S. have adopted and adapted the PLTL model across all STEM disciplines. An extensive body of research exists demonstrating that PLTL improves student learning. The PLTL model involves student leaders guiding the activities of small groups of students in weekly PLTL meetings. The meetings are part of the course requirement. In PLTL, students work through challenging problems that are designed to be solved cooperatively. The student leaders receive extensive training before the beginning of the academic term in a wide variety of areas including how to foster student engagement with the content material and with each other. According to the PLTL methodology, several educational opportunities are offered. (1) The supportive format encourages questions and discussions that lead to greater conceptual understanding. (2) Students learn to work in teams and to communicate more effectively which are valuable skills needed for further and future success. (3) Use of standardized adjunct print curriculum materials and workbooks help to ensure high quality learning that is more often uniformly experienced by all students at PLTL-implementing institutions. (4) Peer leaders learn teaching and group management skills. The difference between PLTL and ESP relates to curriculum development. ESP requires the development of program materials while the national office for PLTL has published supplemental textbooks and workbooks that can be added to the course delivery and also serve as models for development of local curricula. The Center for Peer-led Team Learning offers national conferences and training workshops to support institutions with implementing the program.

(5) Process-Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL)

Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning (POGIL) is a research based learning environment that promotes active learning and engagement by students as they work collaborative to master course content and develop essential skills by working in self-managed teams on guided inquiry activities. The goal is to create a learning environment where the instructor is the facilitator and mentor that seeks to simultaneously develop the ability to think analytically and work effectively as part of a collaborative team. The Process-Oriented component of POGIL is designed to have each instructor think about what process skills are important to develop for his or her students. The Guided Inquiry component enhances the analytical and

critical thinking skills through the design of the activities or the learning cycle and the use of groups requiring students to explain their reasoning.

Student Employment Initiative









Initiated in Fall 2005, the Student Employment Initiative (SEI) is part of a retention and timely graduation strategy that recognizes the compelling need of students to work while attending college. The SEI was designed to integrate students into the campus environment and to help control the variables that could hinder academic progress because of off-campus work obligations through the rigorous, incentive-based model requiring accountability for academic performance, which include enrolling for at least 15 semester credit hours and maintaining a minimum 2.75 GPA. The SEI provides on-campus paid internship opportunities in a student's program of study above and beyond traditional work-study. The SEI adds value to a student's educational experience and places them in positions where they can grow as professionals and gain early exposure to a career or research in a field of interest. That success was recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Star Award in December 2008 and at the national level by Excelencia in Education in 2013. Further, UTB is taking the lessons learned from the program and implementing them into a campus-wide initiative, turning all part-time positions into internships for students. –from the Excelencia in Education website.

*LEC at UTB is currently placing approximately 40-50 of its 140 tutors per semester in the SEI program.

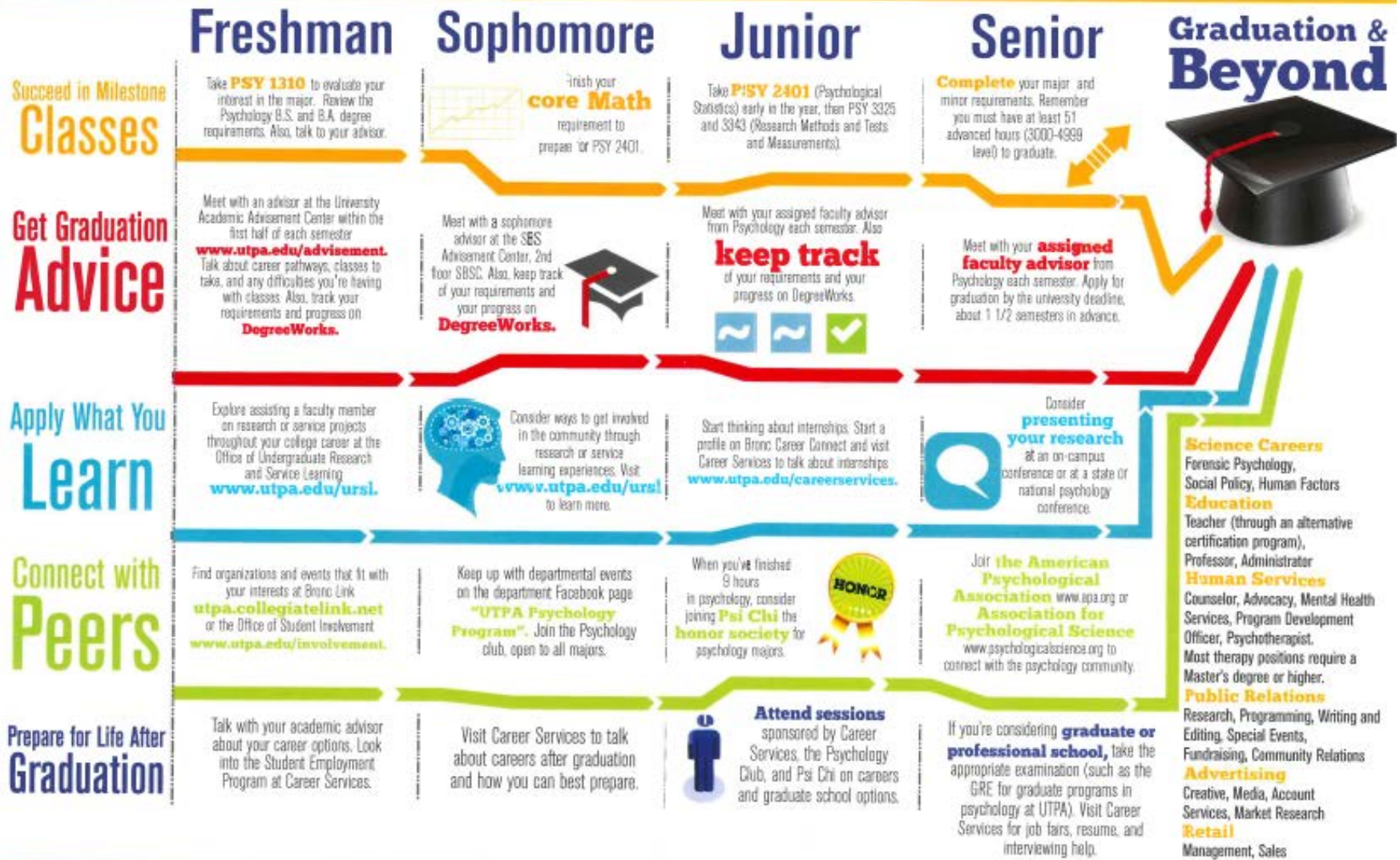
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Appendix G
Example Major Maps from UTB and UTPA

 COLLEGE OF NURSING		B.S. in Nursing Generic Track				
TAKE THE RIGHT CLASSES	Freshman ENGL 1301 and 1302 BIOL 2301/2101 and BIOL 2302/2102 MATH 1314 CHEM 1305/1105 CHEM 1311/1111	Sophomore BIOL 2321/ 2121 NURS 2301 NURS 2302 NURS 2304	Junior Special Topics Course may be taken any semester.	Senior Finish all your major requirements. Special Topics Course may be taken any semester.	NURSING CAREER FIELDS Government: Military Nursing Forensic Nursing Education: Nurse Mentor Nurse researcher Nurse Educator Business: Clinical Consultant Legal Nursing Biotech: Genetics HIV/AIDS Communications: Nurse Investigator Nursing Informatics Human Services: Case-Management	
GET GOOD ADVICE	Visit the Academic Advising Center at Main 1.400 to pick up a copy of your POS and list of requirements to apply to the nursing program.	Take the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS). Register in the Department of Nursing.	Update your degree plan at the Academic Advising Center. Apply for graduation at the Registrar's Office.	Schedule an appointment with an Academic Advising Specialist for a graduation check.		
APPLY WHAT YOU LEARN	 Visit the Office of Career Services to start building your résumé and portfolio. Learn how to get the job you want!	Apply for scholarships: • Lower Rio Grande Nursing Scholarship • Mimi Freeth Scholarship • Philippines Association Scholarship • Tipton Family Endowment	 Contact the Civic Engagement Center to find out how you can volunteer your new skills in the community!	Contact faculty about possible nursing research projects.		
CONNECT WITH PEERS	Join the Nursing Club located in LHSB 2.720A.	Join a state organization like the Texas Student Nursing Association or the Texas Nurses Association.	Consider running for an officer position in the Nursing Club. Get involved in leadership positions in state nursing associations.	Continue club involvement and volunteering.		
THINK GLOBALLY	Discover organizations that improve the health of the world's people, such as the World Health Organization.	Take advantage of study abroad during Maymester or summer terms. Apply at the Office of Global Engagement.	Gain valuable experience by attending a professional research conference.	Gain valuable experience by presenting your research at a conference.		
PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER GRADUATION	Browse the Texas Workforce Commission for nursing-related jobs and trends.	Investigate US News and World Report hospital rankings.	Consider graduate school! Visit the Office of Graduate Studies.	Become a highly qualified practitioner who enhances the community you serve!		

MAJOR MAP • PSYCHOLOGY • Degrees - B.A. in Psychology • B.S. in Psychology



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