

TRiO

Student Support Services (SSS)



Annual Report Fall 2019 – Summer 2020

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV)
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Executive Summary

In fall 2015, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) was awarded a TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) federally funded Department of Education five-year grant to serve 275 undergraduate students yearly that identify as first generation, come from low socio-economic backgrounds, and illustrate a documented disability.

TRiO SSS offers educational support services, such as intrusive coaching, cultural competency training, academic and career preparation. In addition, the program offers tutoring for most courses and professional school entrance exams to marginalized students to assist them towards attainment of their bachelor's degree. To meet the goals of the grant and ensure the program is in compliance with the Department of Education legislation and regulations, participants must meet educational requirements that align with the objectives.

The program goals are to increase retention, and graduation rates of its participants from one academic year to the other (fall to fall), aid students in staying in good academic standing, and foster a supportive and inclusive environment. To track student's participation and academic progress to ensure that we are meeting our objectives, the staff utilizes Blumen—a student tracking software, Survey Monkey, and institutional data. This report provides figures and assessments of the TRiO SSS student characteristics, services provided, and goal achievement of our fifth grant year from fall 2019 to summer 2020.

Mission Statement

TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) is designed to assist participants with enhancing their academic skills in a welcoming atmosphere where they can thrive intellectually, personally, and professionally. We are committed to employing a holistic approach to empower our students to be resilient, demonstrate self-efficacy, and strengthen their self and peer advocacy.

Achievements

- In 2019-2020, 21 students earned their bachelor's degree & 71% earned a 3.5 or higher GPA.
- In fall 2019, 42 students made the President's list and 65 students made the Dean's list.
- In spring 2020, 63 students made the President's list and 82 students made the Dean's list.
- In spring & summer 2020, 43 students each received grant aid in the amount of \$1000 and 32 students each received grant aid in the amount of \$750, totaling \$67,000. More grant aid was available to students to supplement any financial losses because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In February 2020, 15 students volunteered with Charro Days for National TRiO Day.
- In spring break 2020, a total of 11 students traveled to Atlanta, GA to participate in the Graduate, Leadership, and Cultural Competency Training.
- In March 2020, SSS moved all of its coaching, tutoring, and workshops virtually to ensure student safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Services and Activities

Mandated Services: Services that we must provide to stay in compliance.

- **Academic Tutoring:** SSS offers tutoring in most subjects and graduate college level entrance exams. Tutoring is provided virtually and in person via Zoom. In addition, iTutor is available in the evening to students in upper level science courses.
- **Advice and assist in course selection:** Success coaches aid students in creating and reviewing an educational plan to ensure graduation. In addition, EAB is implemented to streamline the appointment process. Services are offered virtually via Zoom and in person.
- **Financial Aid Assistance:** Success coaches assists students with completing the FAFSA application, understanding the differences in grants, loans, repayment, and work study. In addition, students receive assistance with identifying scholarships. The SSS office partners with the financial aid office to stay up to date with Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and FAFSA changes.
- **Financial Literacy:** New and continuing students are provided with financial literacy resources, such as budgeting, savings, and debt reduction during their first meeting every semester. In addition, students identify income and expenses and design a budget sheet to accomplish their financial plan. The SSS program has partnered with TIAA-CREF to provide financial literacy modules to participants.
- **Graduate and professional school application assistance:** SSS coaches aid students with researching graduate programs and schools, reviewing admission deadline dates and requirements, and identifying scholarships for graduate schools. In addition, students receive hands on assistance with outlining important elements to include in their personal statements.

Permissible Services: Services we may also provide that are approved in the SSS grant.

- **Personal, career, and academic counseling:** Supportive counseling when students find themselves in distress. It allows for early intervention and connecting students to the appropriate resources.
- **Exposure to cultural events and training:** Students have the opportunity to participate in on and off campus cultural events, such as theater, music, historical tours, and multicultural.
- **Peer Mentoring/Coaching Advising:** Peer mentors meet with freshman and sophomores to provide academic and personal support every semester to aid students in transitioning to campus. Specialist meet with juniors and seniors to ensure on track to graduation and assist with career planning.
- **Workshops:** SSS provides several workshops throughout the semesters to introduce and expose students to academic skills development, career readiness, financial literacy, wellness, and cultural competency.

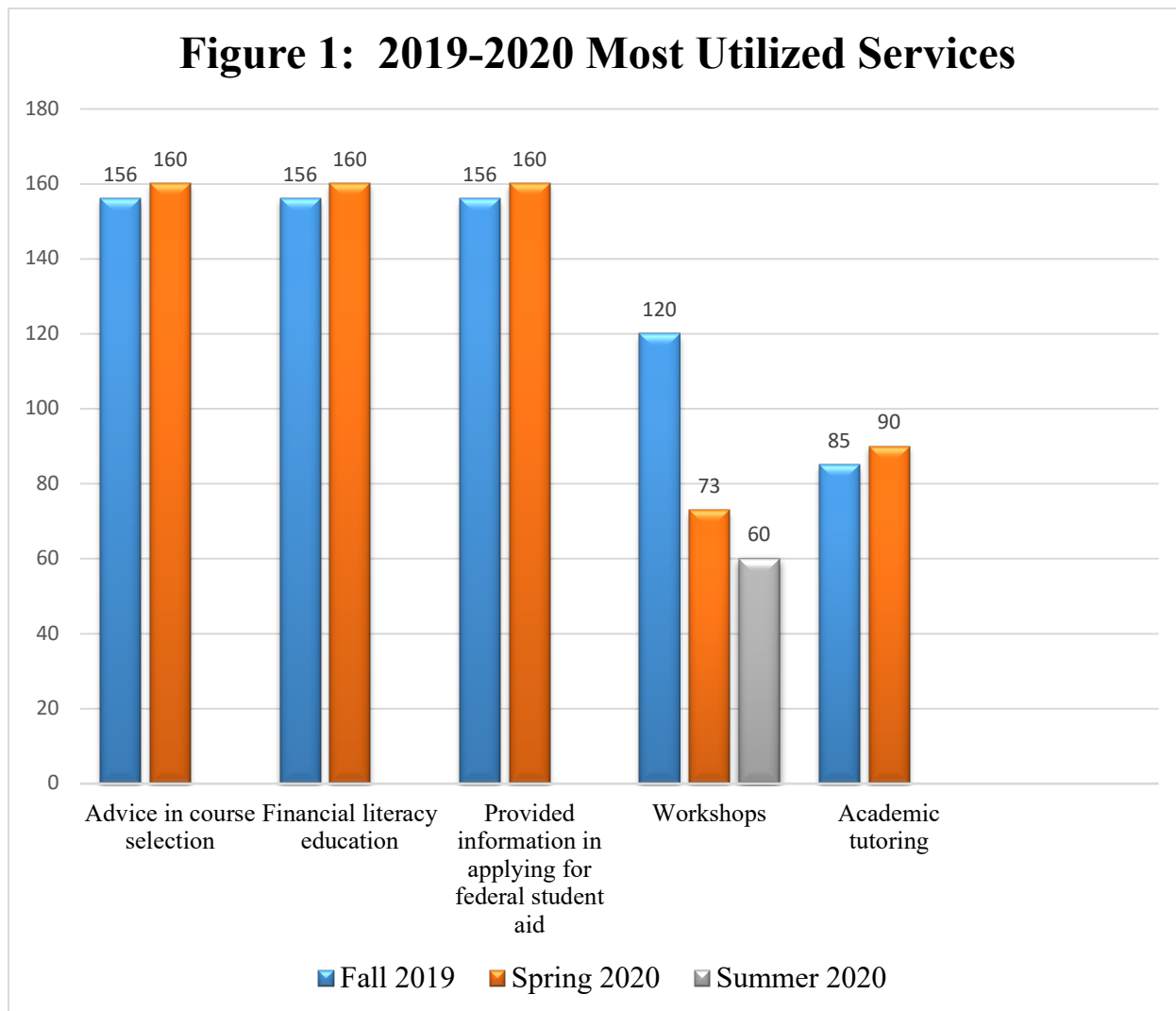


Figure 1: Illustrates the number of participants who utilized these services.
 Note: Most services are offered during fall and spring. Summer 2020 students participated in financial literacy workshop sessions.

Student Characteristics

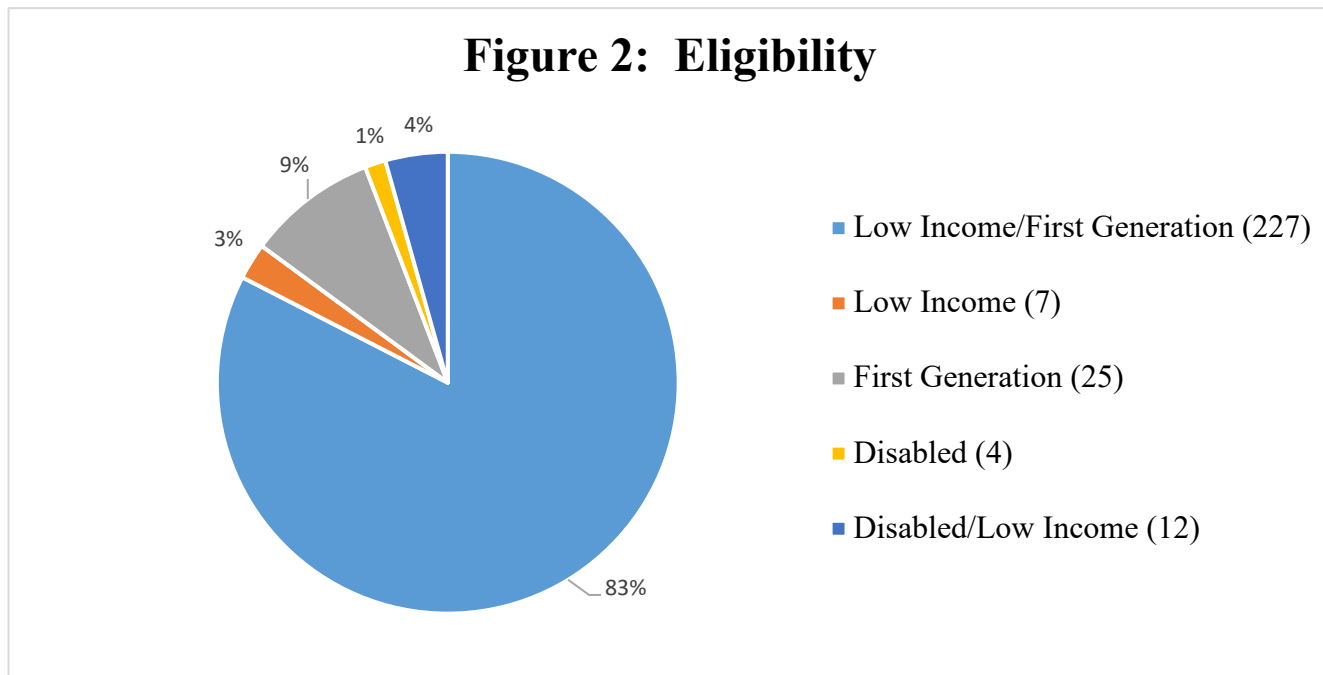


Figure 2: Illustrates the number of participants that met SSS eligibility broken down by number of students and percentages.

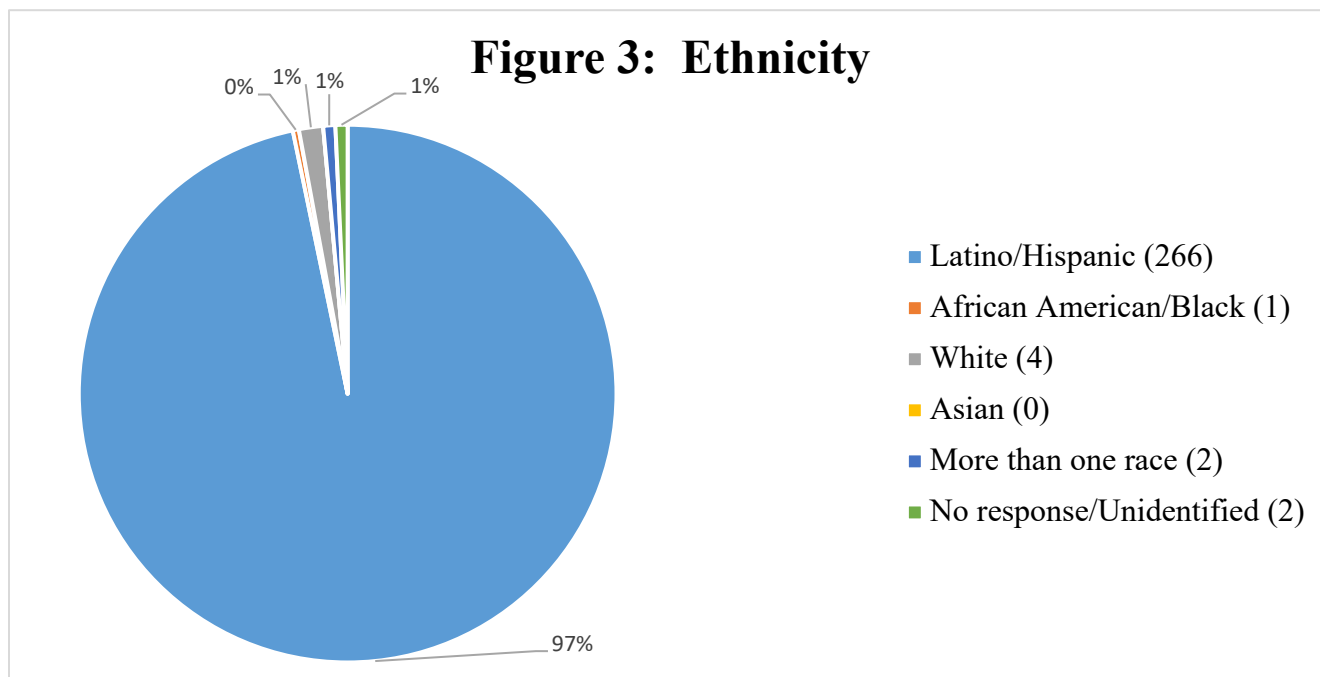


Figure 3: Illustrates the ethnicity of participants broken down by number of students & percentages.

Figure 4: Age

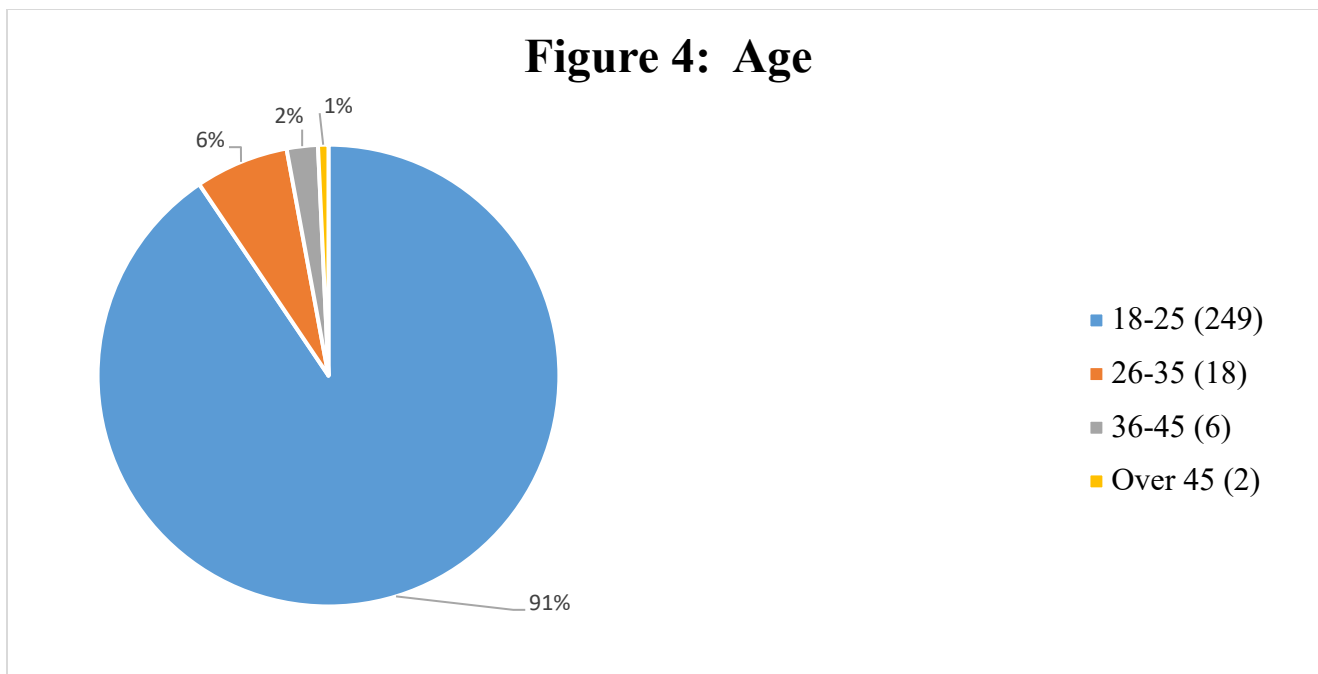


Figure 4: Illustrates the ages for participants broken down by number of students & percentages.

Figure 5: Gender

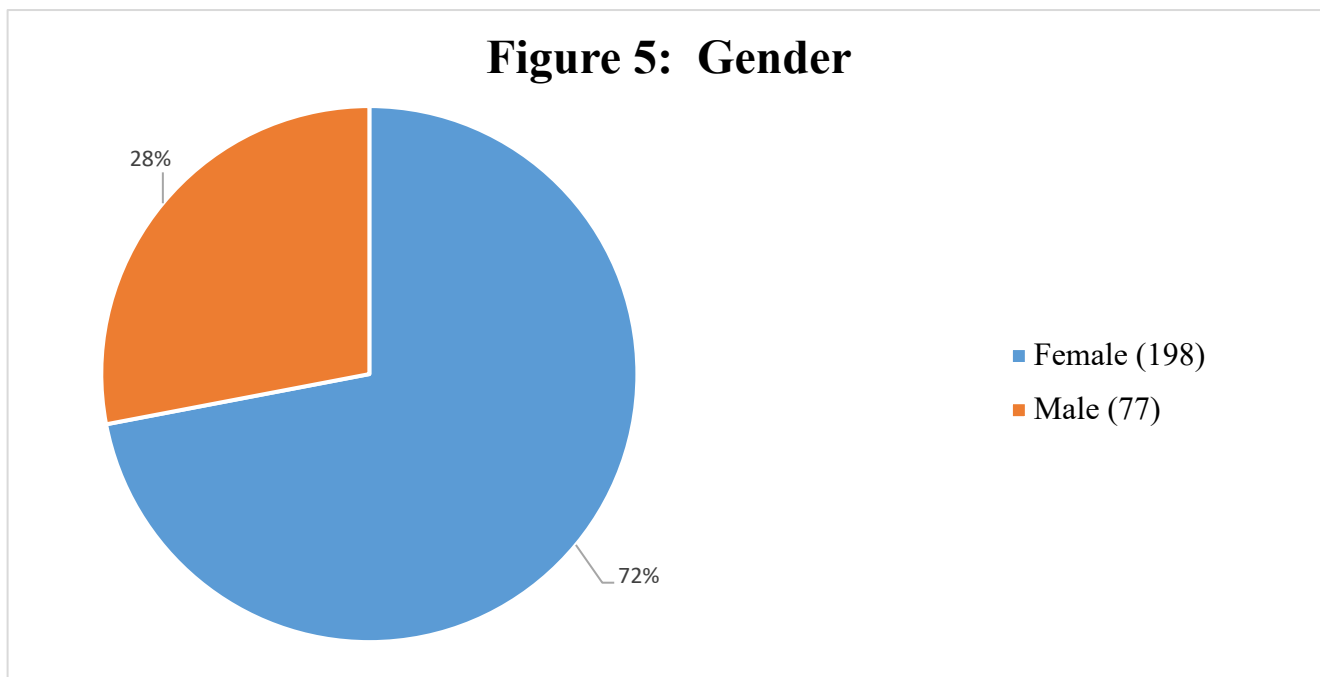


Figure 5: Illustrates the sex for participants broken down by number of participants & percentages.

Figure 6: Classification

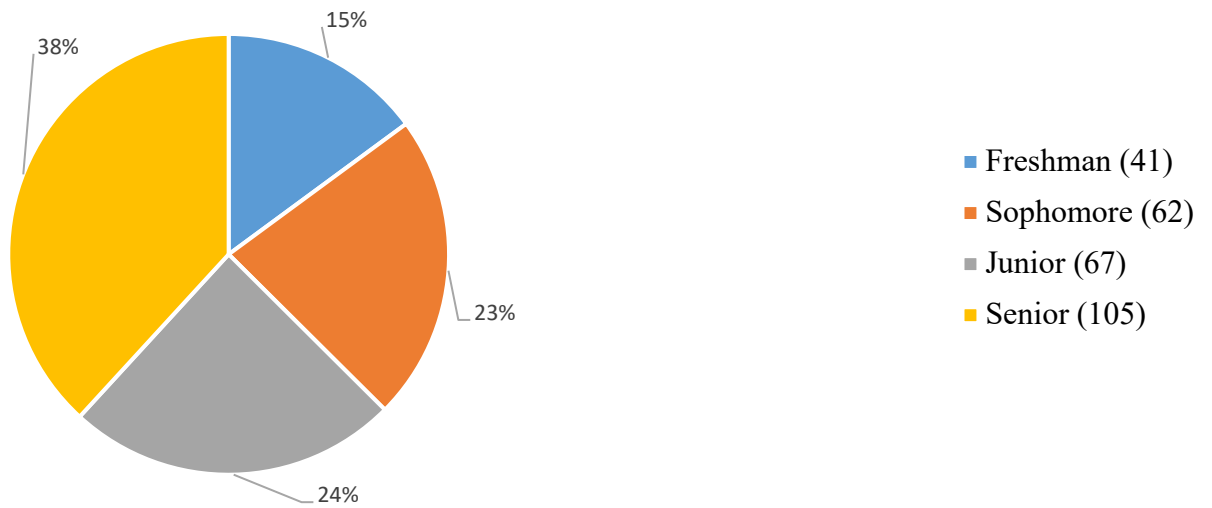


Figure 6: Illustrates the grade level for participants broken down by number of students and percentages.

Academic Performance

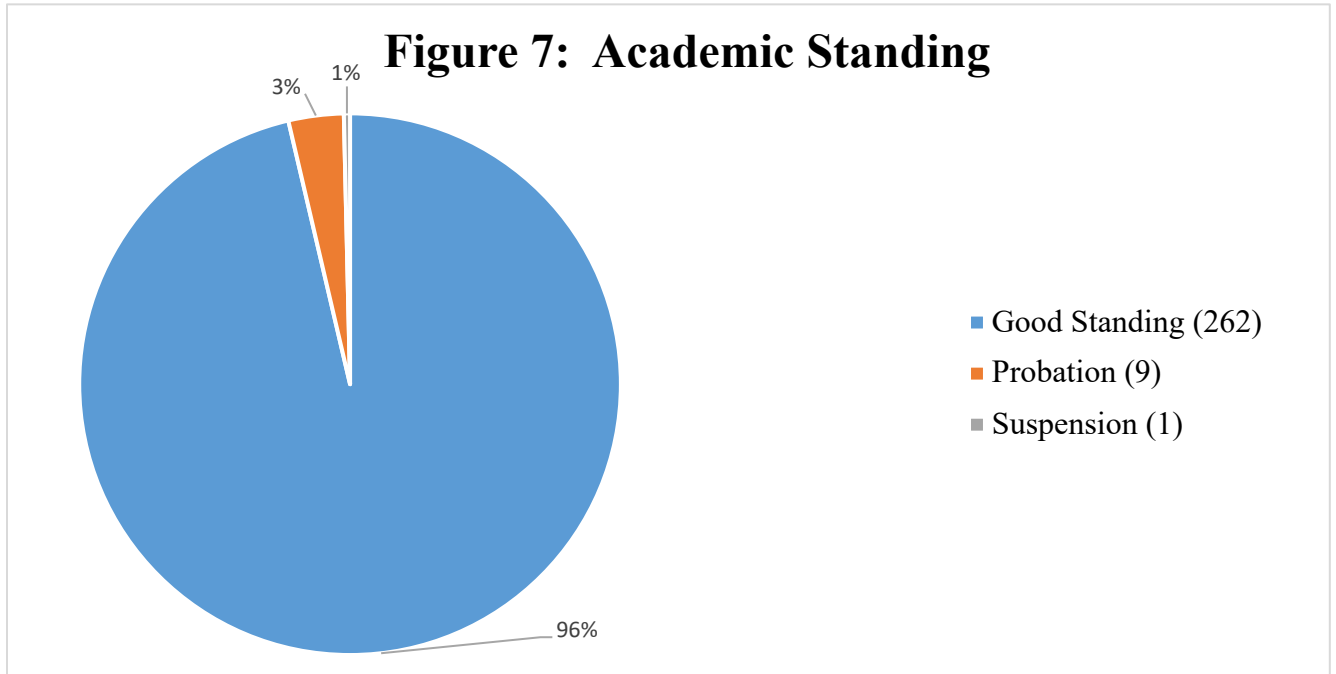


Figure 7: Illustrates the percentage of participants who attained good academic standing by the end of summer 2020. Note: We serve 275 students yearly, but 3 of our students were new or transfer, so no standing could be calculated until they complete one full semester with UTRGV.

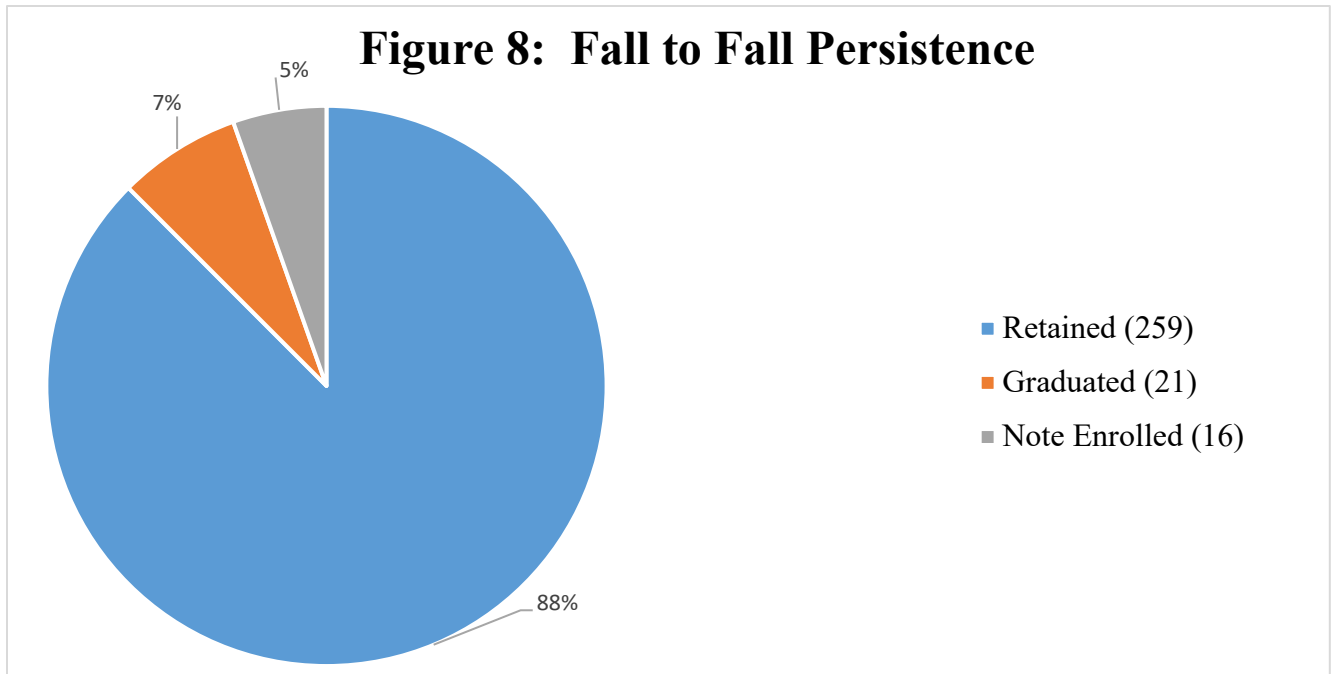


Figure 8: Illustrates the retention rate broken down by number of students & percentages.

Note: Total retention rate is actually 95%
(percentage includes enrolled and graduated students).