
The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley



Annual Report 2018-2019

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV)
One West University Blvd., BMSLC 2.104, Brownsville, TX 78520

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. After a recent restructuring of services, SSS now approaches student success holistically. Thus, increasing recruitment numbers, partnerships across campus, and number of students participating in our services.

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

The program goals are to increase persistence, 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. Blumen—a student tracking software, and institutional data is used to track student's participation in the program and academic progress to ensure that we are meeting our objectives. This report provides figures and assessments of the TRiO SSS student characteristics, services provided, and goal achievement of our fourth grant year from fall 2018 to summer 2019.

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 2018-2019, 19 participants received their bachelor's degrees.
- In fall 2018, nine students attained President's list standing and four students attained Dean's list standing.
- In spring 2019, three students attained President's list standing and five students attained Dean's list standing.
- In 2018-2019, 42% of our graduating students earned a 3.7 or higher GPA.
- In spring and summer 2019, a total of 10 students each semester received grant aid in the amount of \$1000, totaling \$20,000.
- In February 2019, 23 students participated in beach cleanup day for National TRiO Day at South Padre Island.
- In April 2019, two of our students attended the University of Iowa's Law bridge program. This event was entirely free to our students because the University of Iowa sponsored the event.
- In summer 2019, a total of 19 students traveled to New Orleans, LA to participate in a Graduate, Leadership, and Cultural Competency Training. This was the first time this had been done.
- In August 2019, SSS moved to a newly designed space in the Music Building. This move allows for more exposure to students because we are now situated in a high student traffic area.

Student Characteristics (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)

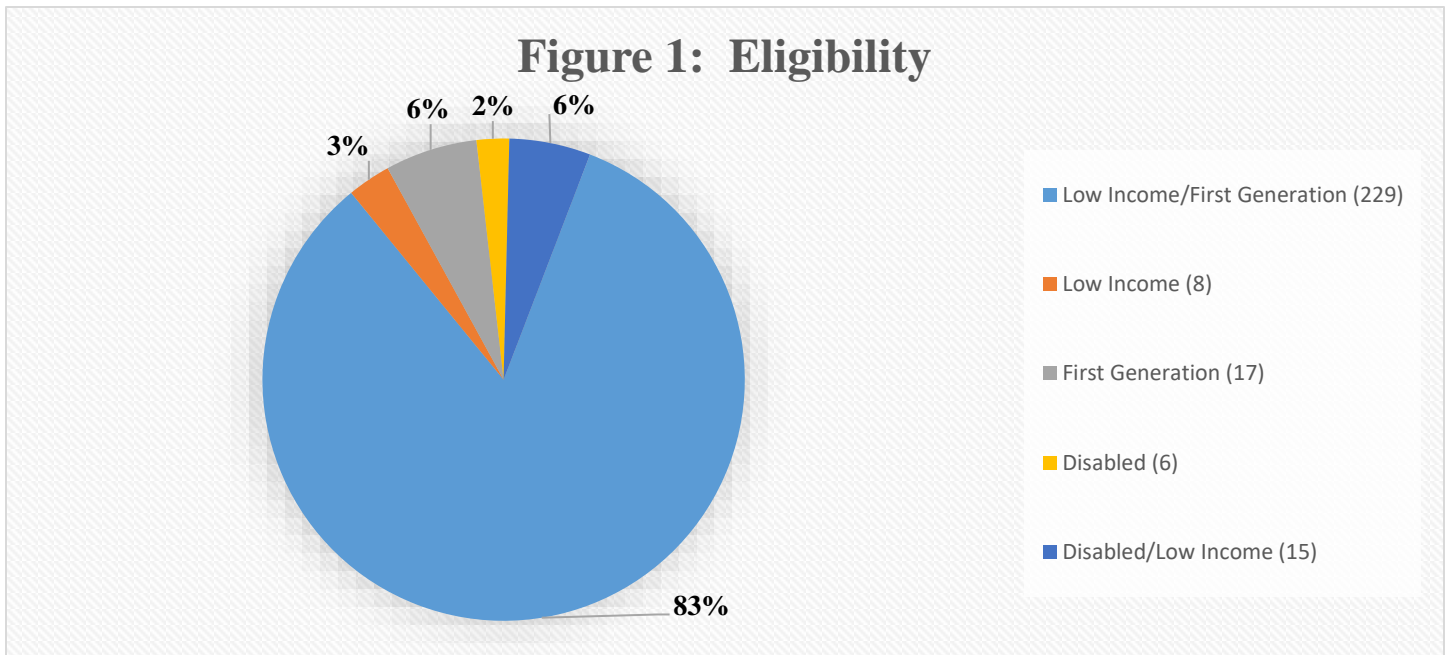


Figure 1: Illustrates the number of participants that met SSS eligibility for 2018-2019 broken down by number of students and percentages.

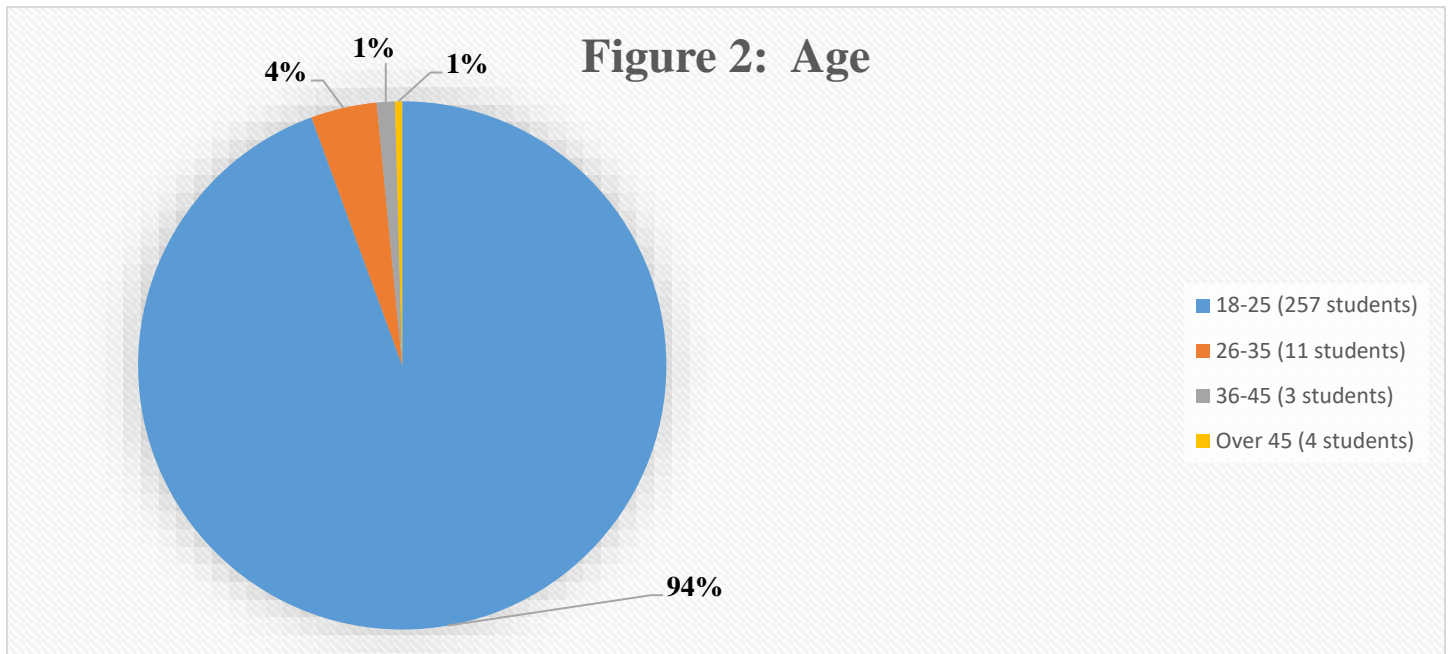


Figure 2: Illustrates the ages for 2018-2019 SSS participants broken down by number of students and percentages.

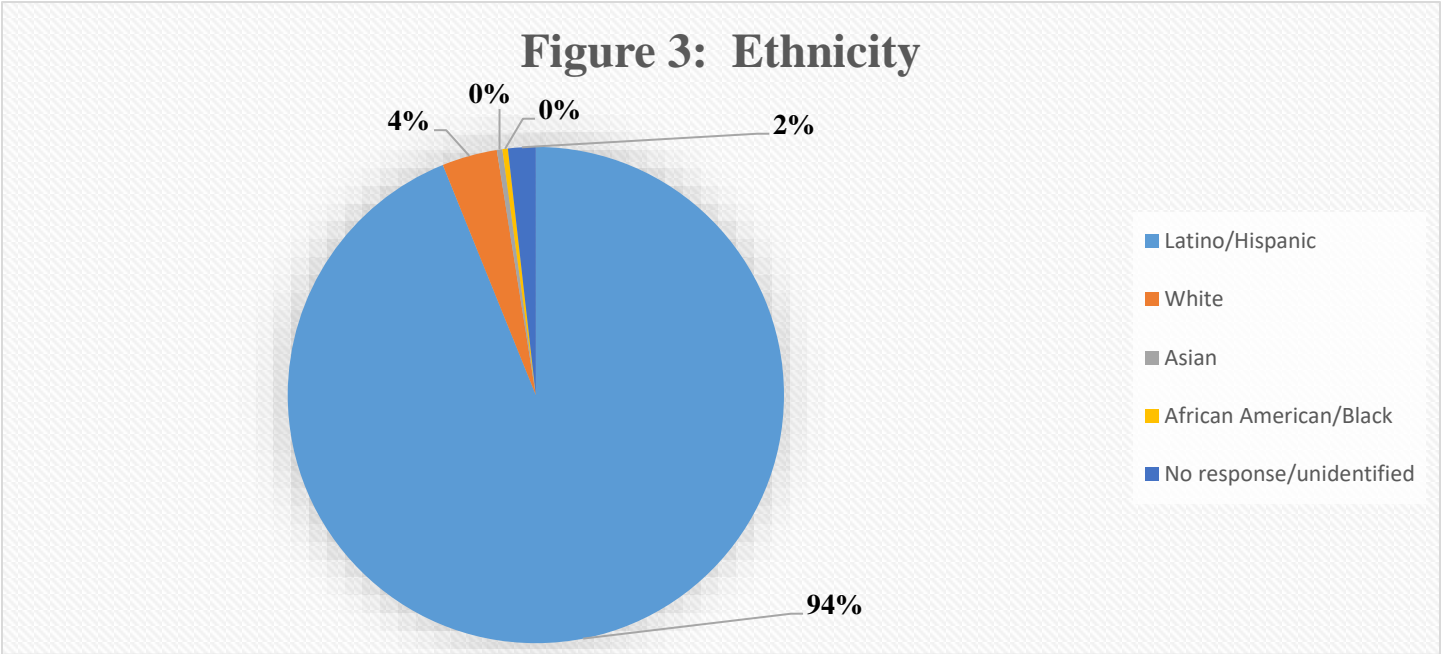


Figure 3: Illustrates the demographics for the 2018-2019 SSS participants broken down by percentages.

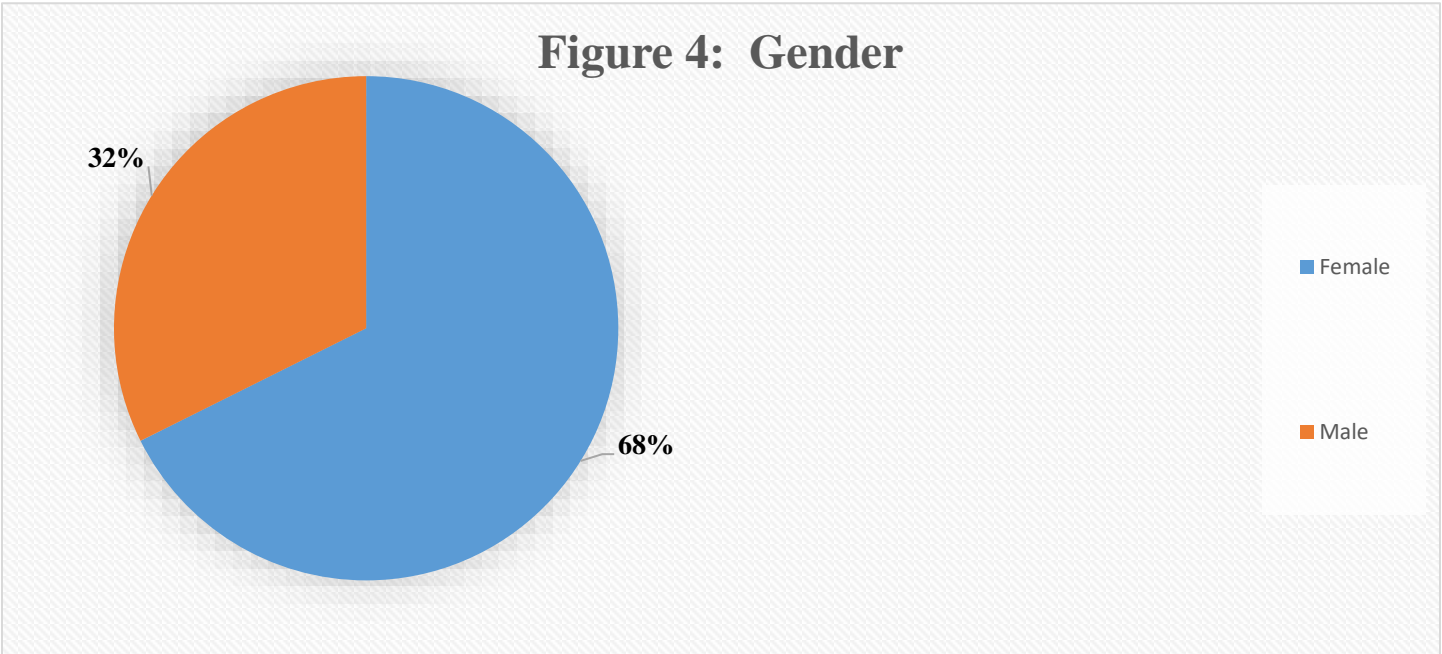


Figure 4: Illustrates the sex for 2018-2019 SSS participants broken down by percentages.

Figure 5: Classification

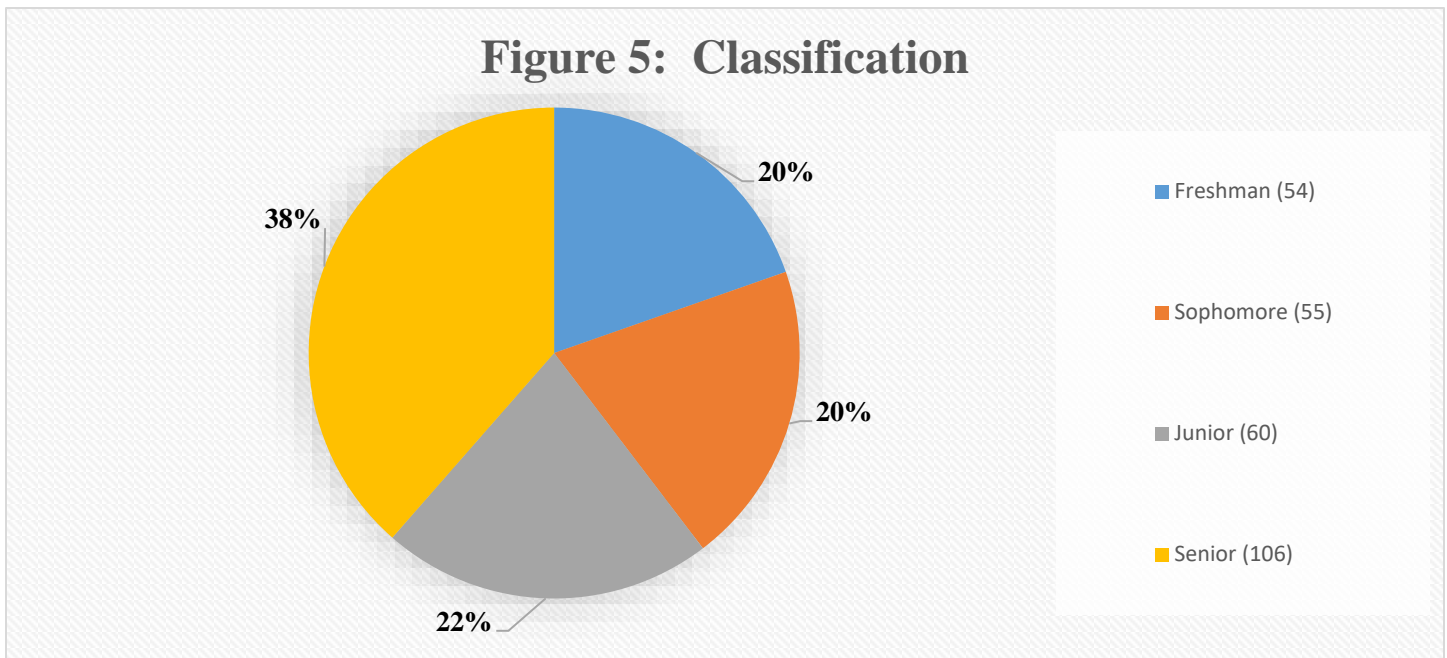


Figure 5: Illustrates the grade level for 2018-2019 SSS participants broken down by number of students and percentages.

Services and Activities (Fall 2018-Spring 2019)

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 by CRLA certified peer tutors during business and after hours (if needed).
- **Advice and assist in course selection:** Students meet with a peer coach/specialist to aid students in creating and reviewing an educational plan to ensure graduation.
- **Financial Aid Assistance:** SSS specialists assist students with completing the FAFSA application, understanding the differences in grants, loans, and work study, and researching 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 returning students are provided with financial literacy information, such as budgeting, savings, and debt during their first meeting every semester. In addition, students complete a budget sheet with their peer coach/specialist and address any concerns during follow up meetings.
- **Graduate and professional school application assistance:** SSS specialists 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 6: 2018-2019 Most Utilized Services

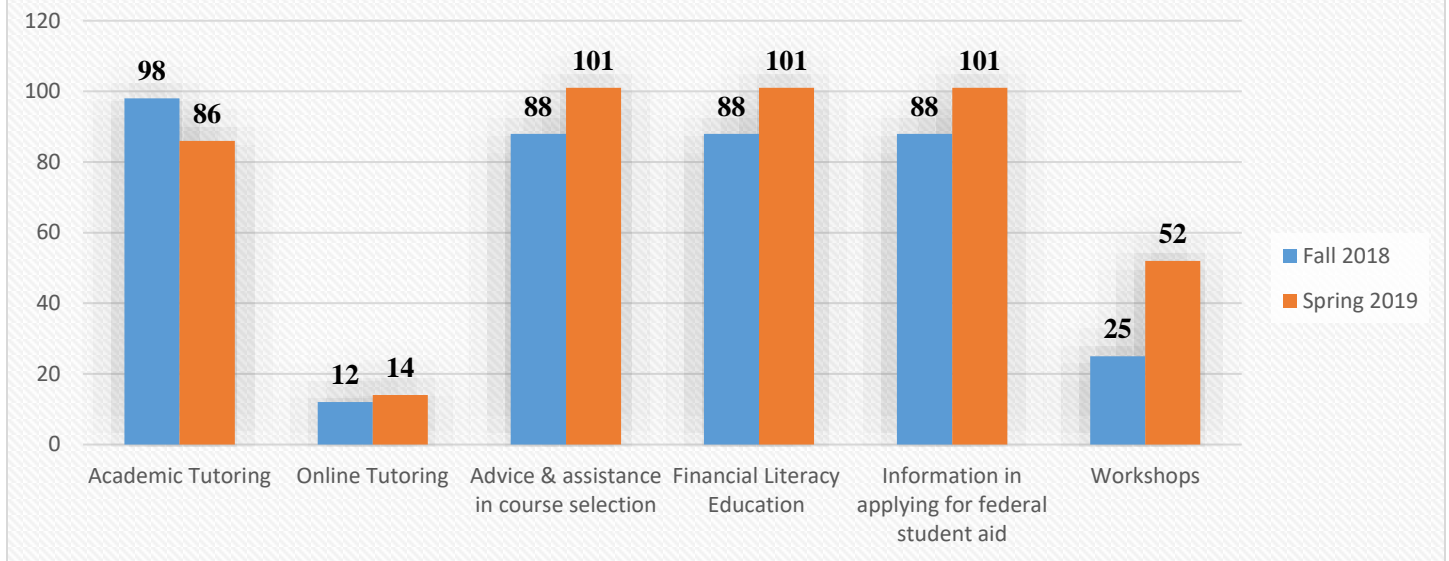


Figure 6: Illustrates the number of SSS participants who utilized these services.

Academic Performance (Fall 2018 to Summer 2019)

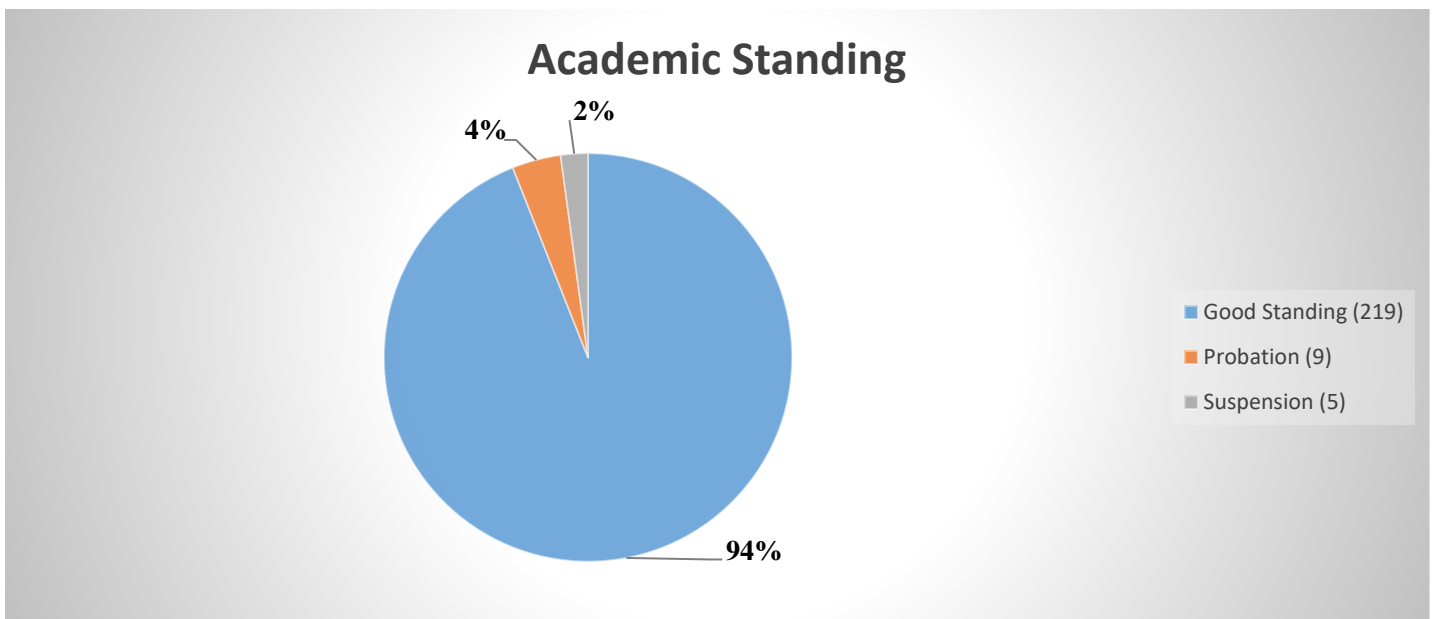


Figure 7: Illustrates the percentage of SSS participants who attained academic standing by the end of summer 2019. Note: We serve 275, but 42 of our students were new or transfer, so no standing could be calculated until they complete one full semester with UTRGV.

Figure 8: Fall to Fall Retention

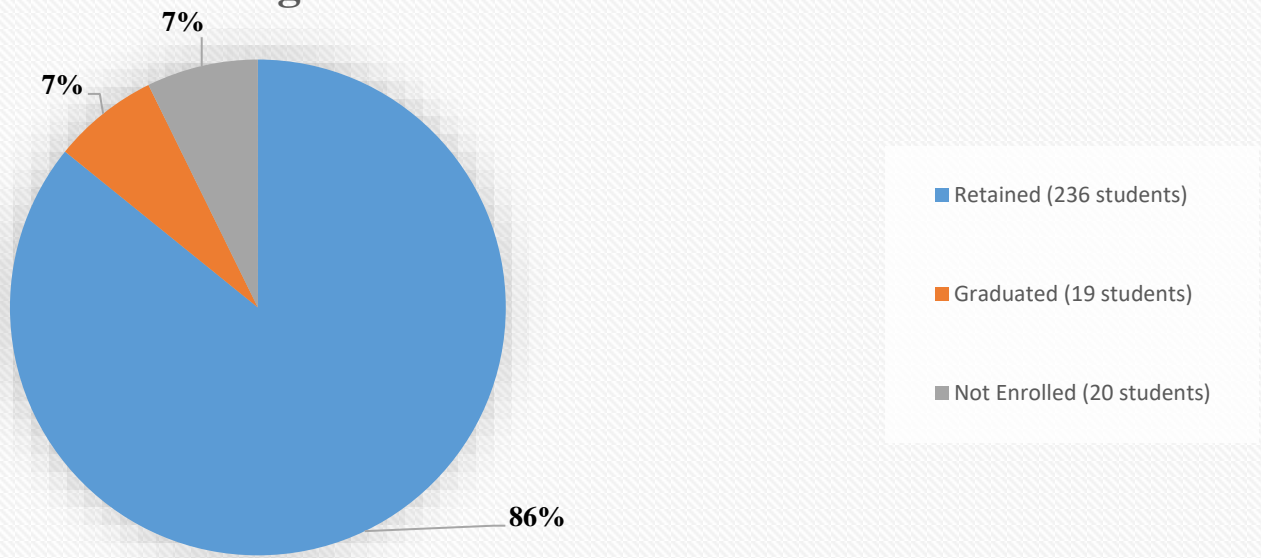


Figure 8: Illustrates retention rates for SSS students from fall 2018 to fall 2019 broken down by number of students and percentages. Note: *Total retention rate is actually 93% (percentages include enrolled students and graduates.)*