



A Member of the Texas State University System

2008-2009

Report of Efforts Concerning Timely Graduation

The table below provides the average number of semester credit hours attempted and the average number of fall and spring semesters attended by a student completing the programs in the following CIP broad-based academic programs:

Average Credits Attempted and Mean Semesters Toward Baccalaureate Degree in Program Areas*

Degree Program	# of Grads**	Credits Attempted	Mean Semesters
Science & Math	80	163	11
Agriculture	95	158	10
Art & Architecture	543	158	11
Business	465	150	10
Health	29	159	11
Social Sciences & Service	529	153	10
Technology	37	152	10
Total Graduates	1778		
Institutional Average		155	10

* Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

** FY 2007

Strategies that have been newly implemented in Fall 2008 at Sam Houston State University include:

- the “Student Success Initiative, a major academic improvement effort, lead at the Assistant Vice Presidential level, which will provide coordination for all campus academic enhancement programs.
- a highly pragmatic approach to supporting student access and attendance (Shuttle Service).

Details about the shuttle service will be provided under section 1 below, and details of the Student Success Initiative will be provided in section 6 below.

1. **To ensure that undergraduate students graduate in a timely manner** Sam Houston State University (SHSU) has initiated a wide variety of proactive programs to include:

NEW: Shuttle service SHSU is all too aware that the recent history of rising fuel prices and the nation's current economic state are presenting obstacles to students desiring to attend SHSU from the Woodlands and Conroe areas, as well as those SHSU students who are needing to take classes at the University Center in the Woodlands. In response, SHSU offers a regular, reliable, and reasonably priced means to transport commuting students to and from classes. The Sam Shuttle runs regularly, Monday through Friday between the hours of 6:30 am and 9:10 pm, with two stops on the SHSU campus, as well as stops at the Outlet Mall at Conroe, the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in the Woodlands, the Portofino Shopping Center in the Woodlands, and at Lone Star College. These locations offer commuters a safe location to park their cars and catch the shuttle. The average length of the trip is one hour, for one way, and ticket prices range from \$4.00 for one way and \$8.00 for a round trip. While the shuttle is public transportation and open to anyone, SHSU students in particular are being encouraged to take advantage of this new service. To date, 5,105 tickets have been sold for the shuttle since its maiden run just before the start of the Fall 08 semester. Not only is the new shuttle both safe and cost-efficient for commuting students, but it can also help with time-management, as students can spend the commute time reading or studying rather than having to focus on driving. By providing this service, the university hopes that commuting students will find it easier to take the classes they need to graduate at times that are more convenient for them.

- **Transition to 120 hour degree programs.** SHSU has initiated a series of Town Hall meetings to discuss strategies for reducing degree programs to 120 hours. Decisions concerning these plans are scheduled to be made by Fall 2007 with implementation no later than Fall 2008.

- **Joint Admissions.** SHSU has initiated a program of joint admissions to assist students who qualify to attend SHSU but opt to begin their program of study at a community college. The joint admission program provides for an easy transition into SHSU while affording these students access to SHSU's support services while they are still attending the community college. <http://www.shsu.edu/joint/>

- **Community College Counselor Workshops.** A program hosted by the SAM Center and Undergraduate Admissions bringing community college advisors to campus to share information about SHSU degree programs, and how to best serve transfer students from their institutions. The program decreases the likelihood of students taking unnecessary courses at either institution.

- **Articulation Agreements.** To enable students to more easily transition from a community college to SHSU, the University has initiated articulation agreements with over 30 community colleges throughout the state that outlines the way community college work can be efficiently integrated into selected baccalaureate programs at SHSU.

<http://www.shsu.edu/prospects/transfer/>

- **Course equivalencies.** To ensure that transfer students know what courses will transfer to SHSU and count toward a specific degree program, the University has created online transfer equivalencies. <https://ww2.shsu.edu/reg27wp/>

- **Traveling advisors.** SHSU assigns academic advisors to visit community college campuses on a regular basis to assist prospective students in selecting courses that will transfer into their intended degree programs.

- **Destination Graduation.** An event hosted each semester by the Office of the Registrar that allows prospective graduates to ensure that all necessary steps have been completed to earn their degree. Staff from departments such as the Office of the Registrar, Student Financial Aid, and Business Services are available to check a student's graduation status to assure students that everything is proceeding as planned or to identify potential problems with recommended solutions.

http://www.shsu.edu/~reg_www/destination/

- **Registration Reminders.** The catalog includes a list of factors that students should consider when registering. Factors include: financial aid eligibility, excessive hours, third attempt penalties, and Q-drop limitations. It is the University's intent to provide pertinent information to students in as many formats as possible. Information is provided in the catalog and on-line when the student(s) register. Specifically, the

following content is provided to students:

Change of Schedule (Adding and Dropping Courses)

- What should students consider when adding or dropping courses?
 - Adding or dropping courses can impact financial aid. Students receiving financial aid and/or scholarships are encouraged to visit with a financial aid representative prior to adding or dropping courses.
 - Adding courses will result in tuition and fee charges to be paid by 4:00 pm on the date the course(s) are added.
 - A student is allowed no more than 5 Q-drops during their career at SHSU.
 - A student, under specific conditions, may be charged a higher tuition rate for excessive undergraduate hours. Please reference Tuition for Excessive Undergraduate Hours within this catalog for further information.
- When can students change their schedules (i.e., during advanced registration, registration, and late registration periods).
- When do charges for adding and dropping courses begin?

Beginning on the first class day of the semester as defined in the official Academic Calendar.

• **Career Services.** SHSU provides its students a fully-staffed office with a career specialist to assist them in making the transition from college to career through a variety of programs, including career advising, resume development, workshops, career fairs, and employer recruiting. A clear goal of employment after graduation will encourage timely graduation. http://www.shsu.edu/~ccp_www/

• **New Student Convocation.** A celebration that motivates new students and their parents to embrace the challenges and experiences of college. All entering freshmen, faculty and staff are invited to this event. A motivational speaker encourages student success and graduation from college. http://www.shsu.edu/~fye_www/convocation.html

• **FYE Newsletter.** The FYE Newsletter is distributed campus wide and, upon request, to the students' parents. This newsletter entitled "In The Know," keeps students alert to important events, as well as, offering and providing helpful hints for developing positive study skills and relationships with the faculty and other university staff. An

archive is also maintained on the FYE website. This tool assists in keeping open the line of communications between the university and new students.

http://www.shsu.edu/~fye_www/newsletter.html

- **Grassroots: Conversations on Leadership in a Diverse Community.** A monthly program highlighting either an African-American or Hispanic leader in a professional field. These leaders share their experiences and various techniques and strategies toward success with students.

http://www.shsu.edu/~sam_www/main%20menu/Support%20Programs/Grassroots.html

2. To ensure that undergraduate students do not attempt an excessive number of semester credit hours beyond the minimum number required to complete the students' degree programs, Sam Houston State University has implemented the following measures:

- **SAM Center.** A centralized location that offers accurate and intrusive academic advising and a variety of study enhancement programs. Recently the SAM Center was recognized by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) as one of the country's top six advising centers. http://www.shsu.edu/~sam_www/

Programs offered by the SAM Center include:

- **Mandatory Advisement.** All SHSU students without an established SHSU GPA or SHSU students with a SHSU GPA below 2.5 must be advised prior to registration.
- **Monitored Academic Progress (MAP).** The program is designed to monitor the academic progress of students on probation. There are three levels of intrusive monitoring to include required study skill sessions, mandatory one-on-one meetings with an advisor, and periodic grade checks during the semester.
- **Academic Survival Skills.** The SAM Center and the Counseling Center offer short courses in a variety of self-help areas to include: time management, reading skills, note taking, stress management, critical thinking, and self assessment. http://www.shsu.edu/~sam_www/main%20menu/Support%20Programs/Study%20Skills%20Series.html
- **First Alert.** This initiative is an intrusive advising program based on referrals from faculty members who are concerned about a student's lack of academic

progress based on attendance and grade checks. The SAM Center staff will contact the referred students and offer opportunities to improve student performance.

• **Academic Support Services.** At no charge to students, SHSU offers a variety of tutorial and consultation centers to include:

○ **Math Lab.** The University provides free personal tutoring services to all students enrolled in freshman or sophomore mathematics and statistics courses.

http://www.shsu.edu/%7Emth_www/helphours.htm

○ **Reading Center.** The Reading Center assists students, faculty, and staff with professional and academic endeavors. The primary goal of the instructors is to empower all students with effective reading strategies and the confidence to excel in their expository reading. To this end, the Reading Center tutors provide students with one-on-one and small group reading instruction. One-session workshops on various reading strategies are offered throughout the school year. In addition to serving undergraduates to develop reading strategies and/or prepare for the THEA, the SHSU Reading Center can also be used by those whose first language is not English to prepare for the TOEFL.

http://www.shsu.edu/%7Erdg_www/

○ **Writing Center.** The Writing Center at Sam Houston State University helps all University students, staff, faculty and community members. The Writing Center was created to help individuals become better writers and develop more confidence in their writing abilities. To this end, the Writing Center tutors provide one-on-one and small group writing instruction. One-session workshops on various topics relating to writing are offered throughout the school year. Students may seek assistance for any type of writing needs ranging from English composition essays to science lab reports, résumés, scholarship and job application letters, even theses and dissertations. Writing Center tutors do not merely correct a student's writing, but rather help students learn prewriting, revising, and editing skills. <http://www.shsu.edu/%7Ewctr/>

○ **Developmental classes.** The University offers four developmental classes (two in mathematics, one in reading and a writing course) designed to help students develop necessary skills to succeed in university-level courses.

- **Tutoring.** In addition to the Reading, Writing, and Math Centers, many academic departments offer academic tutoring at no additional cost. The SAM Center serves as a clearinghouse for all tutorial opportunities outside of math, reading and writing. http://www.shsu.edu/~sam_www/
- **Summer Orientation.** The required New Student Orientation Program hosts organized, purposeful, and positive introduction sessions for all new SHSU students and their families. These sessions help them become familiar with services and programs vital to their successful transition as full and active members of the SHSU community. Partnering collaboratively with other university offices and departments, these sessions help students gain the skills, information and meaningful relationships important to successful long-term academic and personal outcomes.
<http://www.shsu.edu/enrollment/orientation/>
- **Transfer Orientation.** Transfer Orientation programs are hosted prior to the beginning of every long semester. Each program is designed for the diverse needs of transfer students. All programs help students gain the skills, information and meaningful relationships important to successful long-term academic and personal outcomes. New programs for the 2008-2009 year include transfer orientation sessions during the fall and spring campus preview days and transfer orientation sessions taken to specific community colleges.
<http://www.shsu.edu/enrollment/orientation/transfer.html>
- **First-Year Experience (FYE).** A variety of courses and support services designed to help first-year students make a successful transition to the demands of university life. Studies show that a successful first year experience increases the chances of timely graduation.
http://www.shsu.edu/~fye_www/philosophy.html
- **SAM 136.** A three-hour, elective freshman seminar concentrating on enhancing reading, writing, and communication skills needed to succeed in an academic program. Additionally, the course raises awareness about common experiences and challenges that are common among first-year students.
http://www.shsu.edu/~fye_www/sam136.html
- **Freshman Learning Community (FLC).** Enhanced non-residential educational experience specifically designed to foster the intellectual development of students

through increased interaction with fellow students, faculty and staff. The FLC cohorts offer first-year college students a unique opportunity to become familiar with the necessary academic and social skills leading to timely graduation. The FLC cohorts are theme- or major-based.

- **Counseling Center.** The Counseling Center offers personal counseling, academic and career services, and outreach/consultation programs to students. These services give students the needed support to overcome various personal or academic obstacles to their academic success.

<http://www.shsu.edu/~counsel/>

- **Services for Students with Disabilities.** It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individuals shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic program or activity. The ADA office provides assistance to students with disabilities in seeking appropriate accommodations for their courses. <http://www.shsu.edu/~counsel/sswd.html>

- **Degree programs in catalog.** An online catalog is maintained listing all current information designed to help students understand degree requirements and procedures. <http://www.shsu.edu/catalog/>

- **Bearkat Learning Community.** The Bearkat Learning Community is a program which provides incoming freshmen students the opportunity to take common classes with students living in the same residence hall. This group of students has a planned program of activities designed to enhance academics as well as provide a positive social atmosphere. Other non-residential learning communities are centered around academic disciplines to include criminal justice, business, and education. http://www.shsu.edu/~fye_www/learningcommunities.html

- **Five Q-drop Rule.** Students are allowed no more than five Q-drops during their academic career at SHSU. This is designed to encourage students to exhaust all necessary means (i.e. tutoring and other available resources) to successfully complete a course prior to dropping the class.

- **On-line Degree Audit Program.** This is an on-line degree audit program allowing students to view which degree requirements have been met and which requirements have yet to be fulfilled. This is a valuable tool for both students and advisors to keep

students on the right track for timely graduation.

- **Scholarships.** To help offset the rising cost of higher education as well as to attract and reward quality students, the University has created a fund for scholarships. A comprehensive listing of available scholarships is maintained on a web page easily accessed by current and prospective students. Additionally, a scholarship office is conveniently located near the Sam Center to assist students in the application process.

http://www.shsu.edu/~sfa_www/scholarship.html

- **Correspondence Courses.** The Office of Correspondence allows students to supplement their schedule of classes through a flexible offering of core and elective courses. http://www.shsu.edu/~cor_www/

- **On-line courses.** The University offers a wide number of on-line courses to meet the needs of the growing number of non-traditional students as well as students with travel constraints.

- **University Center.** The University Center (TUC), located in The Woodlands, is a multi-institution teaching center, shared by seven institutions of higher education including SHSU. This location allows Houston-area students, with time constraints, to attend courses located closer to their home and/or work. TUC provides opportunity for the non-traditional working students to enroll in classes that they otherwise would not be able to complete due to the commute to Huntsville.

3. **To provide academic counseling concerning timely graduation** SHSU provides the following services:

- **SAM Center.** A centralized location that offers accurate and intrusive academic advising and a variety of study enhancements. http://www.shsu.edu/~sam_www/ Recently the SAM Center was recognized by NACADA as one of the country's top six advising centers. Programs offered by the SAM Center include:

- **Mandatory Advisement.** All SHSU students without an established SHSU GPA or SHSU students with a SHSU GPA below 2.5 must be advised prior to registration.
- **Monitored Academic Progress (MAP).** The program is designed to monitor the academic progress of students on probation. There are three levels of intrusive monitoring to include required study skill sessions, mandatory one-on-one meetings with an advisor, and periodic grade checks during the

semester.

- **Academic Survival Skills.** The SAM Center and the Counseling Center offer short courses in a variety a self-help areas to include: time management, reading skills, note taking, stress management, critical thinking, and self assessment.

http://www.shsu.edu/~sam_www/main%20menu/Support%20Programs/Study%20Skills%20Series.html

- **First Alert.** This initiative is an intrusive advising program based on referrals from faculty members who are concerned about a student's lack of academic progress based on attendance and grade checks. The SAM Center staff will contact the referred students and offer opportunities to improve student performance.

- **Catalog (hard copy and online)** An online catalog is maintained listing all current information designed to help students understand degree requirements and procedures.

<http://www.shsu.edu/catalog/>

- **Summer Orientation.** The New Student Orientation Program hosts organized, purposeful, and positive introduction sessions for all new SHSU students and their families. These sessions help them become familiar with services and programs vital to their successful transition as full and active members of the SHSU community.

Partnering collaboratively with other university offices and departments, these sessions help students gain the skills, information and meaningful relationships important to successful long-term academic and personal outcomes.

<http://www.shsu.edu/enrollment/orientation/>

- **Transfer Orientation.** Transfer Orientation programs are hosted prior to the beginning of every long semester. Each program is designed for the diverse needs of transfer students. All programs help students gain the skills, information and meaningful relationships important to successful long-term academic and personal outcomes. New programs for the 2008-2009 year include transfer orientation sessions during the fall and spring campus preview days and transfer orientation sessions taken to specific community colleges.

<http://www.shsu.edu/enrollment/orientation/transfer.html>

4. **To develop an online student degree progress report which compares the courses taken and credit received by a student to the courses completed and needed for**

degree and graduation requirements for each academic term SHSU has done the following:

- **On-line Degree Audit Program.** This is an on-line degree audit program allowing students to view which degree requirements have been met and which requirements have yet to be fulfilled. This is a valuable tool for both students and advisors to keep students on the right track for timely graduation.

- **Articulation agreements.** To enable students to more easily transition from a community college to SHSU, the University has initiated articulation agreements with over 30 community colleges throughout the state that outlines the way community college work can be efficiently integrated into selected baccalaureate programs at SHSU. <http://www.shsu.edu/prospects/transfer/>

5. To implement tuition policies that encourages timely graduation SHSU has initiated the following programs:

- **45/30-Hour Rule.** The Texas Education Code states that an institution of higher education, under specific conditions, **may charge** a resident undergraduate student a higher tuition rate than the rate charged to other resident undergraduate students. The higher tuition rate may not exceed the rate charged to nonresident undergraduate students.

- **Tuition Rebates for Certain Undergraduate Students.** A tuition rebate program was created by Senate Bill 1907, 75th Texas Legislature, and is authorized by Section 54.0065 of the Texas Education Code. The purpose of this program is to provide tuition rebate of \$1,000 that will provide a financial incentive for students to prepare for university studies while completing their high school work, avail themselves of academic counseling, make early career decisions, and complete their baccalaureate studies with as few extraneous courses as possible. www.shsu.edu/~reg_www/.

- **Third Attempt Rule.** Students enrolled in the same course for the third or more time will be charged the non-resident tuition rate for the hours associated with the course even if the student normally qualifies for in-state tuition. Resident students who reach the “excessive hour limit” will be charged non-resident tuition.

6. To provide Meta-Coordination of all SHSU initiatives aimed at improving student success:

The Office of Student Success Initiatives will help to coordinate the many, and distinct, programs and initiatives SHSU has implemented, or will implement in the future, in order to

improve student success. These programs include initiatives which will impact new transfer students, university scholarships, and students who have been accepted to SHSU. Currently, the Office of Student Success Initiatives is working on a student success plan that starts with pre-entry and extends to graduation. An outline of this plan can be seen on the attached document on the following page. The items in green are elements which are currently already being done at SHSU, items in yellow are being planned/revised, and items in red are currently being considered as possible new programs/events. An advisory board will be established in January to evaluate and further refine this Student Success Plan.

