

STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SFAC)
FY2013 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1. Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.**

The mission of the Academic Achievers Program (AAP) at the University of Houston is to increase student retention and graduation through scholarship awards, tutoring, mentoring, and leadership training. To achieve its mission, the Academic Achievers Program used the funding allocations from SFAC to successfully 1) recruit underrepresented students to the University of Houston by offering a competitive scholarship awards program; 2) retain underrepresented students to graduation by providing academic tutoring and other educational support services that retention research has shown to strengthen students' academic and social development and integration into the university; 3) prepare students to assume leadership roles at the university and in the community. The academic accomplishments of the students in the AAP, Assessment results, and student satisfaction surveys show that the AAP has successfully achieved its objectives for this reporting period. The different support services offered throughout the year by the Academic Achievers Program has contributed to students' academic success, individual potential and graduation.

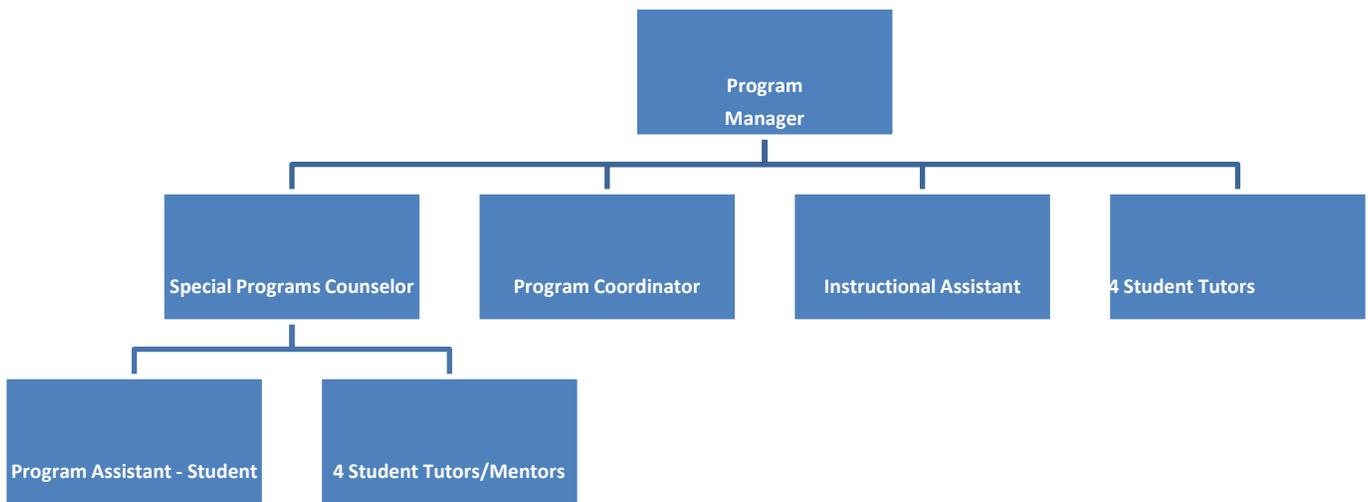
The SFAC fee allocation has helped the AAP to continue its efforts to provide financial, academic and mentorship support to students whose success depends on it. By addressing the academic and fiscal challenges facing university students, the program increases retention and graduation rates. Most often these students are the first in their family to attend college and come from low-income families. Our efforts are concentrated in the development of culturally diverse populations. The diversity of our students makes the program unique.

During the 2010-2011 academic year the Academic Achievers Program provided an annual scholarship of \$ 3,000 to fifty students starting in the spring 2011 semester, provided summer stipends to 20 students for a total of \$169,500. 12 students graduated from the program and 22 new students, including 14 freshman students were accepted into the program for the fall 2011 semester. Out of the approximate 8,560 hours of study hall hours completed during the year, students received over 2,000 hours of one-on-one tutoring and time managements/study skills sessions with lead tutor. AAP students attended academic, self-development and career development seminars during the year. A total of 650 progress reports were sent to professors and about 400 were returned to the AAP to indicate progress and provide an update of the student's academic success during the year. Student evaluations given each year show that over 99% of students report a positive experience in the program. In April 2010, the UH Office of Institutional Research produced a fourth program evaluation to track the progress of students in the Academic Achievers Program.

AAP provides a unique service to the retention efforts of the University. There are few programs for students that provide financial assistance as well as support services, and this program is highly successful in recruiting and retaining underrepresented students.

2. Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and then more specific charts for each program. Where you have multiple staff in the same position (e.g. counselor, custodian, etc), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.

Academic Achievers Program Organizational Chart



- 3. List the objectives that you provided with your 2010-2011 SFAC request. Please comment on your success in achieving these objectives. If an objective changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new objectives, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these objectives.**

The AAP used the 2010-2011 funding allocations from SFAC to successfully accomplish the following objectives.

1. Retention of underrepresented students to graduation by providing academic tutoring and other educational support services.

The program provided on-call academic tutoring to the students in the program and to other university students who work more hours than a typical college student in the evenings and weekends in a more individual tutoring manner without time limitation, the program offered time management/study skills sessions to our incoming freshman students on a weekly basis. APP continued enabling students to attend and participate in leadership skills retreats and conferences, continued providing exceptional and individualized assistance to our students that included priority registration, course selection assistance, academic, career and personal counseling. Both Program Manager and Program Coordinator continued monitoring student grades, tutoring hours, progress reports, scholarship award memos, and counseling to AAP students to monitor student academic and personal success.

2. Recruitment of underrepresented students to the University of Houston through a competitive scholarship awards program.

The program provided competitive scholarships for incoming freshman and undergraduate students. New students were admitted into the Academic Achievers Program and awarded merit scholarships through a documented selection process, Personal recruitment presentations were conducted throughout the year in area high schools, University of Houston recruitment events, community events, and CMAS College Career Days. AAP received an additional grant from Bank of America to provide additional summer stipends to selected AAP juniors. AAP Incoming freshman students were helped with admissions process and assisted parents and students with financial aid information and resources that they could find at the University of Houston.

3. Retention of underrepresented students to graduation by providing career and educational support services that will advance student academic, professional development and better professional opportunities to our students.

The program funded summer scholarships to AAP juniors and seniors, continued providing internship information and opportunities to our students, organized student job site visits at various business locations to help students learn more about career opportunities, sponsored students to attend professional conferences throughout the year, AAP paid for registration fees for two GRE exams, AAP worked with UH Career Center to have AAP juniors and graduating seniors attend seminars/workshops on resume preparation, career exploration and mock interviews.

Assessment results and student satisfaction surveys show that the AAP has successfully achieved its objectives for this reporting period.

- 4. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned objectives and their importance as compared to other objectives that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs, the satisfaction level of those served, and/or any other assessment measures evaluated. Please provide the method for collecting these data.**

During the 2010-2011 academic year:

- 1) Retention of underrepresented students to graduation by providing academic tutoring and other educational support services.
 - A total of 50 AAP students and 45 non-AAP students received approximately 2,000 hours of one-on-one tutoring in different areas of academic studies during the year.
 - A total of 30 AAP students attended 25 academic and self-development seminars sponsored by the Learning Support Services.
 - 26 freshman students participated in time management/study skill sessions with a tutor.
 - 32 AAP students participated in our 2011 annual student leadership retreat at the UH Hilton Hotel. Students participated in a workshop that was targeted to empower students for success. Student's interacted with community professionals and participated in other seminars that increased their self-confidence and overall fulfillment in school and life.
 - A total of 650 progress reports were sent to professors and 400 were returned to the AAP to indicate progress and provide an update of the student's academic success.

- 2) Recruitment of underrepresented students to the University of Houston through a competitive scholarship awards program.
 - AAP provided an annual scholarship of \$3,000 to fifty students in the Academic Achievers Program and 20 summer scholarships were awarded for a total of \$ 169,500. 12 AAP students graduated from the program,
 - 22 new students were admitted to the program for the fall 2011 semester, 14 incoming freshmen, 8 currently enrolled at the University of Houston.
 - A total of 6 CMAS College Career Days were offered during the year were approximately 1,200 high school seniors applied to the University of Houston and received financial aid and college life information.
 - 1 New Member Orientation was conducted during the year for the 22 new students and for their parents.

- 25 AAP students volunteered to participate in recruitment presentations to groups of elementary and middle schools as well as at CMAS career days.
- Program Manager participated as a speaker representing the University of Houston to the High School Equivalency Program, the Parent Leadership Program with HISD parents of LEP/Immigrant students.
- Program Manager participated in conjunction with the University of Houston Office of Admissions (3 recruitment presentations were conducted)
- Program Manager participated in the 2011 Houston Hispanic Forum.
- VAMOS Outreach Presentation in McAllen, TX in coordination with UH Admissions Office and UH Development
- Recruitment presentation to East Early College School in partnership with the College of Technology
- Raul Yzaguirre Presentation for Spanish speaking parents
- “Prepare for the University”- Community Outreach Event sponsored by Buena Tierra Baptist Church – Pasadena, TX
- Hastings High School Presentation (Spanish)
- AAP Program Manager participated in 2 Television and 2 radio presentations during the year to publicize CMAS, 1 phone bank sponsored by UNIVISION during their 2011
- Education Week “Es el Momento” Educational Initiative.

3) Retention of underrepresented students to graduation by providing career and educational support services that will advance student academic, professional development and better professional opportunities to our upper level students.

- 6 UH students were selected to participate in a week-long intensive 2011 Latino Leadership Initiative sponsored by the Harvard Kennedy School Center for Public Leadership. CMAS was again the point of contact to publicize LLI and select participants.
- A total of 15 seniors, 12 juniors and 10 freshmen had the opportunity to attend job site visits throughout the year to familiarize themselves with different career opportunities and network with professionals in their field of study. 4 Job site visits were conducted that included Lopez Negrete Communications, METRO, AAP Capitol Management, Garcia & Hamilton & Associates, L.P.
- 7 students interned in different companies, governmental agencies and organizations.

- 2 students were sponsored to attend professional conferences.
- 10 students participated in seminars/workshops dealing with resume preparation and mock interviews sponsored by the UH Career Center.
- 20 AAP participated in academic workshops sponsored by the Learning Support Services and/or the Counseling and Psychological services

AAP Students have excelled academically, are more dedicated to their classes by completing a higher number of study hours and commit themselves to receive other skills that may be beneficial for them. The 2011 AAP Annual Evaluation showed that over 99% of students report a positive experience. Following are quotes taken out of our annual evaluation given to the students in the fall 2011 semester.

Do you feel you're benefiting from the program?

"Yes, AAP Helps a lot with time management and also with the dramatic change from high school" AAP Freshman

"I have learned to manage my time to be more organized. I have met great people who have helped me to succeed in my career plans/goals" AAP Sophomore

"Yes, workshops, scholarship, tutors are a plus" AAP Sophomore

"If it were not for the AAP program I would not be here. I owe the program my future" AAP Senior

"The lounge is a good place to study and use the computers, especially in short notice" AAP Junior

"It's a very helpful program in terms of both financial support and moral support. Everyone is very helpful and supportive. It's excellent" AAP Freshman

2010 4th Annual Program Evaluation

The UH Office of Institutional Research produced a fourth program evaluation to track the progress of students in the Academic Achievers Program. The evaluation was divided into a quantitative section which provided Retention and Graduation data similar to past reports on the Academic Achievers Program, and a qualitative study resulting from focus groups conducted with Academic Achievers students. This is the first time a qualitative component has been added to the report on the Academic Achievers Program

Section I: Quantitative Findings

- Students in the Academic Achievers Program have historically outperformed their Hispanic and UH peer in terms of retention and graduation.
- AAP students have consistently graduated at higher rates, as well as remained enrolled in comparison to these other two groups. AAP students consistently graduate at higher percentages than their Hispanic and UH peer.
- In addition to graduating at higher rates, AAP students are more likely to be retained. In other words, Hispanic and UH undergraduates are less likely to be enrolled as time goes on in comparison to their AAP peers.
- High retention and graduation rates are positive indicators of student success. The quantitative results for the AAP students indicate that by participating in the program they may be benefiting academically from the services provided by the program, such as tutoring and mandatory study sessions.

Section II: Qualitative Findings

This section of the report draws from four focus groups conducted in November 2010. Two of the focus groups only included students who started the Academic Achievers Program as freshmen, and two of the focus groups only included students who started Academic Achievers at the University of Houston sometime after entering or transferring to the University of Houston. A total of 18 students participated in the focus groups and each focus group lasted about an hour. The focus groups were conducted by research assistants from the Office of Institutional Research. The students who participated were recruited via the Academic Achievers list-serv. This is the first time such focus groups have been conducted with students who participate in the AAP program.

Students' responses in the focus groups were overwhelmingly positive. The only "negative" theme which emerged was a desire for larger facilities to be used by Academic Achiever students. A total of 148 comments emerged from the focus groups with students who started at UH and in Academic Achievers simultaneously, and a total of 86 comments emerged from the groups with those students who started the Academic Achievers Program some time after they started at the University of Houston.

Comments from the focus groups were overwhelmingly positive.

- AAP Staff Always There in Every Way
- AAP Opens New Opportunities
- If AAP Didn't Exist, I Would...
- A Sense of Family and Community
- Family Support and Change the Future
- Study Plan Key Component
- Financial Incentive

5. **Please discuss any budget changes experienced since your last (FY2012) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections. In addition, if your unit concluded FY2011 with a Ledger 3 Fund Equity balance, please describe the conditions which caused the fund balance.**

no fund balances with ledger 3 remain in account

6. **Please list your 2012-2013 objectives in priority order. Larger units may wish to group your response by subprogram. Under each objective, state the specific programs, activities, and/or services that you plan to implement to meet your objectives.**

Our Objectives for the 2012-2013 will remain the same:

1. Retention of underrepresented students to graduation by providing academic tutoring and other educational support services.
 - Continue providing scholarships for incoming freshman and undergraduate students.
 - Continue providing on-call academic tutoring to the students in the program and to other university students who work more hours than a typical college student in the evenings and weekends in a more individual tutoring manner without time limitation.
 - Continue enabling students the opportunity to attend and participate in leadership skills retreats and conferences.
 - Continue providing exceptional and individualized assistance to our students that includes priority registration, course selection assistance, academic, career and personal counseling.
2. Recruitment of underrepresented students to the University of Houston through a competitive scholarship awards program.
 - Increase from 60 to 70 students served for the fall 2012
 - Continue recruiting new students into the Academic Achievers Program.
 - Continue doing personal recruitment presentations throughout the year in area high schools, University of Houston recruitment events, community events, and CMAS College Career Days.
 - Continue offering incoming freshman students help with admissions process and assist parents and students with financial aid information and resources.
3. Retention of underrepresented students to graduation by providing career and educational support services that will advance student academic, professional development and leadership potential
 - Organize student job site visits at various business locations to help students learn more about career opportunities.
 - Continue funding one summer internship for one program student.

- Continue funding registration fees to the students in the program that are pursuing graduate school or Law School admissions.
- Continue providing internship opportunities
- Sponsor students to attend professional conferences throughout the year.
- Continue involving community professional leaders to participate in our events, workshops and meetings.
- Offer more career orientation seminars/workshops for sophomores and juniors and graduating seniors.

7. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)?

1. 2011 Noche Cultural Scholarship Banquet benefitting the Academic Achievers Program at the University of Houston and Austin High School
2. Yearly Donor cultivation
3. Submitting grant proposals to major foundations and community corporations.

8. Please describe any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

The Academic Achievers Program (AAP) targets low-income Hispanic and minority students who are typically the first in their families to attend college, and has proven to be highly effective in keeping students enrolled in good standing and on the path to graduation. Many of these students are the sons and daughters of recent immigrants or are immigrants themselves and the scholarship assistance and retention activities offered by AAP are crucial to their ability to remain in college and graduate. Our mission is to increase student retention and graduation through scholarship awards, tutoring, mentoring, and leadership training. The need for the program is clear: the Hispanic population is one of the fastest-growing populations in Houston and is entering the labor force in greater numbers. From 1990 to 2000, Houston's Hispanic population grew by 75 percent and is expected to be the majority population within the next 10-15 years. Yet they are one of the least educated demographic groups:

* Only 51 percent of Mexican American adults have a high school education, in contrast to 84 percent of the total U.S. population.

* Only 7 percent of Mexican American adults have a college education compared to 26 percent of the total U.S. population.

* Mexican Americans (who comprise 77% of the Harris County Hispanic population) and Central Americans (6% of the Harris County Hispanic population) are the two least educated Hispanic groups in the United States.

At the University of Houston, Hispanic student enrollment has increased significantly along with the population of the greater Houston area. Yet Hispanic students are at a high risk of dropping out because many do not have the support systems that will allow them to overcome common obstacles. These obstacles are often financial (little or no family contribution to college expenses), but they may also be educational (insufficient academic preparation or study skills), or attitudinal (family pressure to leave school and work full-time).

The Center for Mexican American Studies provides direct help for undergraduate students through the Academic Achievers Program, which funds 60 scholarships for students, most of whom are the first in their families to attend college. Students accepted into the program receive a \$3,000 scholarship per year as well as tutoring and mentoring services, and close monitoring of their academic progress; in return, they sign a contract agreeing to attend mandatory academic and self-development workshops, participate in leadership training activities, and maintain a GPA of at least 2.7. Many of the students in the program have stated that without the scholarships, they would simply be unable to go to college at all.