

Students Who Are Parents (SWAP) Initiative Review and Program Proposal

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My Choose Your Own Adventure Assignment

Students Who Are Parents (SWAP), an initiative to ensure the success of student-parents, was established in the Retention Management & Planning (RMP) Office at Texas State University in 2011. The RMP office was dissolved after a leadership change and SWAP was moved into a new unit in the Dean of Students Office, the Compassion, Advocacy, Resources, and Education (CARE) Center. I coordinated programming efforts for SWAP from June 2021 through October 2021. While SWAP is advertised as an initiative on the Texas State website, SWAP has been operating for nearly ten years without a clearly established mission, vision, goals, and outcomes or a systematic assessment of the initiative. Initiatives are typically new programming efforts and are introduced for improvement purposes or to serve a specific student population who would benefit from specialized services and resources. Since the initiative has been ongoing for several years now, a review of the SWAP initiative should be conducted to determine if SWAP should be concluded as an initiative or established as a program.

When considering the student-parent population, it is imperative that assessment practices are utilized to report and display the effectiveness of SWAP. Without evidence of initiative effectiveness, resources may be allocated elsewhere as there will be no way to prove SWAP benefits and supports student-parent success. Student-parent success outcomes may include student learning, development, retention, persistence, and degree completion. The student-parent population is often rendered invisible on college campuses until they reveal their status to faculty and staff. Due to this, institutions must be intentional if they desire to track student-parent data and outcomes.

When assessing program effectiveness, a program review can be conducted to review outcomes from programming efforts to determine how effective the program is in fulfilling its

mission (Schuh et al., 2016). Schuh et al. notes “evaluating program effectiveness is a matter of identifying the intended outcomes that represent successful achievement of mission and goals, carrying out program elements purposefully to meet those outcomes, and assessing the extent to which the outcomes have been achieved” (p.102, 2016). As previously mentioned, SWAP does not have an established mission, goals, or intended outcomes. My Choose Your Own Adventure (CYOA) Assignment serves as an initiative review for SWAP to determine current initiative effectiveness. I assess the SWAP initiative’s current effectiveness by benchmarking student-parent programs at one local and four peer institutions, followed by a SWOT analysis of the initiative. The SWOT analysis was conducted by reviewing documents and previous assessments from 2017 to 2021 in comparison to benchmarking data. While I previously mentioned reviewing SWAP longitudinal data in my proposal, this information is not available as student data and learning outcomes have not been tracked consistently over time. My CYOA assignment also serves as a program proposal to establish a mission, vision, goals, and outcomes to support meaningful assessment moving forward. Resources relevant to student-parent programs as well as benchmarking data were utilized to develop the SWAP program proposal.

Understanding the College Student-Parent Population

In September of 2018, Young Invincibles released a report, *Student Parents and Health Care in Texas: Understanding and Elevating their Needs*, created to increase awareness of the challenges and needs that the student-parent population in Texas faces. Young Invincibles is an advocacy organization dedicated to exploring issues facing young adults related to health care, higher education, and economic security. The report was developed using both qualitative and quantitative data, which included a survey of 60 student-parents and an analysis of relevant reports such as the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study and the National Center for

Education Statistics 2016 data. According to the report, one-in-five college students are also parents, however, this ratio increases to one-in-four college students for the state of Texas (Young Invincibles, 2018). Women are disproportionately impacted as 72 percent of student parents are mothers and 62 percent of student parent mothers are also single mothers. The disparities extend to race as well, with nearly half of Black women being undergraduate student-parents compared to 29 percent of white women being undergraduate student-parents (Young Invincibles, 2018). Young Invincibles notes that most Texas' four-year higher education institutions, including the University of Texas and Texas A&M University, do not identify student-parents on their campus or track data on their outcomes (2018). Despite the invisibility of the student-parent population on college campuses, there is stark evidence that this population is large and in need of valuable support.

While obtaining their education, student-parents face issues related to accessing health care, child care and employment. In Texas, nearly one-in-four women are uninsured (Young Invincibles, 2018). Lack of access to healthcare prevents access to contraceptives, which may lead to unplanned pregnancy and creates barriers for women experiencing behavioral and reproductive health issues. Furthermore, accessing childcare can be extremely difficult for student-parents, with higher education institutions only offering enough child care slots to cover five percent of the current child care need (Young Invincibles, 2018). When child care opportunities become available, they are often inaccessible to the student-parent population. Approximately 70 percent of student-parents at community colleges live at or below the 200 percent poverty line, leaving minimal capability to pay for child care fees, which average approximately \$15,489 a year for a 4-year old dependent (Young Invincibles, 2018). On average, student-parents also work more than their peers without dependents. Working 15 hours or more

per week is correlated with negative academic performance and grade averages of C or lower.

With these challenges in mind, it is not surprising that only 33 percent of student-parents obtain their degree within 6-years of enrollment while 56 percent of their dependent peers graduate within 6-years (Young Invincibles, 2018).

Obtaining a degree within a reasonable period can significantly alter a student's life. As of 2017, individuals who had obtained their bachelor's degree earned approximately \$24,000 more a year than their peers who held only a high school diploma (Young Invincibles, 2018). Positions requiring a bachelor's degree may be more likely to offer affordable health care options and provide a means for paying for child care. In summary, student-parents experience significant challenges while obtaining their college degree. Without documentation and assessment of student success outcomes, evidence cannot be provided to support that student-parents need intentional programming efforts and holistic support.

The Students Who Are Parents (SWAP) Initiative at Texas State University

Initiative: Students Who Are Parents (SWAP)

- **Division:** Division of Student Affairs
- **Department:** The Dean of Students Office
- **Office/Unit:** Compassion, Advocacy, Resources, and Education (CARE) Center

Texas State University Institutional, Enrollment, and Student Demographic Data

Institution Type	Large, Public, 4-Year
Location	San Marcos, Texas

Total Enrollment: 37,812	
Undergraduate Enrollment: 33,193	80% Full-time, 20% Part-time
Graduate Enrollment: 4,619	58% Full-time, 42% Part-time

Retention Rates for First-Time Students Pursuing Bachelor's Degrees	
Full-time Students	77%
Part-time Students	56%

6-year Graduation Rate	55%
Pell Grant Eligible Students	37%
First-Generation Students	43%
Undergraduate Student In-state Residence	97%

Undergraduate Ethnicity Profile	
White	42%
Black	10%
Hispanic	41%
Asian	3%
Two or more races	4%
International	0%

Distance Education Status		
	Undergraduate	Graduate
Enrolled only in distance education	23%	36%
Enrolled in some distance education	72%	40%

Undergraduate Age	
24 and under	89%
25 and over	11%

Gender Profile	
Female	59%
Male	41%

Texas State University Mission, Vision, and Goals

- **Mission:** Texas State University is a doctoral-granting, student-centered institution dedicated to excellence and innovation in teaching, research, including creative expression, and service. The university strives to create new knowledge, to embrace a diversity of people and ideas, to foster cultural and economic development, and to prepare its graduates to participate fully and freely as citizens of Texas, the nation, and the world.
- **Values:** In pursuing our mission, we, the faculty, staff, and students of Texas State University, are guided by a shared collection of values:
 - Teaching and learning based on research, student involvement, and the free exchange of ideas in a supportive environment;
 - Research and creative activities that encompass the full range of academic disciplines—research with relevance, from the sciences to the arts, from the theoretical to the applied;
 - The cultivation of character, integrity, honesty, civility, compassion, fairness, respect, and ethical behavior in all members of our university community;
 - A diversity of people and ideas, a spirit of inclusiveness, a global perspective, and a sense of community as essential conditions for campus life;
 - A commitment to service and leadership for the public good;

- Responsible stewardship of our resources and environment; and
- Continued reflection and evaluation to ensure that our strengths as a community always benefit those we serve.
- **Goals:**
 - Promote the success of all students.
 - Offer high quality academic and education programming.
 - Achieve significant progress in research and creative activity as measured by national standards.
 - Provide the necessary services, resources, and infrastructure to support the university's strategic direction.

The Division of Student Affairs

- **Mission:** The Student Affairs Division provides high quality, supportive programs and services to ensure the success of our diverse student population. We create and foster a safe, inclusive and engaged community focused on maximizing student potential for career success, and life-long learning.
- **Vision:** Lead, engage, and inspire students to realize their full potential.
- **Goals:**
 - Facilitate the retention, graduation and career development of a high quality, diverse student population through sustained partnerships within the campus community and external constituents
 - Create and deliver innovative co-curricular programs and services through partnership with faculty, staff and external constituents to ensure the success of students
 - Foster a Culture of Care within an environment that is safe, responsive and supportive of a diverse community
 - Increase the campus cultural competencies through University-wide coordination of educational initiatives and skill based training.
 - Increase student resilience by educating on self-advocacy and well-being
 - Recruit, develop, support and retain high quality, diverse staff.

- Expand and manage financial, physical, and technological resources effectively and efficiently to meet the growing demands

The Dean of Students Office

- **Vision:** The Dean of Students Office will be nationally recognized for standards of excellence in the delivery of student services and to foster a welcoming environment that is inclusive, safe and conducive to learning.
- **Mission:** The Dean of Students Office provides exemplary student services and opportunities grounded in ethical and moral principles. As a component of Student Affairs, the Dean of Students Office collaborates and shares responsibilities with other members of the university community to enhance student learning and support student success. The department assists, develops and educates students through organizational advising; leadership programs; emergency services; legal services; alcohol and drug intervention efforts; and by responding to student complaints and allegations of student conduct violations.
- **Department Goals:**
 - Deliver co-curricular programming through leadership development, support services and experiential learning activities to facilitate student success.
 - Provide educational services that develop resiliency of students experiencing academic or university-related difficulties within a Culture of Care.
 - Facilitate professional growth and community development for Dean of Students staff members through an environment that retains high quality employees.
 - Manage resources effectively and efficiently to meet growing demands.

Compassion, Advocacy, Resources, and Education (CARE) Center

- **Vision:** The DOS CARE Center creates a culture of holistic care for all students.
- **Mission:** The DOS CARE Center enhances student retention and promotes student success by providing compassion, advocacy, resources and education.
- **Services:** Absence Notifications, Academic Consultations, Educational Webinars, Emergency Funding, Foster Care Alumni Support, Peer Mentoring, and Student-Parent Support

Students Who Are Parents (SWAP)

- **Website Description:** The Students Who Are Parents group is a great way to meet other Bobcat parents and get connected with relevant resources. If you are a currently enrolled undergraduate or graduate student, and also a parent, please join us! We would love to see you at our student parent events, and participate in our SWAP Canvas site. To get updates about the events and programs that are going on for student parents please submit your email address.
- **Initiative:** Created to ensure the success of students who are parents. The group is here to help student parents form a network with other student parents. To achieve this, the Dean of Students Office CARE Center organizes luncheons and socials for student parents to have an opportunity to get to know each other.
- **Programs/Events and Services**
 - **SWAP School Supply Drive:** The Dean of Students CARE Center has partnered with other offices on campus to organize a school supply drive to help offset the cost of sending your kids back to school! Please come by and pick up what your kids need to make sure they're set up for success for the upcoming school year. This year, we are excited to announce that student parents will have the option to select a tote bag or laptop backpack while supplies last. All student parents in attendance will also receive a weekly assignment notebook to utilize for the upcoming academic year. School supplies will be available for pick-up in the LBJ Student Center in room 3-21.2 from Tuesday, August 3rd to Friday, August 6th. You can come by the LBJ Student Center anytime between 9:30 AM to 5 PM to collect your supplies during the dates above.
 - **SWAP Welcome Social:** Student parents, join us at Concho Green for an outdoor welcome social on Saturday, September 25th from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM to celebrate the start of a new school year! Bring your family, socialize with fellow SWAP students, and play lawn games for all ages including cornhole, oversized Jenga, giant Legos, outdoor bowling, and more! Box lunches from Jason's Deli will be provided upon request. This is a come-and-go event, and an RSVP is required to attend.

- **SWAP Canvas Page:** Many of our SWAP parents use our canvas page to connect with one another and find resources both on and off campus for them and their children. Our canvas page includes discussion posts, crafts and activities for kids, and many other resources!
- **Summer Camp Fair:** The Summer Camp Fair is a collaborative event between the DOS CARE Center, the Students Who Are Parents (SWAP) group and the Office of Human Resources. Similar to a career fair, the Summer Camp Fair gave student-parents and Texas State University faculty and staff with children the opportunity to hear from a variety of summer camps available in the central Texas area.
- Typically, one to two social events and one to two lunch-style workshops have been held per semester catered to student-parents.
- **Resources:**
 - Monthly SWAP Newsletter including important dates, Texas State resources, community resources, and upcoming events
 - **Texas State Resources:** Academic Advising, Brilliant Bobcats, Student Learning Assistance Center, Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, Bobcat Gold, BOSS, Career Services, Emergency Funding, and Title IX: Protection for Pregnant and Parenting Status, Raising San Marcos Facebook Group, Texas Workforce Commission Child Care Services Program, Texas State Child Development Center
 - **Community Resources:** Scholarship information for single mothers and fathers, San Marcos Public Library, Boys and Girls Club, WIC, San Marcos Activity Center, Texas Benefits (SNAP), Networx, Title IX: Protection for Pregnant and Parenting Status

Identified Student-Parent Population at Texas State University (Fall 2021)

- 128 students
- Other student data cannot be accessed due to my position change.

Benchmarking of Student-Parent Programs and Resources at Peer Institutions

Benchmarking is a method to assess the quality of an initiative or program through comparison (Schuh et al., 2016). For this project, the quality of the SWAP initiative is being assessed, with quality being defined as having student-parent program goals and intended outcomes consistent with institutional mission, adding value to the student-parent experience, and meeting or exceeding the expectations of student-parents. For this benchmarking effort, the unit of comparison is student-parent support initiatives and programs, and the objects of comparison are mission, vision, goals, intended outcomes if available, and provided resources and programming.

The following questions served as a guide for benchmarking and set the intent for this benchmarking effort:

- What is the SWAP initiative's relative strengths and weaknesses?
- Is the SWAP initiative doing as well as it can?
- Can the SWAP initiative do more to support student-parent success?
- How does the SWAP initiative compare to student-parent support efforts at similar institutions?
- How can the SWAP initiative be improved?

The following five institutions were selected to benchmark:

- **In-State Peers:** University of Houston, University of North Texas
- **Out-of-State Peers:** Bowling Green State University, George Mason University
- **Local Peer, Recognized for Student-Parent Support:** Texas Women's University

University of Houston

Institution Type	Large, Public, 4-Year
Location	Houston, Texas

Total Enrollment: 47,090	
Undergraduate Enrollment: 39,165	74% Full-time, 26% Part-time
Graduate Enrollment: 7,925	68% Full-time, 32% Part-time

Retention Rates for First-Time Students Pursuing Bachelor's Degrees	
Full-time Students	86%
Part-time Students	68%

6-year Graduation Rate	62%
Pell Grant Eligible Students	44%
First-Generation Students	43%
Undergraduate Student In-state Residence	96%

Undergraduate Ethnicity Profile	
White	21%
Black	10%
Hispanic	37%
Asian	23%
Two or more races	3%
International	4%

Distance Education Status (COVID-19 Data)		
	Undergraduate	Graduate
Enrolled only in distance education	92%	46%
Enrolled in some distance education	7%	32%

Undergraduate Age	
24 and under	86%
25 and over	14%

Gender Profile	
Female	51%
Male	49%

Reasoning for Benchmarking: Local, Designated Peer Institution by Institutional Research

Mission & Values

- **University Mission:** The University of Houston draws strength from its diversity to transform lives and communities through education, research, service and innovation in a real world setting. UH is an engine for discovery, conversation and change that informs and leads local, state, national and global partnerships.
- **University Values**
 - **Diversity, Inclusion & Freedom of Expression:** We value our people and embrace our differences as we remove barriers, engage in free and open discourse and provide resources to think critically and make us stronger.
 - **Innovation:** We infuse innovation into everything – our culture, curriculum, and campus workplace.

- **Collaboration:** We build strength through creative innovation, entrepreneurship, research, intellectual curiosity and partnerships in everything we do.
- **Resilience:** We change and adapt, transform and are creative to meet the ever-changing needs of the University and society.

Through benchmarking, the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Department and the Child Learning Center (CLC) Department were identified as offering support to student-parents through information, resources, and/or services. Both the CAPS and CLC departments are within the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services.

Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services

- **Mission:** The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services cultivates an environment that facilitates student success through learning, discovery, and engagement.
- **Vision:** The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services will provide a nationally acclaimed student experience that results in a valuable impact on persistence and graduation.
- **Values:** The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services is committed to an ethic of care, including a commitment to civility and individual growth and learning, while holding firm and true to our core values:
 - **Empowerment:** We empower students and staff through programs, development, and employment.
 - **Transparency:** We provide transparency of purpose with honesty and integrity.
 - **Accountability:** We are accountable for the provision of quality programs and services.
 - **Diversity and Inclusion:** We celebrate diversity and embrace the intentional inclusion of all experiences and cultures while fostering a welcoming and open community.
 - **Innovation:** We expect innovation as we develop cutting-edge programs and services that continuously strive for excellence while supporting student success.

- **Collaboration:** We embrace the spirit of collaboration through mutually beneficial partnerships on campus and in the surrounding environments fostering the exchange of knowledge, resources and expertise.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

- **CAPS Mission:** CAPS promotes the well-being of the diverse campus community by balancing high quality mental health services and clinical training with accessibility to foster student success through self-discovery, learning, and interpersonal engagement.
- **CAPS Vision:** CAPS embraces the belief that students' mental health is a vital component of their academic, professional, and personal success. CAPS will expand awareness of and access to mental health services in order to positively impact the emotional well-being of the campus community, enhance help-seeking behaviors, and effectively assist students to become engaged global citizens.
- Webpage acknowledges the challenges of being a parent and going to school such as balancing multiple responsibilities and offers several resources
- **Resources:** *7 Tips for Parents in College* by The Best Colleges website, on-campus Children's Learning Center (CLC), Center for Student Involvement, Campus Calendar, UH Distance Education Program, Financial Aid, Campus Recreation and Wellness Center, and Student Health Insurance.

Children's Learning Center (CLC)

- **CLC Mission:** The mission of the CLC is to facilitate an inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity as well as promotes a professional commitment to impacting our community and supporting student success, through the provision of a nationally accredited early childhood educational program for the children of University of Houston (UH) students, faculty, and staff.
- **Website Statement:** The CLC is committed to the mission of the University of Houston, the UH Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services, and Student Life. We value and support the Division's Strategic Initiatives:
 - Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.

- Actualize and leverage the fiscal, human, technological, and facility resources that enhance the student experience.
- Foster the creation of a global learning community that actualizes and embraces inclusion while preparing students to become active citizens.
- Develop a culture of innovation and accountability in the redesign of Division policies, processes and procedures.
- Cultivate a collective identity that demonstrates a united vision.
- Create and engage in strategic partnerships.
- **Enrollment Eligibility:** Students are eligible to enroll their child in the CLC if they are enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours at UH in both fall and spring and be in a degree-seeking program as an undergraduate/graduate student.
- **Resources:** The CLC provides links to parenting resources including the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, the Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, Safe Kids, Texas Parent to Parent, Bright Futures, and Child Abuse Prevention, however, these resources are not listed on the Counseling and Psychological Services Students with Children Resource page. If eligible, student-parents can receive tuition assistance from one of two programs if they qualify based on financial need, which is determined by the Scholarships and Financial Aid Office.
- **CLC Tuition Assistance Programs**
 - **The Student Fees Advisory Committee child care tuition assistance** is available to graduate and undergraduate student-parents who have remaining need. Each year, the CLC makes a presentation during the UH Student Fees Advisory Committee Allocation Process to request student services fees for child care tuition assistance. The awards can be up to a 35% to 45% reduction in child care tuition fees.
 - **The Child Care Access Means Parents in School child care tuition assistance program** is available to undergraduate student-parents who have remaining need and qualify for the Pell Grant. The CLC Administrators submitted a grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Education and were awarded funding for the *Child Care Access Means Parents in School* (CCAMPIS) grant. This program

awards up to a 60% reduction in child care tuition fees for students who meet eligibility requirements.

○ **CCAMPIS Project Goals:**

- Continue to support the participation of parents in postsecondary education through the provision of campus-based child care services
- Continue to provide affordable exemplary early childhood education and services for parents and their children
- Continue to empower students through specifically designed services to stay in higher education and graduate
- Continue to evaluate/report the effects of campus-based child care services on student parent retention/graduation
- Continue to contribute to parent knowledge of early childhood and increase the understanding of their role as their child's first teacher

○ Students must apply for this program and include the following in their application:

- A copy of your most recent college transcript (unofficial)
- A copy of your class schedule for the current semester
- A copy of your UH PeopleSoft Award Summary For Aid Year 2022
- An essay describing, "How the CCAMPIS assistance will help you pursue your educational degree." This essay must be typed, double-spaced and no more than two pages in length.
- A copy of your UH PeopleSoft Federal Pell Grant Award (if applicable)
- Completion of the Pre-Program Survey

CCAMPIS Pre-Program Survey

Parenting Information

- How often do you do activities with your child?
 - Never to Neutral to Regularly on a 7-point scale
- How often do you read to your child?
 - Never to Neutral to Regularly on a 7-point scale
- Are you familiar with developmentally appropriate activities for your child?
 - No to Neutral to Yes on a 7-point scale
- Do you feel prepared to handle health and safety issues related to your child?
 - No to Neutral to Yes on a 7-point scale
- What parenting topics interest you? (open-ended)
- How can the Children's Learning Centers best support you and your child? (open-ended)

CCAMPIS Benefit Information

- During hours of CCAMPIS provided child care, I will be able to: (Please check all that apply)
 - Attend Class
 - Take earlier classes
 - Take later classes
 - Have additional study time
 - Spend more time in the library/computer lab
 - Obtain tutoring assistance
 - Obtain advising or counseling support
 - Participate in group study projects or meetings
 - Other:

Retention/Graduation Information

- How significant is the CCAMPIS grant support in enabling you to complete your degree?
 - Extremely Important, Important, Helpful, Not Important, Not Helpful
- Please check all that apply:
 - I would not be able to enroll at UH without the CCAMPIS grant assistance
 - I would not be able to persist at UH without the CCAMPIS grant assistance
 - I would not be able to graduate from UH without the CCAMPIS grant assistance

University of North Texas

Institution Type	Large, Public, 4-Year
Location	Denton, Texas

Total Enrollment: 40,953	
Undergraduate Enrollment: 32,241	80% Full-time, 20% Part-time
Graduate Enrollment: 8,139	55% Full-time, 45% Part-time

Retention Rates for First-Time Students Pursuing Bachelor's Degrees	
Full-time Students	85%
Part-time Students	63%

6-year Graduation Rate	57%
Pell Grant Eligible Students	39%
First-Generation Students	41.5%
Undergraduate Student In-state Residence	92%

Undergraduate Ethnicity Profile	
White	41%
Black	14%
Hispanic	27%
Asian	7%
Two or more races	5%
International	5%

Distance Education Status		
	Undergraduate	Graduate
Enrolled only in distance education	9%	34%
Enrolled in some distance education	69%	16%

Undergraduate Age	
24 and under	86%
25 and over	14%

Gender Profile	
Female	53%
Male	47%

Reasoning for Benchmarking: Local, Designated Peer Institution by Institutional Research

UNT Mission, Purpose, and Vision

- **Mission:** At the University of North Texas, our caring and creative community empowers our students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.
- **Purpose:** Our students will be the innovative leaders of tomorrow.
- **Vision:** We will become globally known for collaborative and imaginative educational innovation and scholarly activity that transforms our students and benefits the world around us.

Through benchmarking, Off-Campus Student Services within the Division of Student Affairs was identified as offering support, information, resources, and services to student-parents.

Division of Student Affairs

- **Mission:** The Division of Student Affairs creates an inclusive student experience that supports academic success, social engagement, and personal and professional growth.
- **Vision:** The Division of Student Affairs sees the potential within all UNT students and fosters a culture of excellence and opportunity. We build a foundation for all students to succeed as contributing members in an evolving global society.

Off-Campus Student Services

- **Website Statement:** Live off-campus but want to stay connected to UNT? We can help! Off-Campus Student Services provides resources and services for the commuter, off-campus, graduate, and non-traditional student populations, to support and enhance the collegiate experience.
- **Purpose:** Off-Campus Student Services, part of Student Activities, serves as a liaison between students and departments that provide services for off-campus students. Providing resources and services directed towards the commuter, off-campus, graduate, and non-traditional student populations, as well as raising the awareness of these students. Off-Campus Student Services sponsors several programs and activities to assist students in their overall collegiate experience. Services include assistance in locating off-campus housing, information on commuter and transportation services (e.g., carpooling, bus schedules, etc.), as well as coordinating and co-sponsoring events such as Commuter Week and Housing Fairs.
- **Non-Traditional Students**
 - UNT considers non-traditional students to be an undergraduate student with two or more of the following characteristics:
 - Is older than the perceived “traditional” college age
 - Has returned to higher education after time away from initial enrollment
 - Has enrolled in higher education after time away from secondary education
 - Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children, family members, or others)

- Is a single parent (either not married, or married but separated and has dependents)
 - Works at least 35 hours per week
 - Commutes to campus
 - Is enrolled in 100% online or off-campus courses
- **Website Statement:** The non-trad student population at UNT is as diverse as it gets. They are veterans, married couples, single parents, grandparents, distance learners, first time students and second chance opportunists.
- **Non-Trad Listserv:** Students can be alerted via email about upcoming events that benefit non-traditional students.
- **Non-Traditional Student Representative:** A fellow non-traditional student is available to answer questions or for students to confide any issues they may be facing related to the non-traditional student experience.
- **Events and Programs**
 - **Campus Services Open House:** While open to all students, Campus Services Open House is designed to help graduate, commuter, and non-traditional students learn about campus and local resources. *It is held later in the day when these students are more likely to have classes, and provides a one-stop-shop of information and resources for these busy students.*
 - Time: 4 PM to 6 PM
 - Door Prize: Attendees can enter to win 1 of 10 swag bags or 1 of 4 \$25 Dining Flex by checking in at the OCSS table.
 - Campus and Local Resources: Advising Services, Career Center, Center for Leadership & Service, Counseling & Testing Services, Dining Services, Fine Arts Series, Graduate Student Council, International Affairs (Study Abroad Office), Learning Center, Multicultural Center, Off-Campus Housing Source, Off-Campus Student Services, Office of Disability Access, Rec Sports, RISE Center, Student Government Association, Student Legal Services, Student Veterans Association, University Program Council, UNT Police Department, Transportation Services

- **Coffee & Convos:** A program offered during the fall and spring semesters for non-traditional, commuter, and graduate students that gives them an opportunity to engage their professors in conversations outside of the classroom. We know how important it is for students to connect with faculty informally outside of the classroom to build relationships, network, and even discuss research or career insights, so we help you connect with them!
 - **How it works:** After completing a quick pre-survey (linked below), students will receive a participation confirmation email from Off-Campus Student Services. Students will then pick up a voucher, good for themselves and a professor, for a free cup of coffee (or other beverage) at select locations on campus, including at Discovery Park. After the student meets with their professor, they must complete a quick post-survey. They will then receive a free t-shirt and be entered to win a grand prize, one of two \$50 UNT Barnes & Noble "shopping sprees!"
- **Family Fun Night:** The purpose of Family Fun Night is to highlight non-traditional, commuter, off-campus, online, and graduate students, expose them to available on-campus resources, and connect them with other similar students. Family Fun Night is full of activities, games, and prizes to create a relaxing atmosphere for students and their children to connect and build relationships.
- **Family Movie Night:** Family Movie Night is a great way for UNT students, especially student-parents, to enjoy a family-friendly movie and engage with other UNT students, student-parents, and staff. It provides student-parents with a way to involve their children in their college life. Free with current UNT student ID.
- **Grab & Go:** Once a month in the morning, Off-Campus Student Services and Off-Campus Connection set up a table near different bus stops located around campus and give out free breakfast and snacks. Commuter students can grab free food and free information on their way to or from class.
- **Housing Fair:** The Housing Fair, held in both Fall and Spring, connects students with representatives from area properties and housing resources, all in one place. With properties bringing floor plans, price breakdowns, and move-in specials, the

Housing Fair helps students find housing in the City of Denton. Additionally, UNT Departments and Community Partners participate to provide important information and resources in relation to off-campus housing. The participating entities often have plenty of free swag (i.e.. t-shirts, key chains, water bottles, etc.) to give away to students.

- **Nest Watchers:** Nest Watchers is a babysitters clearinghouse designed to provide UNT-Denton student-parents with an additional resource when looking for hourly child care. Nest Watchers connects current UNT student-parents who express a need for babysitting services with current UNT students who are interested in babysitting. It serves as a means for students (babysitters) to help other students (parents), while they benefit in return, via a paid job. The primary goal is to provide student-parents the flexibility in child care, allowing them a greater focus on academic performance. The secondary goal is to provide student babysitters with a means for a supplemental income.
 - The Nest Watchers website page contains thorough information for both babysitters and student-parents to assist in the process of identifying a suitable match.
 - Babysitters must fill out a [Babysitter Interest Form](#) to be added to the Nest Watchers Program babysitters list. Student-parents must complete a [Parent Interest Form](#) to access the babysitter list.
 - Information is provided noting that obtaining a background check is the babysitter's responsibility with information on how to secure one. Additional resources are also provided on training opportunities for babysitting, first aid, and CPR certifications.
 - Information is provided for student-parents on reviewing background checks and how to view the Texas Public Sex Offender Registry.
 - Tips are provided for babysitters and student-parents on what information and questions should be asked during the initial meeting to identify a good fit for both the babysitter and the family.

- **Non-Trad Week:** UNT is dedicated to engaging our non-traditional students to enrich their journey through higher education. Are you a non-traditional student in search of resources, community, or free food? Non-Traditional Student Appreciation Week, or "Non-Trad Week" is a full week of programming for Non-Traditional Students. It is held every Fall semester. Non-Trad Week events typically include extended departmental office hours, special food offerings, social events, presentations from UNT Departments and special guest speakers, family fun and movie nights, free tickets to a football game, professional-quality headshots, and so much more!
- **Non-Traditional Student Book Stipend:** Off-Campus Student Services (OCSS) provides book stipends for deserving non-traditional undergraduate and graduate students. Awards are valued at up to \$300 each and will be paid directly to the UNT Barnes and Noble Bookstore on the selected students' behalf and may only be used for Fall 2021 book rentals and class-related supplies. OCSS will review all applications and determine the winners based on academic merit, financial need, determination of eligibility, and essay.
 - **Eligibility Requirements:**
 - Be enrolled in the Fall 2021 semesters at UNT Denton (includes Frisco Campus)
 - Must be in Good Standing with the University
 - Must have a filed FAFSA and demonstrate financial need (based on FAFSA Expected Family Contribution or EFC)
 - Be a graduate student or identify with one or more characteristics of a non-traditional undergraduate student (see non-traditional student criteria here: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/off-campus-student-services/non-traditional-students>)
 - Maintain minimum cumulative UNT GPA (all hours taken at UNT): 2.7 if an undergraduate and 3.35 if a graduate student
 - Successful completion of the essay prompt
 - Must utilize Textbook Rental Program (Unless 100% Online student)

- A student is only allowed to receive this book award twice during their academic career at UNT Denton
- **Off-Campus Connection:** Off-Campus Connection (OCC) is an unpaid student-leadership program for UNT students who live off-campus. Under the advisement of the Coordinator of Off-Campus Student Services, OCC members will experience leadership opportunities, on-campus and off-campus engagement, networking, professional development, and more. Members will participate in the planning, development, and execution of existing OCSS events and programs, including Family Fun Night, Family Movie Night, Open House, Housing Fair, outreach and marketing, and more. Lastly, members will have an opportunity to create new off-campus events or programs and serve as a voice for UNT's non-traditional, commuter, and off-campus student populations. OCC is a great way for off-campus students to foster a community atmosphere where UNT students can succeed academically, socially, and professionally.
- **Family Resource Page:** Designed to link students to helpful resources for child care, family, funding, and more.
 - **Goal:** Provide as much assistance as possible so students can best meet the needs of themselves and their families and continue to be a successful student.
 - **Associated Program:** Nest Watchers
 - **Resources:** Texas Child Care Solutions (Texas Workforce Commission), Workforce Solutions North Central Texas, Guidelines to Apply for Child Care Financial Assistance (North Central Texas), Texas Child Care Solutions Home Page, Texas Child Care Solutions Financial Assistance Page, Denton ISD Pre-Kindergarten Program: Thrive by 5, Texas Home Institution for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), Drop-in Care Options, Fatherhood EFFECT (Educating Fathers for Empowering Children Tomorrow) Program, Lactation Rooms, UNT Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, UNT Student Money Management Center, UNT Career Center, UNT Student Legal Services, UNT Student Veteran Services, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas, Texas Workforce Solutions (Employment), Child and Dependent Care Tax Credits, Pre-School Options, and Product Safety Recall List

- **Child Care Tips:** Articles provided on bedtime battles, tantrums, potty training, discipline, bed wetting, brain development, children with special needs, and children staying home alone.
- **UNT Programs for Children:** Early Childhood Music, Center for Play Therapy, UNT Speech & Hearing Center, UNT Autism Center, Child and Family Resource Clinic, UNT Center for Parent Education, Child Development Laboratory at UNT

Bowling Green State University

Institution Type	Public, 4-Year
Location	Bowling Green, Ohio

Total Enrollment: 18,142	
Undergraduate Enrollment: 14,988	83% Full-time, 17% Part-time
Graduate Enrollment: 3,154	46% Full-time, 54% Part-time

Retention Rates for First-Time Students Pursuing Bachelor's Degrees	
Full-time Students	79%
Part-time Students	68%

6-year Graduation Rate	62%
Pell Grant Eligible Students	25.5%
First-Generation Students	30%
Undergraduate Student In-state Residence	88%

Undergraduate Ethnicity Profile	
White	79%
Black	7%
Hispanic	4%
Asian	1%
Two or more races	3%
International	2%

Distance Education Status		
	Undergraduate	Graduate
Enrolled only in distance education	7%	42%
Enrolled in some distance education	28%	11%

Undergraduate Age	
24 and under	93%
25 and over	7%

Gender Profile	
Female	56%
Male	44%

Reasoning for Benchmarking: Designated National Peer Institution by Institutional Research

BGSU Vision, Mission, and Values

- **Vision:** With a spirit of innovation, Bowling Green State University is a premier, inclusive learning community that develops, transforms and impacts individuals and communities through learning, collaboration and discovery. As a public university, BGSU focuses on contributing to the public good and embraces its role as a national

model in addressing the educational, economic and social vitality of our region, the state of Ohio, the nation and the world.

- **Mission:** Bowling Green State University provides holistic and comprehensive educational experiences that enhance the lives of our students, stakeholders and the many publics we serve. Our graduates are prepared for lifelong personal and career growth and for engaged citizenship and leadership in a global society. Through our excellence in teaching, research and outreach, BGSU builds a collaborative, diverse and inclusive community where creative ideas, new knowledge and entrepreneurial achievements can benefit others in our region, the state of Ohio, the nation and the world.
- **Core Values:**
 - Intellectual and personal growth
 - Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship
 - Diversity and belonging
 - Collaboration with each other and our partners
 - Excellence in all we do

Through benchmarking, Students Who Are Parents was identified as an available webpage to support the parenting student population. This resource page was developed by the Office of Parent, Family and New Student Connections and the Nontraditional and Military Student Services (NTMSS), which also provides support to student-parents.

Office of Parent, Family and New Student Connections

- **Purpose:** Bowling Green State University created the Office of Parent, Family and New Student Connections to connect, educate and advocate for the entire Falcon Family.
- **Mission:** We are committed to enhancing each students learning experience by engaging parents and families as active partners in supporting student success at BGSU. Our mission is to educate and advocate for BGSU families and provide a synergistic environment for both students and families.
- **Website Statement:** At BGSU, we embrace the notion of multi-dimensional families and recognize that family structures include families of origin and families of choice. We

serve all families guardians, grandparents and other supporters in the lives of our students. Our intent is to make the BGSU campus a “home away from home” by offering you a full range of services and resources.

Nontraditional and Military Student Services (NTMSS)

- **Website Statement:** NTMSS provides assistance to support you as you make career and educational choices. Beginning, returning to, or continuing your college education can pose a variety of challenges. The NTMSS staff is familiar with the issues facing nontraditional and military students and can be a resource as you plan and complete your program. Whether you are a nontraditional student starting or restarting your education, or an active-military or Veteran student, we can assist you in navigating the application process and easing your transition to BGSU. Advisors are also available to assist current students. We can help you discover and utilize campus resources and develop programs to best meet your needs.
 - BGSU has been ranked 5th in the nation and 1st in the Midwest for veterans and active military students by the Military Times in its Best for Vets: College 2021 rankings.
- **Nontraditional Students:** Define nontraditional students as those who are 23 or older, students who are parents, or students who may identify as a nontraditional student based on other circumstances.
- [Class of 2019 Success Stories: Graduate candidate takes nontraditional route with unparalleled experiences](#)
 - Article highlighting and celebrating the experiences and successes of a non-traditional, student-parent graduating from BGSU.

Students Who Are Parents Webpage

- **Website Statement:** BGSU is committed to supporting the parenting student population. As part of that effort, we want to connect parenting students with services available on the BGSU campus and beyond. The information on this webpage is designed to help you balance your life as a student and parent by providing academic support, financial support, and acclimating your family to the BGSU community. We want to highlight the

experiences of all parenting students – undergraduate, graduate, biological, adoptive/foster, single, partnered, etc. We understand that all students have unique experiences and their own obstacles to overcome. BGSU has many inspiring parenting students, and hearing their stories is important to the development of support programs and other initiatives designed to create a more cohesive and supportive community for students with children.

- **On-Campus Resources:** Being pregnant or a parent while going to school can be a challenging experience. Finding balance between family commitments, writing papers, classes and your own wellness can be a difficult process.
 - Accessibility Services, BGSU Cares, Career Center, Center for Women and Gender Equity, Counseling Center, Financial Aid, Lactation/Wellness Rooms, Learning Commons, LGBTQ+ Resource Center, Multicultural Affairs, Nontraditional & Military Student Services, Parent, Family and New Student Connections, Recreation and Wellness, and Student Legal Services
- **Off-Campus Resources:** Along with the support of BGSU, there are numerous off-campus resources available in and around Bowling Green. The State of Ohio and Wood County provides assistance and resources for eligible families.
 - **Child Care Resource Document:** This resource is intended to assist current and prospective students in considering child care options in Bowling Green. We have put together information about child care services and programs and options for government assistance for child care as an initial guide for parents. We have compiled information from local licensed child care services and programs and various websites as a way to inform prospective or current students about some childcare options.
 - **Additional Resources:** Institute for Women's Policy Research, National Women's Law Center, Ohio Early Learning Resources, Wood County Department of Job and Family Services, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- **Student Scholarships:**
 - **Elizabeth M. Boyer Fund:** Educational fund available to full-time, BGSU undergraduate females maintaining a 2.5 GPA who hold primary custodial responsibility for a minor child and/or an adult child with special needs.

- **Non-Traditional Student Scholarships:** Apply to eight scholarships geared towards adult learners and non-traditional students via BGSU's scholarship system Academic Works.
- **Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Foundation:** Scholarship for low-income mothers pursuing post-secondary education.
- **Women Empowering Women, Inc.:** Scholarship for single mothers pursuing post-secondary education.
- **Zonta Club of Bowling Green:** Annual scholarship to women age 25 or older. The award recipient must be a resident of Wood County, Ohio, show financial need, have earned a high school diploma or GED, and be eligible to enroll or already be enrolled in a post-secondary program of study.

George Mason University

Institution Type	Large, Public, 4-Year
Location	Fairfax, Virginia

Total Enrollment: 38,541	
Undergraduate Enrollment: 27,104	80% Full-time, 20% Part-time
Graduate Enrollment: 11,437	39% Full-time, 61% Part-time

Retention Rates for First-Time Students Pursuing Bachelor's Degrees	
Full-time Students	86%
Part-time Students	75%

6-year Graduation Rate	72%
Pell Grant Eligible Students	29%
First-Generation Students	28%
Undergraduate Student In-state Residence	81%

Undergraduate Ethnicity Profile	
White	37%
Black	11%
Hispanic	16%
Asian	22%
Two or more races	5%
International	5%

Distance Education Status (COVID-19 Data)		
	Undergraduate	Graduate
Enrolled only in distance education	73%	64%
Enrolled in some distance education	26%	23%

Undergraduate Age	
24 and under	81%
25 and over	19%

Gender Profile	
Female	49%
Male	51%

Reasoning for Benchmarking: Designated National Peer Institution by Institutional Research

GMU Mission and Values

- **Mission:** A public, comprehensive, research university established by the Commonwealth of Virginia in the National Capital Region, we are an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world.
- **Values**
 - **Our students come first:** Our top priority is to provide students with a transformational learning experience that helps them grow as individuals, scholars and professionals
 - **Diversity is our strength:** We include and embrace a multitude of people and ideas in everything we do and respect differences
 - **Innovation is our tradition:** We strive to find new and better ways to deliver on our mission while honoring time-tested academic values
 - **We honor freedom of thought and expression:** We protect the freedom of all members of our community to seek truth and express their views
 - **We are careful stewards:** We manage the economic and natural resources entrusted to us responsibly and sustainably
 - **We act with integrity:** We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards as educators, scholars, students and professionals
 - **We thrive together:** We nurture a positive and collaborative community that contributes to the well-being and success of every member

Through benchmarking, the Parenting and Expecting Students page was identified as a resource page for student-parents produced by New Student and Family Programs.

New Student and Family Programs

- **Vision:** To continuously promote student success in the Mason community by providing a seamless, comprehensive transition experience for students and their families.
- **Mission:** To effectively serve the incoming students and families of George Mason University by providing a cohesive transition, supportive systems, purposeful

experiences, and an empowered student leader team that contributes to social engagement, academic success, and ultimately, retention.

- **Core Values:**
 - Always remain student-centered
 - Provide a sense of belonging within the Mason Family
 - Educate and inform our audiences
 - Build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships
 - Strive for excellence

New Student-Parent Website Statement from George Mason University (April 7, 2019)

- Student-parents can be an invisible population, often setting aside their parent status in order to be a student. Students with children are less likely to complete a certificate or degree within six years of enrollment, and many withdraw before completion. A group of champions for student-parents at Mason has come together to change our campus community for the better. The group has been considering strategies to support and connect with this important student population. The launch of a new website is the first step in this urgent need to streamline services and resources.

Parenting and Expecting Students Webpage

- **Website Statement:** Whether studying as undergraduate or graduate students, parenting and expecting students are valued contributors to the Mason community. New Student and Family Programs coordinates with faculty, staff, and outside organizations to provide information that meets the unique needs of Mason's student-parent population. On this website, pregnant and parenting students can find resources for academic support, food and housing security, child care, health care, and more. Faculty and staff are encouraged to review the suggested syllabus statement and FAQs to learn more about student-parent support on campus.
- **Campus Resources:**
 - **Career Services:** University Career Services recognizes that you have a busy schedule – balancing the demands of work, school and home. Take advantage of

our extended hours: Sunday to Thursday, 7 p.m.- 11 p.m. via phone and/or video (WebEx).

- **Freedom Fitness Center:** While they enjoy working out, students can take advantage of up to two consecutive hours per day of free child care for children ages 6 months to 11 years of age.
- **Lactation Rooms:** George Mason University supports working and learning mothers. As such, we offer private spaces on each campus to accommodate nursing mothers.
- **Mason Adult Student Union:** Mason Adult Student Union (MASU) is a student organization that focuses on improving the well-being of adult/non-traditional students by providing opportunities for them to find or provide support in their educational endeavors where everyone's contribution is valued and appreciated.
- **Mason Child Development Center:** Mason families receive a 10% discount on tuition.
- **Student Health Services:** Regarding women's health, Student Health Services provides annual exams. Our doctors and nurse practitioners also provide evaluation and treatment of gynecological concerns, including urinary tract infections and menstrual irregularities. We can discuss issues and concerns related to women's health and sexual health, including birth control options and pregnancy counseling.
- **Student Support and Advocacy Center:** The Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) is committed to providing an empowering environment for all Mason students to seek support services and to explore healthy life choices. We offer educational programming, one-on-one consultations, and resources in the areas of interpersonal violence, personal wellness (including stress management and sexual health), and alcohol and drug use. We assist students encountering barriers to personal success. The center hosts the Patriot Pantry, which provides non-perishable food, toiletries, and school supplies to students in need. SSAC also strives to educate student users about the resources available on campus and in the surrounding community.

- **University Parents Student Group:** University Parents is a Mason student group that is dedicated to expanding access to higher education and increasing graduation rates among student parents at the university.
 - **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/gmuuniversityparents/>
 - **Parenting Student Focus Groups:** Hosted to assist in creating resources and services especially for parenting students. Childcare and food was provided to participating students.
 - **Events:** The Povertization of Women: A Panel on Race, Class, and Gender in America
- **Women and Gender Studies Center**
 - **Purpose:** Link with academic programs, University Life units, and the Northern Virginia community to provide learning experiences that educate about gender issues and issues of special importance to women; to provide a safe psychological and physical space for all women and gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgender populations; and to support our academic programs.
 - **Working Moms Support Group:** The Support Group for Working Mothers at Mason is one way Mason faculty, staff, and students can come together, discuss the issues confronting working mothers, and perhaps motivate changes on campus. During the academic year, the support group meets every other week at noon in the Women and Gender Studies Center.
 - The brown bag lunches are available to women interested in sharing stories and being part of an informal organization of working mothers. Group members work full time or part-time, raise their children with a partner or alone, are the major breadwinners or sole benefit providers, and many are also working students. Working mothers face unique issues and this group allows members to discuss their experiences in a friendly, nonjudgmental environment.
- **Additional Resources:** Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics, Counseling and Psychological Services, Disability Services, Summer Camps and Programs,

- **Community Resources:**
 - Childcare registry on website that includes childcare organizations that accept childcare vouchers, offer scholarships, and have sliding scale fees for income eligible families. (34 resources listed)
 - Children's Items registry which lists community nonprofits that provide children's essentials, as well as seasonal school supplies and holiday help. (16 resources listed)
 - Basic Needs registry which lists community nonprofits that provide support with basic needs, such as clothing, food, and household items. (20 resources listed)
 - Housing registry that includes affordable housing options and temporary housing programs like the Young Mother Housing Programs. (21 resources listed)
 - Well-Being registry for dental, behavior, and physical community medical resources. (30 resources listed)
- **Parenting Resources:** Registry of parenting resources beneficial to parenting and expecting students including classes support groups, organizations, and online resources.
- **Financial Assistance:** Financial resources beneficial to parenting and expecting students including student-parent scholarships, emergency financial assistance, government assistance, and basic needs assistance.
- **Laws, Policies, and Rights:** Information is provided on Title IX Protections, Disability Services, and the Housing Policy. No on-campus family housing is provided.
- **Faculty and Staff Resources:**
 - Syllabus Language
 - Parents and Primary Caregiver Accommodations: Our institution values diversity and inclusion, and this includes supporting students who also have parenting and family caregiver responsibilities. Parents and primary caregivers often have additional complications that sometimes make it difficult to attend class, such as morning sickness or late school openings, childcare emergencies, etc. If one of these situations will make it impossible for you to attend class, please let your instructor know about the situation and provide documentation as soon as possible, and these situations will be treated as documented excused absences. If you have a

childcare emergency and you think you and your child can manage it, you may bring your child to class; please sit near the door so you can easily step outside if your child needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, and return once your child's needs have been met.

Students who are pregnant or parenting should consult this university resource for guidance: <https://masonfamily.gmu.edu/student-parents/>

- **Frequently Asked Questions:**

- Are there any laws that protect me as a pregnant or parenting student?
- I'm a nursing mom, where can I find lactation spaces on campus?
- Where do I meet other student parents?
- How can I find affordable childcare?
- Can I live on campus with my child(ren)?
- Where do I find scholarships for student parents?
- Are there any community resources available to help my family meet our basic needs like diapers, food, and clothing?

Texas Woman's University

Institution Type	Midsize, Public 4-year Institution
Location	Denton, Texas

Total Enrollment: 16,433	
Undergraduate Enrollment: 10,644	64% Full-time, 36% Part-time
Graduate Enrollment: 5,789	41% Full-time, 59% Part-time

Retention Rates for First-Time Students Pursuing Bachelor's Degrees	
Full-time Students	77%
Part-time Students	63%

6-year Graduation Rate	48%
Pell Grant Eligible Students	25%
Undergraduate Student In-state Residence	98%

Undergraduate Ethnicity Profile	
White	36%
Black	17%
Hispanic	32%
Asian	9%
Two or more races	4%
International	2%

Undergraduate Age	
24 and under	76%
25 and over	24%

Gender Profile	
Female	87%
Male	13%

Distance Education Status		
	Undergraduate	Graduate
Enrolled only in distance education	39%	68%
Enrolled in some distance education	44%	20%

Reasoning for Benchmarking: Local, Ranked 7th Best College for Students with Children by Best Colleges, Public 4-Year Institution

TWU's Purpose, Mission, Vision, Values & Principles

- **Purpose:** Educate a woman, empower the world.
- **Mission:** Texas Woman's University cultivates engaged leaders and global citizens by leveraging its historical strengths in health, liberal arts, and education and its standing as the nation's largest public university primarily for women. Committed to transformational learning, discovery, and service in an inclusive environment that embraces diversity, Texas Woman's inspires excellence and a pioneering spirit.
- **Vision:** Texas Woman's will be known as the premier public university for a woman-focused education and leadership development, graduating thriving citizens who have a strong sense of community, health, prosperity, and a sense of purpose
- **Values:** Fundamental to who we are and what drives our actions
 - Opportunity, creativity, collaboration, wellbeing, diversity, excellence, caring
- **Principles:** Guiding principles that emerge from Texas Woman's history and frame its future
 - The growth of students is nurtured in a safe environment that fosters personal connections, resiliency, and a philosophy of education as a lifelong process.
 - Our commitment to excellence and integrity permeates all that we do.
 - Diversity and collaboration are fundamental to our academic culture of innovation, research, and creative expression.
 - Liberal arts develop the whole person, inspire inquiry, encourage application, and cultivate success in careers and graduate education.
 - Graduate education provides opportunities for individual advancement and develops professionals to serve society at large.

- People and cutting-edge technology drive the discovery and creative expression that fuel our educational enterprise.

Through benchmarking, the Campus Alliance for Resource Education was identified as offering resources for student-parents. The website outlines a specific page for students and their families. The Department of University Housing provides family specific housing and programs for student-parents.

Campus Alliance for Resource Education (CARE)

- **Purpose:** Resource center for off-campus living, commuting and non-traditional (including veterans, students with children, adult learners and students who are adopted/aged out of foster care) student services.
- **Website Statement:** Life is a difficult balancing act for all students, but can be even more of a challenge for non-traditional students and commuting students. At TWU, we get it. We know you face many obstacles while attending college, including inexperience in the classroom, working, parenting and care-giving, among other obligations. The Campus Alliance for Resource Education (CARE) office is here to help lighten your load by connecting you to resources on campus so you can achieve your dream of getting a higher education.
 - Are you struggling to pay for school, child care, or you or your family's specific needs? Are you having a hard time in any of your classes? Have you been able to balance your life responsibilities with school? What is keeping you from achieving your goals? Please contact us and let us help you! We are here for you!
- **Services:**
 - Student appointments
 - Provide information about transportation
 - Refer to campus or community resource
 - Give personalized, individual attention
 - Potentially provide financial assistance

- Arrange activities, events, and support networks that are specifically designed for commuters
- Provide a quiet, comfortable, safe space for you to eat, study, hang out, and do homework in our Commuter Lounge
- Offer amenities such as a fridge, microwave, computers to work on, and more
- **Family**
 - **Website Statement:** At TWU we recognize that your educational journey often involves your family, particularly if you are a student and a parent. Whether you're trying to juggle childcare, need holiday gifts for your kids or have come to the end of your journey and are interested in Family Graduation, we have resources that will help you find balance.
 - Title IX information for pregnant students on main page
 - **Resources and Services**
 - **Succeed Using Child Care and Educational Student Services (SUCCESS):** Funded by the US Department of Education, the federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program (CCAMPIS) provides funding for child care sliding scale vouchers and support for qualified TWU students on the Denton campus
 - Students who meet the eligibility requirements of the grant may submit an application. Based on available funding and student need, a portion of child care costs will be paid directly to the child care center. The greater the student's financial need, the greater the amount of the voucher --up to 90% with maximum monthly vouchers not to exceed \$670 per child. These sliding scale vouchers are offered for fall and spring semesters. Summer vouchers will be provided based on funding availability. CARE will distribute the vouchers to the pre-approved child care centers based on student choice.
 - Program Requirements:
 - Selection of licensed pre-approved childcare provider in the Dallas/Fort-Worth area

- Regular communication with SUCCESS advisor
- Meet with SUCCESS advisor to complete orientation and child care choice advising
- Participate in symposium (1 per semester)
- Volunteer 1 hour per semester and record in Pioneers Engage
- Complete CCAMPIS and SUCCESS surveys
- Maintain eligibility
 - Selection of licensed pre-approved childcare provider in the Dallas/Fort-Worth area
 - Regular communication with SUCCESS advisor
 - Meet with SUCCESS advisor to complete orientation and child care choice advising
 - Participate in symposium (1 per semester)
 - Volunteer 1 hour per semester and record in Pioneers Engage
 - Complete CCAMPIS and SUCCESS surveys
 - Maintain eligibility
- **SNAP-Free Food:** The CARE Office facilitates monthly SNAP consultations
- **Student Pioneers Also Raising Kids (S.P.A.R.K.):** Student organization to connect with other parents to find resources or recommendations about childcare, schools, etc. S.P.A.R.K. encourages and supports the non-traditional student's integration into Texas Woman's University. In conjunction with TWU, S.P.A.R.K. will represent the needs of non-traditional students in order to secure deserved privileges.
- **Lactation:** TWU is a breastfeeding friendly community that is committed to providing a comfortable, safe, and supportive environment for mothers and lactating parents to express milk and breastfeed infants. Information on lactation room logistics, educational information and lactation

resources for students, employees and campus visitors is coordinated by CARE.

- **Other Resources:** Texas Workforce Child Care Services, Texas Pre-Kindergarten, Child Care Search Resources
- **Programming:**
 - Hosts monthly events to assist in creating community for student parents. Coffee Chats, informational panels focused on seeking child care, and family friendly events are all aimed at welcoming and supporting student parents.
 - **Family Graduation:** Texas Woman's University recognizes the challenges of being a student and a parent. Family Graduation Celebration recognizes your family's role in your academic journey and success. During the pandemic, a mailing with family friendly items will help families celebrate this major milestone at home.
 - **Holiday Gift Program:** The TWU Holiday Gift Program for students with young families was established over thirty years ago to assist TWU student parents with financial need by providing gifts for their children during the holiday season. Students must fill out an application by November 1st to participate and it is for enrolled TWU students who have children only.
 - CARE calls for donations, sponsors, and for the campus community to encourage parents to apply for the program.

Department of University Housing

- **Vision:** The Department of University Housing & Dining will enrich the student experience by creating a stimulating environment that encourages civility, well-being, and academic success. Residents, when fully engaged in the community, will acquire skills and knowledge which result in becoming successful leaders in the world.
- **Mission:** The mission of the Department of University Housing & Dining is to create a safe, dynamic and compassionate community in support of student's academic success, personal development, campus and community engagement.

- **Family Housing:** The on-campus location, academic atmosphere and reasonable rates combine to make on-campus family apartments an exceptional housing opportunity.
 - **Housing Options:** Apartment styles and sizes vary. There are two- and three-bedroom units in an unfurnished condition. All apartments and traditional rooms include central heat and air conditioning, as well as basic cable service and data connection. Linens, bedding, table and floor lamps, dishes, trash and recycling cans, shower curtain and other such personal items are not provided. Each apartment has a refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, and garbage disposal; microwaves are not provided.
 - **Eligibility:** Any legally married couple (as recognized in the State of Texas), with or without child(ren), or a single parent who has legal custody of a child(ren) is eligible for family housing. A valid marriage certificate, birth certificate(s) and/or adoption paper(s) must be presented at the time of contract signing to verify family status. Only immediate family members (husband, wife, children) may occupy the apartment and they must reside together for the duration of the contract period. Each student must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester for the Fall and Spring semesters.
 - **School Age Children's Enrichment Program (The Clubhouse)**
 - **Program Description:** The Clubhouse is an enrichment program designed for school age children between the ages of 3 and 12 (At the time of the child's enrollment) of enrolled TWU students with priority given to TWU students living on-campus in family housing. Priority placement deadlines are July 15 for fall and March 15 for summer. Non-students affiliated with TWU will be considered on a space available basis.
 - An educational enrichment programming includes reading projects, arts & crafts, cooking experiments, gardening, science, weekly field trips, community services, and more.
 - **Enrollment:** Students must reserve a space, pay a \$25 non-refundable family enrollment fee, and pay appropriate tuition fees.
 - **Hours of Operation:** Monday through Friday from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

- **Rates:**
 - TWU Student Living On-Campus: \$1,250 for 1st Child, \$1,125 for each additional child for the entire Fall/Spring
 - TWU Student Living Off-Campus: \$1,430 for 1st Child, \$1,290 for each additional child for the entire Fall/Spring
- **Drop-In Childcare:** The Clubhouse Drop In child care program is a FREE service provided to TWU students. Trained staff will be on hand to properly care for children on a reservation or drop-in basis. Our goal is to provide high quality child care so students are able to complete their education at TWU. This program is geared towards children ages 5-12. Parent(s) or guardian(s) must be a TWU student. Maximum capacity each evening is 25 children.
 - **Program Activities:** Program activities include activities that promote social and emotional development, community service projects, cooking, sports, arts/crafts, fitness activities, music, math and science enrichment activities, storytelling, reading, and other fun activities.
 - **Hours of Operation:** Fall and Spring Semester: 6:30 pm to 9 pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings.
 - **Enrollment:** Students must complete The Clubhouse Enrollment Packet and pay the \$25 application fee per semester. Care is available to TWU students only on a first come first-serve basis. Availability for drop-off care can be confirmed by calling the center by 4 pm, the day before the care is needed.

Benchmarking Summary

University of Houston

In comparison to Texas State University (TSU), the University of Houston (UH) has 10,000 more students enrolled, has a larger percentage of undergraduate students enrolled part-time, a larger percentage of graduate students enrolled full-time, and a relatively even female to male student ratio. There are slightly more undergraduate students over the age of 25. The six-year graduation rate and retention rate for both full-time and part-time students is higher at UH.

The university offers a resource page specific to student-parents but has limited resources and does not mention community resources available on the page. The on-campus child care center offers two tuition assistance programs, one of which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education CCAMPIS grant. In comparison to TSU, student-parent support is significantly less robust, however, the child care center offers tuition assistance and TSU does not. The child care center explicitly mentions on their website that they support the mission of the university and the Division of Student Affairs, which drove the establishment of the grant funded tuition assistance program.

University of North Texas

In comparison to TSU, the University of North Texas (UNT) has relatively similar enrollment measures and they both have more female than male students. There are slightly more undergraduate students over the age of 25. The 6-year graduation rate is relatively the same, however, the full-time student and part-time student retention rates are seven to eight percentage points above TSU. UNT offers robust resources and support for non-traditional students by designating an entire office dedicated to their success. Within this office, events that serve non-traditional students also serve student-parents in addition to specific programs catered to student-parents such as family social events and the babysitter clearinghouse. There is an extensive family resource page with both on-campus and community resources, although more community resources could be included. Student-parents can also take advantage of the non-traditional student book stipend. TSU offers many similar resources for student-parents, however, UNT displays a culture of support for all non-traditional students and provides an innovative resource to connect students to affordable child care.

Bowling Green State University

In comparison to TSU, Bowling Green State University (BGSU) has approximately 9,000 less students, but full-time enrollment versus part-time enrollment rates and the full-time student retention rate are relatively similar. BGSU has a higher 6-year graduation rate and a retention rate for part-time students that is over 10 percentage points greater than TSU. Both institutions have more female than male students, but BGSU has a smaller percentage of undergraduate students over 25. BGSU offers a students who are parents webpage that connects students to on-campus resources including lactation rooms, community resources, and student-parent scholarships. BGSU offers a child care resource document but does not appear to offer any other intentional programming or resources to student-parents.

George Mason University

In comparison to TSU, George Mason University (GMU) is comparable in total, part-time undergraduate, and full-time undergraduate enrollment. There are more undergraduate students at GMU over the age of 25 and the gender ratio is more even. Retention rates and the 6-year graduation rate is significantly higher than TSU. As of 2019, GMU announced they are taking a more intentional approach to supporting student-parents. The student-parent webpage clearly directs student-parents to on-campus resources including lactation rooms, community resources, parenting resources, financial assistance resources, Title IX information, and frequently asked questions. Faculty can identify a syllabus statement on this webpage to include regarding parent and primary caregiver accommodations. Social support and connection are offered through the University Parents Student Group and the Working Moms Support Group.

Texas Women's University

In comparison to TSU, Texas Women's University (TWU) has 10,000 less students and nearly a 9:1 ratio of female to male students, which differs greatly from TSU. Nearly 1 in 4 undergraduate students at TWU are 25 and over. The 6-year graduation rate is lower than TSU, but TWU's retention rate of part-time undergraduate students is 8 percentage points above TSU. It can be assumed that TWU is serving more non-traditional students than TSU and thus, TWU offers student-parent programs to reflect their student population. The Campus Alliance for Resource Education (CARE) possesses the CCAMPIS grant, which allows students to utilize tuition assistance at child care facilities off-campus, unlike UH. Other resources for identifying affordable child care options are also provided on the website. CARE offers student appointments and requires that students receiving the CCAMPIS grant meet with a SUCCESS advisor and regularly communicate with them. CARE offers SNAP application consultations, a student organization for student-parents, and programming for student-parents including monthly social events, a family graduation, and a holiday gift program. The Department of University Housing offers housing options specifically for students with families. There is a childhood enrichment program that students must pay for and drop-in child care options that are free. Both programs are offered in the afternoon and evening to support student-parent schedules. In comparison to all institutions benchmarked, TWU by far has the most robust support services available to student-parents.

SWOT Analysis of SWAP

The following SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was created by reviewing the SWAP website as well as documents and assessments from 2017 to 2021. Information gathered from benchmarking was also utilized to complete the analysis. If this

SWOT analysis was being conducted as part of a team, I would include stakeholders such as the program coordinator for Parent & Family Relations who started the program, administrators from the Child Development Center, and the CARE Center staff.

Strengths

- SWAP has continued to increase the number of students they serve each year. In 2018, SWAP served 64 student-parents compared to 100 student-parents served in 2021.
- The SWAP website connects student-parents to both Texas State and community resources and intentionally highlights relevant resources through a monthly newsletter and Canvas posts. Students must complete a form to receive emails, newsletters, and be added to the Canvas page. This allows students to identify themselves as a student-parent to the CARE Center. Upon registration, student-parents are added to an excel sheet for tracking purposes.
- SWAP offers intentional programming catered to student-parents on a regular basis including one to two social events per semester and an annual school supply drive. SWAP previously held lunch and learns and/or workshops, but these were discontinued with the re-organization. Students regularly note in surveys that they value and appreciate the opportunity to connect with other student-parents. Based upon results from needs assessments, students continuously indicate they want to take advantage of family-friendly events.
- The annual school supply drive is a staple event for SWAP and has been programmed for seven consecutive years. Each year, SWAP increases the number of students and children served as well as campus department and office participation in the event. This event is very beneficial to student-parent success as it helps to provide most school supplies needed for elementary and middle school aged children. Student feedback for this program has always been positive and students are very appreciative of the financial support.

Weaknesses

- SWAP has never consistently tracked outcomes for the initiative or aggregate student-parent outcomes. While student-parents are added to an excel database upon completing an online form, this is simply to keep track of numbers and student-parent emails.

Student-parent demographic information including age, race/ethnicity, first-generation student status, and veteran status has not been incorporated into assessments before 2021. To improve SWAP, student-parent outcomes should be tracked overtime so that a foundational understanding of student-parent success and challenges can be understood. This includes data for GPA, persistence, retention, and degree completion. The excel database should track currently enrolled students as well as students who are not enrolled but have not graduated.

- While SWAP provides valuable opportunities for student-parents to connect and socialize, there has been an over-emphasis on programming just for the sake of programming. Lunch and learn style events or workshops had decreasing participation over the years and student-parents express in surveys that while they appreciate the time to connect with other student-parents, they do not have a lot of time in general. Staff member response has involved purchasing more door prizes and other material items to entice students to participate. Funds have repeatedly been wasted on items that are not picked up by student-parents due to low participation. To improve SWAP, programming should focus on family social events and events for physical resource acquisition such as the school supply drive or a toy drive, diaper drive, household supply drive, etc. Instead of spending funds on crafts, funding could be placed towards items that can support student-parents and their basic needs. One consideration for an additional event would be a student-parent or family graduation to celebrate the accomplishments of student-parents.
- More financial assistance is needed to support student-parents and their success outcomes. The CARE Center offers textbook grants for foster-care alumni. Depending on the acquisition of these funds, a similar opportunity should be explored for student-parents. Student-parents regularly express that they need assistance and support accessing affordable child-care options. SWAP has not effectively connected students to resources that can assist with this process. For example, on the website, the only child care center listed is the Child Development Center (CDC), however there is typically a long waitlist, and the CDC has high tuition fees with no subsidies offered for students. To improve SWAP, the CARE Center should aim to obtain funds to support child care tuition assistance. One viable option would be to apply to the CCAMPIS grant from the U.S.

Department of Education. Creating a babysitting clearinghouse like UNT could also be another viable option to connect student-parents to affordable child care.

- Texas State University has lactation rooms across campus, but these rooms are not advertised to SWAP students and are labeled as available for staff and faculty only on the Human Resources website. Based upon communication with Human Resources, students can only use the space if the previous director of RMP made a special request. This does not benefit student-parents because they are not aware of the resource available to them unless they think to ask. Lactation rooms are already readily available on campus so a system should be created for student-parents to utilize these rooms without hassle.
- SWAP could do more to identify the current student-parent population on-campus. SWAP does not have any official campus partners or contacts except for the school supply drive. Leveraging a campus culture that is aware of student-parents and understands their needs would likely increase referrals to the SWAP program. A university wide message could also be sent notifying all campus stakeholders that resources are available for student-parents. In the past, I have been told that this is not allowed, but it should be reconsidered. If it is possible to pull student data regarding if they have dependents, this information should be made available to the CARE center for retention, persistence, and degree completion assessment.
- SWAP should do more to ensure that student-parents have access to class times that are flexible and work for their schedule. There are several student populations at Texas State who have the capability to register early. The CARE Center should consider embarking on efforts to have this opportunity extended to student-parents as well as they are often juggling a multitude of responsibilities and must build their schedule around their children.

Opportunities

- Consider adopting programs and services that other peer institutions have adopted to support student parents including child care tuition assistance programs, textbook assistance, a babysitting clearinghouse, drop-in day care hours, family graduation, and lactation rooms.
- There may be potential opportunities to collaborate with the Office of the Registrar to offer early registration to student-parents. Community collaborations with facilities that

provide food, housing, household supplies, diapers, and formula should also be explored to build a robust support system for student-parents. The CARE Center should collaborate with Human Resources to begin the process of making lactation rooms available for student-parent use.

- **Recommendations from Young Invincibles:** Young Invincibles (2018) notes that student-parents need supportive healthcare environments as well as parent education about rights during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. The organization recommends a two-generation or whole family approach to student parents, rather than seeing students and their children as two separate populations to serve. The Family Friendly Campus Toolkit can be used to assist in the process of tracking student-parent data and implementing best practices to support them. All stakeholders need to be on board to create a campus environment that supports holistic student-parent success. The organization also recommends institutions offer free childcare or childcare on a sliding scale for student-parents and applying for the CCAMPIS grant. Young Invincibles (2018) notes that health centers on campus should offer services for reproductive health. The Student Health Center on-campus does offer these services, but they should be advertised directly to student-parents. Data-tracking of student-parent outcomes is highlighted as another aspect needed to support student-parent success. Young Invincibles (2018) recommends tracking outcomes for student-parents, even beyond graduation, and collecting data on their academic progress, including that of students who stop out and return. An annual survey should also be administered to understand the current student-parent population and data should be collected on both mother and father student-parent experiences.

Threats

- With the re-organization of the Division of Student Affairs, there is no longer enough staff to support the SWAP program. Before the reorganization, there was a full-time coordinator and graduate assistant overseeing the program with assistance from the Director of Parent & Family Relations. There is no longer a specific staff member designated to focus on SWAP, which makes it very difficult to expand resources and services to SWAP students, yet alone keep the ones that are already available.

- Outcome tracking and meaningful assessment is not being conducted within the CARE Center and could seriously threaten the continuation of the SWAP initiative if funding, resources, or staff needed to be allocated elsewhere. Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and decreasing enrollment across the state and the country, this concern should be taken seriously as funding may be decreasing for student programming in the near future.
- From benchmarking, I have identified that other institutions are doing more intentional work to support student-parents and their success, specifically financially. When looking for institutions to attend, student-parents may select another institution due to lack of financial support available to student-parents at Texas State.

Students Who Are Parents (SWAP) Program Proposal

The proposed mission, vision, goals, and outcomes for the implementation of Students Who Are Parents (SWAP) as a program have been outlined below.

- **Mission:** The SWAP program contributes to student-parent retention and promotes student-parent success by providing supportive programs and services to enhance the educational experience of the student-parent population at Texas State University.
- **Vision:** SWAP will be nationally recognized for implementing and maintaining best practices to support the student-parent population at Texas State University.
- **Goals**
 - Increase the retention and graduation of the student-parent population through sustained programming and services catered to student-parents and their needs.
 - Foster a culture of support and compassion for the student-parent population at Texas State by educating stakeholders on student-parent needs, challenges, strengths, and resources.
 - Implement and maintain innovative programming to support the student-parent population in collaboration with campus and community constituents.
 - Collect data and track outcomes on student-parents to maintain an accurate understanding of their experiences, needs, and challenges.

- **Outcomes**

- Student-parents who receive support through SWAP programs and services will have an increased awareness of campus and/or community resources.
- Student-parents who receive support through SWAP programs and services will have a 6-year graduation rate of 40 percent or above in comparison to the national average of 33 percent.
- Retention rates for first-time student-parents pursuing their bachelor's degrees who receive services and support from SWAP will be equal or within 5 percentage points of the overall retention rate for first-time students pursuing bachelor's degrees.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to my mother. My mother is a first-generation college student and obtained her bachelor's degree before I was born. In 2005, my mother returned to school to obtain her master's degree. I was only seven at the time. I have fond memories of being on campus with her, walking through the horticulture green house, painting pumpkins in a classroom for Halloween, and being babysat by a student who attended the university. In January of 2007, my brother was born. With only six hours left in her graduate degree, my mother lacked support mentally, emotionally, and financially. She never completed her degree, and it is far too late for her to go back without starting over. While there are many reasons that I decided to pursue a master's degree, the fear of never reaching completion did influence me to attend immediately after my undergraduate education. That being said, I would also like to dedicate this project to the student-parents I served directly during my role with SWAP. I cannot deny that their success has always been near and dear to my heart.