



Harding University's TRiO Student Support Services

Tutoring Center: A Case Study in Accutrack Usage

Training Program and Institution Details:

Institution Name: **Harding University**

Program Name: **TRIO Student Support Services Tutoring Center**

Program's Webpage URL Address Link: **www.harding.edu/sss**

Program's Complete Mailing Address: **TRIO SSS, Harding University 12268**

City, State/Province, Zip/Postal Code: **Searcy, AR 72149-2268**

Name(s) of the Primary & Other Contact Person(s) & their Position Title(s):

- 1. Dr. Anissa Harris, TRIO SSS Tutor Coordinator**
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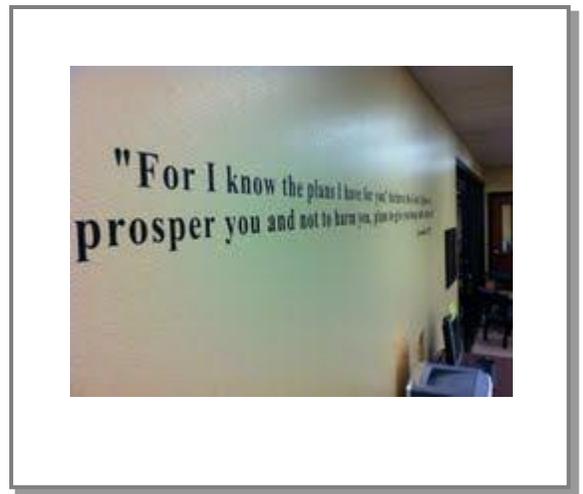
“PROGRAM OVERVIEW”

A. Program History

Harding University's TRIO Student Support Services is a five year federally (Dept. of Ed.) funded program serving 275 participants with yearly federal funding of \$366,385. Harding University's SSS has been improving retention, graduation and academic achievement among disadvantaged students for over two decades. The tutoring program has been certified with CRLA since 1995 and ATP since 2005.

Our program includes all of the activities required by TRIO, including

- Academic tutoring, directly and through other services
- Advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection and appropriate degree selection
- Activities designed to assist participants in applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in graduate and professional programs
- Information on both the full range of Federal student financial aid programs and benefits and assistance in completing financial aid applications including FAFSA
- Counseling designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students including financial planning for postsecondary educational aid
- Personal Professional Counseling for qualified participants



Our program also offers participants services that are permitted but not required. These features include personal, career and academic counseling, counseling related to career options, exposure to cultural events and mentoring involving upper level students.

Our program is comprehensive and holistic in its approach to meeting student needs. We offer instructional and emotional support to participants through a freshman year experience organized around a supplemental instructional model that's tied to essential 'gateway' courses. By clustering students in these courses, we create small communities of peers who can offer one another support and who are nurtured by staff and tutors. Participants are strengthened both individually and in groups during enrichment activities designed to build their confidence, provide cultural education, motivate and inform them to achieve their best and support one another. Our staff members are highly trained professionals who focus exclusively on project participants and work together to meet their needs. Our tutors are professionally trained as well in best practices of one-to-one peer instruction. The project is a highly valued and visible part of the campus community, and has met and surpassed most project goals for each cycle. We desire to continue this track record in response to the new standardized objectives and to use thorough evaluations to guide our development over the next five years.

FY 2010-2015 Funding Amount: \$366,385/yr.	Grant Aid Amount: \$25,000
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Program Objectives based on Department of Education regulations		
Persistent Rate:	75%	% of all participants served by the SSS project will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or graduate and/or transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution during the academic year.
Good Academic Standing Rate:	87%	% of all enrolled participants served by the SSS project will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution.
4 Year Graduation Rate:	53%	% of new participants served each year will graduate within six (6) years.

B. Program Objectives

The mission statement of the TRIO SSS Program that is the overarching theme for the tutoring program is:

“Working together to promote physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic success through fellowship collegiality, and accountability.”

TRIO Student Support Services strives to provide information, services, and support that promotes academic as well as personal success for any qualified student seeking matriculation through one of Harding University’s degree programs.

TRIO SSS program tutoring/mentoring objectives are stated in the grant application and include the goal that all participants in SSS requesting tutoring will be served. Goals and objectives of our tutoring center—as well as our means of measuring and achieving these goals—are itemized below:

- 1. To provide a learning environment that is individualized, personal and supportive to all SSS students.**
 - a. One-to-one peer tutoring
 - b. Peer mentoring & coaching
- 2. To provide tutorial support that will help students to learn to function as effectively, efficiently, confidently, and independently as they can.**
 - a. Staff of 30+ tutors
 - i. fully trained
 - ii. many certified by CRLA
 - iii. all academically model students
 - b. Tutor training to facilitate best practices & successful outcomes for all tutoring sessions
 - c. Coaches & Players (CAPS) program: Provides one-to-one peer mentoring and coaching to develop strong personal and academic habits & integration into the Harding culture

3. **To diagnose learning and study skills needs & provide materials to develop necessary skills.**
 - a. CAPSOL, Learning Styles Inventory
 - b. Campbell Interest & Skills Survey (CISS)
 - c. Workshops on study skills, learning styles, & other areas as needed
 - d. One-to-one peer tutoring, mentoring, & coaching
4. **To mentor & support a Learning Community of first-time college freshmen**
 - a. Assimilates students into the academic, spiritual, and social culture of Harding University
 - b. Builds community & offer opportunities to develop friendships among staff and students—an important key to success
 - c. Offers academic support and provides academic and personal advice
 - d. Provides instant support group, increases student success
 - e. Streamlines registration process for freshman year
 - f. Identical course schedule for fall semester
 - g. Student Instructors (SI's) attend courses with them & provide SI sessions tailored to their courses & open to any student enrolled in the course
 - h. Laptops available for checkout & personal use
 - i. Free tuition for the TRIO first year experience class: *On Course Strategies for Success*
 - Meets 2-3x weekly
 - Provides detailed instruction on successful habits
 - Small group format
 - Intimate environment
 - Explores general success strategies as well as those applicable to the Harding culture, faculty, and courses;
 - Mandatory tutoring/SI attendance
 - j. Creates opportunities and activities to help students learn about themselves, other students, Harding University traditions, and educational opportunities

C. **Reporting Lines**

TRIO tutors are hired by the SSS Tutor Coordinator with the approval of the SSS Director. The Director reports directly to the Dean of the Center for Student Success (CSS) responsible for making sure the instructional programs and the curriculum are of the best quality consistent with the resources of the institution, specifically tending to the academic welfare of the students and promoting the academic standards of the institution. The TRIO SSS program sends interim and annual reports including tutoring data and evaluations to the Dean, VPAA, and the University President as well. All of the tutoring data for all TRiO reports are generated from and with Accutrack software.

D. **Sources of Funding**

The SSS program is exclusively funded by a federally funded TRIO grant. Harding University has had an SSS grant from its initial application in 1990 to the present. We are currently in the first year of a five year grant cycle and therefore have funding in place through August of 2015.

E. **Services and Students Served**

Student Support Services is a federally funded program designed to give academic, personal, cultural and financial support to students who are at-risk for attrition because they are (1) the first generation in their families to attend college, (2) from families who have low income and/or (3) have some type of disability. The SSS program is funded to serve 275 qualifying students.

Services offered include counseling, 1:1 peer tutoring, 1:1 peer coaching, learning communities, SI study groups, study skills instruction, academic counseling, career counseling, financial counseling, and cultural and personal enhancement activities. The purposes for the services offered include retention, good academic standing, and graduation.

SSS students participate in an extensive enrollment interview and take a learning styles inventory called the CAPSOL. TRIO SSS faculty and staff members, including all tutoring staff, are trained in the purposes and evaluation of the CAPSOL and work directly with each SSS student to identify and prescribe study skills and learning activities that promote academic success.

As an effort to provide resources that support the critical thinking skill development and the integration of learning theories into practice, the TRIO program also provides academic consumables that are needed to incorporate innovative study strategies into the client's daily routine. Examples of these items include but are not limited to the following:

- Study skills materials
- Note cards
- Calculators
- Voice Recorders
- Kurzweil software
- Textbooks for reference

Historically the TRIO tutoring program offers tutoring in each of the 10 undergraduate degrees in more than 90 academic majors. Since the University now offers 14 pre-professional programs and 10 graduate and professional degrees in its colleges of Arts and Humanities, Bible and Religion, Business Administration, Communication, Education, Honors, Nursing, Pharmacy and Sciences, it additionally provides undergraduate support for students completing pre-requisite courses for these degrees. This program uses Accutrack to manage all data for research and evaluation, a feature that permits the administrators to track or evaluate all aspects of the program and objectives, including attendance, use of supplies/space, and funding.

F. Program Location and Facility.

Our handicapped accessible Center for Student Success is located on the second floor of the Hammond Student Center on Market Street, across from the main auditorium and between the College of Bible & Religion and the Heritage Inn (university hotel/conference hub) in the center of student traffic on campus. Our center has 6 private, semi-soundproof, video-monitored tutor rooms, each equipped with computer and printer access. The computers offer access to the internet and to the library. These private rooms, as well as the 3 others across the hall, are also used for test accommodations. Adjacent to these rooms is a newly established Tutoring/Study Center, equipped with a sitting/waiting/studying area. This space provides a home for those tutors who work throughout the day and need a place to wait for their clients or work on their own studies in between appointments. It also offers 16 tables with chairs available for paired or solitary study or tutoring. In addition, we have faculty/staff office suites with administrative assistance to maximize effectiveness and use of classroom space for the Learning Community, student gatherings, small group meetings, or study sessions. There is additional over-flow tutoring space in empty offices if it is needed.



G. Training Guidelines

Administration: The SSS Tutoring program is under the co-direction of the director of the TRIO SSS Program, Dr. Jim Johnston, Ed D., and the Tutor Coordinator, Dr. Anissa Harris Ed D. Training guidelines are discussed and agreed upon by both leaders in relation to previous program assessments and tutor/ client evaluations. Definitive plans for each training' components are created to support reaching program goals and objectives, specifically, improving client retention rates and keeping students in good academic standing with the University so each matriculates through the degree program.

Selection: Tutor applicants are either referred by teachers or apply to a job posting. Each must have at least a 3.0 in the subject area they will tutor, be in good standing with the university, and have three positive faculty recommendations. Application review, including an analysis of the applicant's academic transcript and schedule, is followed by an interview with the Tutor Coordinator. Accepted applicants are then contacted (personally or by phone) and emailed an [Invitation to Be A TRIO Tutor](#). Applicants are required to respond to the Invitation within a designated time period and complete a list of pre-employment/training activities:

- Completing University mandated payroll paperwork
- Presenting official University picture ID for identity verification
- Scheduling an Appointment with the Tutor Coordinator to complete the following:
 - TRIO SSS Tutor Contract
 - TRIO SSS Tutoring Program Confidentiality Agreement
 - [TRIO SSS Accutrack Tutoring Software Tutorial](#)

The Accutrack Tutoring Tutorial, created by the tutor coordinator, provides screenshots and steps on entering data, setting/cancelling/rescheduling appointments, and completing assessment (sample attached). Applicants must then attend the mandatory training session so that the required 12 hours of tutor training is completed prior to beginning work. All tutor employee documentation is kept secured in the Tutor Coordinator's office.

Hours: Tutoring is available by appointment only and scheduled only during the tutor's self-determined availability. Tutoring hours are typically 9:30a-9p M-F, although we do permit early morning tutoring and weekend tutoring if scheduled in advance. Tutors may, within their personal time constraints, accept individual walk in appointments if requested, although it is not required for employment. Tutors are paid federal minimum wage by the TRIO SSS Grant, and the services are free of charge to qualified Harding University students.

Evaluation, Data, & Tracking: The tutor program is evaluated both informally and formally. The Tutor Coordinator communicates with tutors by e-mail each week and has individual conferences with tutors



for debriefing, guidance and problem-solving. Tutors may communicate with the coordinator individually, by e-mail and/or on tutor contact forms. The tutoring center is also videoed with close-circuit cameras so that all sessions can be viewed if needed. The security provides a level of accountability as well as evaluation. Tutors also provide feedback called **SESSION LOGS** per appointment using Accutrack, the tutoring software that tracks appointments, attendance, payroll, and evaluation. These Logs provide the Coordinator insight into the content, methodology, and circumstances of each individual session providing data essential for coaching tutors as well as clients toward successful personal and academic outcomes. Clients are also surveyed routinely through Accutrack by means of rotating

Likert-scale surveys that request feedback on tutor performance, center effectiveness, and availability/use of TRIO SSS Tutoring resources. Tutors may access their personal **feedback through the REPORT feature of Accutrack**. In this fashion tutors can monitor their own progress with their clients. The Tutor Coordinator can change settings so that restrictions are in place for any confidential data. At intervals, the Tutor Coordinator compiles the evaluation data to provide individual and collective training as indicated.

Accutrack is used daily by the Tutor Coordinator and all TRIO tutors to set, manage, and communicate appointment times. It has an internal and external means of sending messages and emails. It allows the Tutor Coordinator to track students by groups, cohorts, or courses for analysis or evaluation purposes. It provides a logging in/out system that allows tutors and clients to sign in and out of Accutrack by means of their University ID barcodes. The Tutor Coordinator evaluates the sign in/out logs daily to eliminate errors or discrepancies. Due to Accutrack's accuracy, the Tutor Coordinator has designed specialized reports that serve as **timesheets for Student Payroll** at the University. Creating these electronic timesheets has increased office efficiency and productivity. Tutoring data by client is transferred from Accutrack to the grant database at regular intervals so these data are included in the grant's Annual Performance Report to the government. The data generated by Accutrack is so specific and accurate that it is routinely used to verify attendance, retention, and participation for the University

and for federal government reports. Its flexibility and detail allows the user the ability to pull almost any desired report. Integrating data from Accutrack into daily, weekly, monthly, and annual evaluations and assessment always adds validity and accuracy to the findings. It is an essential tool in the TRiO program where assessment and records are vital to the funding and grassroots support for the program and students.

Development & Growth With Accutrack: The Tutor Coordinator's Perspective

Accutrack 5.0 was in place as the tutor tracking software when I was hired as the tutor coordinator in 2004, but it was not being fully optimized. Appointments were set in Accutrack, but tutors were communicating with appointment slips and physical in/out-boxes rather than electronic ones. All tutor and student communication as well as data entry for evaluation was manual rather than electronic. Records and communication were unreliable. Tutors completed a double-copy appointment slip and left them each night to be set. Every morning I would spend an hour setting appointments in the computer from the previous night and then assessing the paper copies of feedback from tutors on the appointment content and focus. Tutors tracked their time on paper timesheets that were then manually added, verified, and hand-aligned with any data from Accutrack. The reports feature, other than running total tutoring times etc, was not used. Students signed into Accutrack at the start and end of appointments but they also signed on a clipboard because the database had not been previously “trusted” as a reliable standalone source.



After I acclimated to the TRiO program and explored Accutrack, I discovered the many features provided by the database. I provided a small library of textbooks for tutors to use when working or preparing for appointments. I had these cataloged into Accutrack so they could be checked out and monitored. I worked with our local IT department and set up the email feature within Accutrack so the paper appointment slips were eliminated. I trained my tutors to use email DAILY to look for and verify appointments. I eventually tailored the Appointment Setting message and established Appointment Reminders that go out 24 hours before an appointment time and No-Show/Cancel/Reschedule Emails that are sent at those appropriate times. With this new communication, I was able to automatically increase my direct contact with the students served and eliminate miscommunication that caused no-shows and cancelled appointments. For several years I even copied myself on all these emails so I could verify that they were being sent properly and accurately. Doing so created confidence in the program and also provided accountability if a student said “that email never went out.”

I then trained my tutors to set their own appointments in Accutrack and eliminated the appointment slips. Doing so saved the department money spent on expensive duplicate forms (so the tutor and student could each have a copy) and also increased the accuracy of the data and reduced manual errors. Later I learned about Session Logs. I created a Likert-scale evaluation for to assess on specific grant or tutor training objectives and connected it to the appointment pay—if a tutor does not complete the session log, they do not get paid for the appointment. I provided training on how to write a good session log, the narrative that accompanies the Likert-scale, and then also can view and print them for individual training or evaluation sessions. Using the features of Accutrack has saved me considerable

time and elevated my job from “pushing-paper” back to “working with students” as it was intended. Additionally, I now survey clients at regular intervals. I use the Survey Manager to create tutor evaluation surveys to determine how each session is going, and other times I use a CENTER survey to assess if we are meeting their needs as a whole. These data are invaluable in every aspect of our department.

Using Accutrack has greatly improved and impacted our tutor training. As a certified tutoring program, we are required to ascertain that we meet the certification requirements of CRLA and ATP. Accutrack allows me to run a single report to answer each of the certification objectives. I can additionally customize reports as I need to, thanks to the helpful support at Accutrack that took 15 minutes one day to explain this process to me. Since using Accutrack is so essential to tutor responsibilities, I created a tutorial with a SAMPLE STUDENT that allows tutors to learn how to enter data, navigate Accutrack, and complete the appointment setting/cancelling/rescheduling tasks required of them. I am in the process of creating a new tutorial for writing Session Logs and evaluating data related to their own tutoring. Creating the tutorial provides me a way to train tutors in a bodily-kinesthetic way that also teaches them to do their jobs via simulation. It has been a time-saver and more effective at communicating to tutors whether or not they are “tech-savvy.” I now leave the tutorials by the sign in station for reference in case a tutor forgets how to do something.

What I most enjoy about Accutrack is that since I am a Platinum Support member and keep the newest version of Accutrack, I can generate any report on almost any aspect of tutoring from the database! My experiences with the software have taught me to trust it—I know that my job is to verify the accuracy of the sign-in logs by making sure tutors and clients sign in and out—and if I do that then it is completely trustworthy. This program routinely runs payroll reports and timesheets; client data usage reports by week, pay-period, month, term, and year; session log and student evaluation reports; attendance logs for students on probation; and usage reports for export to Student Access. I additionally use it to track training hours for tutor training certification and payroll; I also use the data to write recommendations for alumni-tutors for jobs and graduate schools. These reports have been submitted to the local university, the federal government, and even been used in court to verify the University’s support of students.

I recently upgraded to AccutrackSQL 12.0 and purchased the SilverLight add-on. This feature permits tutors to cancel appointments and view their schedules remotely, away from the center. We have also fashioned a work-around so tutors can log in the student profile and set appointments remotely. I look forward to expanding and enhancing the use of this feature specifically in the future. I also intend to use Accutrack to monitor and evaluate workshops, small group meetings, use of the tutoring center and space, and other events that are relevant to the department. ***What I love about Accutrack is that I know that it will continue to change and upgrade to meet the technological needs of the program while maintaining efficiency and quality control for the data.*** Accutrack maintains and manages the evidence to verify that the TRiO Tutoring Center is a data-driven program so the staff can focus on the people, the students that are served. Without it, I would struggle to meet the objectives of my job. It is a blessing!

H. SUPPLEMENTAL INFO: TRiO Tutor Training

Training Requirements: Tutors are required to attend a minimum of 12 hours of training prior to employment, and is, therefore, offered each semester as needed. The Tutoring Center offers a fall tutor training intensive that provides the necessary hours although additional workshops are required throughout the semester based on evaluations and needs. Spring tutor training intensives are available, based on the center's needs for new tutors. If all spring tutors participated in the fall intensive, however, then spring training provides an additional 2-6 hours of training through staggered meetings, workshops, and online initiatives. All tutors attend group or individual maintenance meetings/conferences and workshops to provide communication regarding changes or student/tutor needs.

Meeting Frequency & Length: Fall or spring training intensives are typically offered on the 2nd weekend of the semester. They begin on Friday evening, 3-6p, and continue the next Saturday morning for sessions from 8:30a-3:30p, with a working lunch. Prior to attending an intensive, a tutor applicant must complete "pre-training" activities that include completing payroll paperwork for the University, Contract/Confidentiality paperwork for TRiO employment files, and an intensive Accutrack tutorial (1-1.5 hrs) that enters tutor data into the tracking system and orients users to simple and more advanced Accutrack processes (based on tutor skill level). To demonstrate mastery of the concepts, tutors must follow instructions to complete Accutrack tasks excepted of peer tutors. Accutrack sends the Tutor Coordinator emails and documentation as each module is completed in the tutorial. Since the Tutor Coordinator designed the Tutorial for this program, it is tailored to this center's objectives. It can be augmented or updated at any time, based upon the needs of the tutors, clients, or center.

Facilitators & Types of Presentations: Tutor training is currently facilitated by the Tutor Coordinator and the SSS Director, who each have doctorates in Education, classroom and online teaching experience, and hold certifications in low ropes, conflict resolution by *Mobile Team Challenge*, and *Master Tutor Trainer* credentials through the Association of the Tutoring Profession (ATP). Other guest presenters are invited as needed to facilitate certain skill or knowledge development. Experienced or alumni tutors also participate in training to gain certification levels as well as to augment the development of new tutors. Typically the entire tutoring staff participates in intensive trainings which vary in number from 20-40 participants at any given time. All TRiO faculty/staff members are introduced and participate in training initiatives on some levels as tutors may communicate and work with all TRiO counselors to best serve client's needs. Workshop trainings usually last 1-2.5 hours and are typically organized. These are offered intermittently, on demand, to accommodate tutor class and work schedules. Workshops are typically attended in small group format with the number of participants ranging from five to 20 tutors at any one time.

Training presentation types and topics are determined based on the level of experience of current/new tutors, client needs, and communicated concerns/needs of tutors and clients as perceived by the Coordinator and Director. All TRiO tutor training is interactive—videos and independent instruction are used sparingly and only in situations that warrant this form of instruction. Additionally, TRiO training is very cohesive—designed intentionally to address the appropriate curriculum in an experiential manner followed by interactive debriefing activities that require not only participation, but critical-thinking and analysis about learning, tutoring, and communicating. For example, each training agenda is designed purposefully so that each time block addresses a required element of tutor training, but also integrates all eight learning styles into each time block . . . The trainers actually model the desired behaviors for

the tutors during training so they each know what it “looks” like and “feels” like to be tutored appropriately. Because of the complex nature of each block in the training agenda, the Level of the training is dictated by the intensity and experience of the participating tutors. For example, with a group of all new tutors, the trainers will role play, model, facilitate small group discussions and competitions, and lead other learning experiences to accomplish and experience the training goals for the day. With a group that has experienced tutors, the trainers can facilitate deeper debriefing and explore more advanced critical thinking processes as the tutors are challenged to understand brain techniques and cognitive processes. In even more experienced training intensives, Level 3 tutors often facilitate small group activities and low-ropes sessions so they deepen their understanding of the learning culture and processes. Empowering the experienced tutors to take more responsibility in the training environment creates better outcomes for the client in the tutoring environment. As a result of our unique method of facilitating tutor training, there is also an overlap in the documentation and presentation of materials—a factor that may seem inconsistent at first glance, but is actually indicative of more mature, effective learning than traditional lecture or video type of training.

Presentation Topics: The initiatives facilitated by Harding University faculty and counselors address SSS policies and procedures; tutor basics, roles and responsibilities (definition, guidelines, do’s/don’ts); critical thinking, communication and referral skills, assessing and tutoring study skills, guidelines for tutoring sessions; the culture and psychology of learning (brain theory, memory strategies, etc.); and techniques for students with learning disabilities. Other hot topics as well as CRLA mandated topics are also integrated.

Training Resources: There are numerous resources available for tutor training and use. Videos, books, and study tools are available for extra training and assistance in tutoring. These are located in secured cabinets outside the tutoring rooms so the tutor has on-going access to them. Video tutor training programs include World Book’s “Tutorlink” (a set of 4 videos, a CD, and 3 handbooks), “The Tutor’s Guide” (a set of 4 videos), and “The Art of Tutoring.” Videos on related topics such as learning disabilities, supplemental instruction, and test anxiety are also available. Books include *The Master Tutor*, by Ross McDonald, *Becoming a Master Student*, by Dave Ellis, and Skip Downing’s *On Course*, student success manual. The CAPSOL Learning Styles Inventory is also required for tutor training and client use. Resource software includes the *Study Behavior Inventory* and *Ultimate Speed Reader*, as well as *Kurzweil* reading software for disabilities. There are study tools in the cabinet located inside the sign-in room. Each tutor has access to subject and skill-based resources (handouts, simulations, practice activities) as well as a training manual that was developed by the SSS Tutor Coordinator and senior-level tutors; the manual is continuously updated for process changes and student/tutor resources.