

STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES ASSESSMENT SURVEY FY 2009/2010

The Department of Student Legal Services (SLS) at Texas Tech University conducted a survey of SLS clients to assess their experience, learning and our impact on retention and academic performance. The survey was administered to 629 students who consulted with SLS during Fiscal Year 2009/2010; 396 students completed the survey, for a total response rate of 64%.

A portion of the survey was completed prior to consultation with an SLS attorney, with the remaining portion being completed either following consultation or at the conclusion of representation. The survey is attached to this summary as Appendix A and the full results are attached as Appendix B.

KEY FINDINGS:

- SLS significantly supports both student retention and academic performance.
- SLS promotes co-curricular student learning.
- SLS clients seek legal assistance in four primary areas.

STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES SUPPORTS STUDENT RETENTION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

The survey revealed that SLS has a significant impact upon academic performance and student retention. When asked if their legal issue was adversely affecting their ability to focus on their studies, 41% of students answered “yes,” and 85% of students stated that the assistance received from SLS enabled them to focus on their studies and remain enrolled at Texas Tech University.

Additional analysis revealed that the following legal services had the most significant positive impact on academic performance and student retention: Auto & Medical (95.5%)¹, Consumer (88.37%)¹, Criminal (87.96%)¹, Landlord/Tenant (85.94%)¹, and Family (82.93%)¹. Further analysis revealed that legal services having the most positive impact on academic performance and student retention were the services most utilized by international and graduate students.²

STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES SUPPORTS CO-CURRICULAR STUDENT LEARNING.

The key purpose of SLS is to ensure that each student understands the legal issues relevant to their situation. When possible, SLS strongly encourages students to implement self-help strategies to resolve their legal matters. As a result, client meeting(s) serve not only as a source of counseling, but also as an opportunity for significant co-curricular learning. Prior to their consultation, only 8% of students reported having “significant” or “expert” knowledge regarding their legal issue; whereas after consultation, almost 65% of students reported having “significant” or “expert” knowledge regarding their legal issue.

STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES CLIENTS SEEK LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN FOUR PRIMARY AREAS.

SLS currently offers advice and/or representation in the following areas: Family, Criminal, Consumer, Business, Estate Planning, Auto & Medical, and Landlord Tenant. Findings indicate that students seek assistance in four primary areas: Landlord/Tenant (32.58%)³, Criminal (27.78%)³, Consumer (11.36%)³, and Family (10.35%)³.

SUMMARY

Based upon student utilization, co-curricular learning, and the positive effect on student retention and academic performance, legal services should continue to be provided in the following areas: Landlord/Tenant, Criminal, Consumer, Family and Auto/Medical. Continued outreach to international and graduate students is critical due to the significant correlation between providing services to these student populations and positively impacting student retention and academic performance.

¹ Indicates percentage of students with this type of legal issue who reported SLS had a positive impact on their ability to focus on their studies and remain enrolled at Texas Tech University.

² Approximately 40% of the students seeking assistance in either Consumer or Auto/Medical issues were international students, and roughly 20% of students seeking assistance in consumer law were graduate students.

³ Indicates percentage of students seeking assistance in that legal area.