

UTOP 2019 ASSESSMENT REPORT



UNC CHARLOTTE

*Office of Academic
Diversity and Inclusion*





The University Transition Opportunities Program (UTOP) began in 1986 to facilitate the underrepresented student's transition from high school to college. By involving incoming UNC Charlotte freshmen in a rigorous six-week summer collegiate experience, UTOP builds upon the scholastic abilities of the students through college courses and contact with University academic support services.

UTOP class schedules are designed by the UTOP staff to assist each student in establishing a solid academic foundation as they begin their college career. Upon completion of the program, UTOP students will have earned seven credits towards graduation.

Knowing who to ask and what to ask is essential to university survival. On their way to becoming the best informed freshmen on the UNC Charlotte campus, UTOP students learn about the many resources available to them as university students.

Students live in a residence hall on campus during UTOP to gain a head start on adjusting to college life. They begin to develop good study skills and living habits. Interpersonal skills strengthen, and students form many lasting friendships which continue through and beyond their college careers.

UTOP mentors play a vital role throughout the UTOP experience. These carefully selected students share their experiences and help UTOP students become aware of university expectations for students. UTOP mentors live in the residence halls with UTOP students, attend classes with students to effectively assist students during study hall and aid in the development of skills needed to succeed in college and assist in the coordination of events.

Learning Outcomes

Through a mentoring relationship with an upper-class student, first-year students will...

- ◆ Make connections academically, socially, and co-curricularly
- ◆ Learn or improve important transferable skills such as study skills, test taking skills, time management, stress management, critical thinking, problem solving, financial literacy, goal setting, and professional skills (resume building, interviewing, etc.)
- ◆ Better understanding of academic expectations and college culture
- ◆ Become familiar with and utilize campus resources
- ◆ Establish relationships with faculty and staff and build a supportive peer network

ABOUT UTOP

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & UPDATES

In 2019, UTOP underwent the following changes in operation:

Raven Johnson Leadership Legacy Scholarship & Crowdfund

Raven Johnson (UTOP '11, UNCC '15) established the Leadership Legacy Scholarship with her father, Bruce Johnson, to provide financial support to students desiring to participate in UTOP. Raven pledged to sponsor the UTOP participant fee of 1-3 students each year.

In response to Raven Johnson's gift, the program launched a crowdfunding effort, the UTOP Participant Fee Scholarship, to provide financial assistance to more students to help pay for their participant fee. To date, the fund has raised \$3,365.

Program High in Attendance

For the second year in a row, UTOP 2019 broke the program's attendance record. After achieving a program high of 92 in 2018, the total number of UTOP participants in 2019 was 104.

New Courses

College Algebra, Introduction to Sociology and Liberal Studies: Western History and Culture were added to the UTOP curriculum. UTOP offered 9 general education courses (13 sections). Average class size = 16 students

Mentoring Training

UTOP mentor training class transitioned to a 3-credit hour course during the Spring semester, Communications Studies 3050: Topics in COMM Studies—UTOP Leadership



UTOP 2019 BY THE NUMBERS

104

Total Participants

Participation by Reported Race/Ethnicity

	Number	Percentage
African American	46	44.2%
American Indian	1	0.009%
Any 2 or More Races	11	10.6%
Asian	5	0.48%
Caucasian	22	21.1%
Hispanic	17	16.3%
Not Specified	2	0.01%

Participation by Gender Identity

	Number	Percentage
Female	64	61.5%
Male	40	38.4%

UTOP 2019 BY THE NUMBERS

First-Generation Participation

	Number	Percentage
First-Gen	23	22.1%
Non First-Gen	81	77.9%

Participation by College

	Number	Percentage
Arts & Architecture	3	0.03%
Business	12	11.5%
Computing & Informatics	10	0.10%
Education	2	0.01%
Engineering	11	10.6%
Health & Human Services	19	18.3%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	28	26.9%
University College	19	18.3%

UTOP 2019 COST

The cost for participation in 2019 for an in-state student was \$3,708.25. These costs break down as follows:

- ◆ Summer Tuition & Fees: \$2,403.25
- ◆ Housing: \$1,055.00
- ◆ Participant Fee: \$250

For out-of-state students enrolled in the program, the cost was \$6,746.25. These costs break down as follows:

- ◆ Summer Tuition & Fees: \$5,441.25
- ◆ Housing: \$1,055.00
- ◆ Participant Fee: \$250

Additional Fees Added to Tuition:

College of Architecture: \$41.75

College of Computing and Informatics: \$50

College of Engineering: \$50

College of Health & Human Services: \$41.75

To secure a spot in UTOP students must complete a UTOP application and submit payment of the UTOP participant fee. The UTOP cost does not cover summer meal plans; summer meal plans are optional for UTOP students and can be purchased at the student's expense.

UTOP 2019 Scholarships

Full Scholarship (in-state): 57.69%

Full Scholarship (out-of-state): 0.01%

Partial Scholarship (in-state): 37.50%

Partial Scholarship (out-of-state): 0.02%

No Award (No FAFSA on file): 0.02%

Pell amount for 0 EFC student: \$1,524

Percentage of participants who were awarded Pell: 45.19%

Percentage of participants who were full Pell: 25.00%

Percentage of participants who were partial Pell: 20.19%



OVERALL PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE



In September 2019, a participant post-survey was administered to assess the experiences of University Transition Opportunities Program (UTOP) summer 2019 participants. 51 of 104 participants responded to the survey; a response rate of 49%. Reported results are responses indicated as “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” by survey participants.

UTOP provides first-year, first-time students with the opportunity to begin their college experience at UNC Charlotte before the fall semester. Participants are enrolled in two general education courses, earning seven credit hours towards their degree, participate in academic skills building workshops to develop study skills, and co-curricular activities, receive leadership and professional development programming,, become aware of campus resources, participate in social activities, and interact and build relationships with faculty and staff, peer mentors, and fellow first-year students to build a solid network of support.

UTOP participants indicated a high level of agreement in their experience with the program. 100% of respondents indicated that they were glad they made the decision to attend the program and would recommend the program to other first-year students.

98% of respondents indicated that UTOP addressed their greatest concerns in starting college. Common responses included:

- ◆ Time management
- ◆ Balancing social life and school work/studying
- ◆ Navigating campus
- ◆ Being prepared for class
- ◆ Developing good study habits
- ◆ Meeting people and developing a solid peer network

“Overall, UTOP was a great experience for me. It provided a foundation for my collegiate career here at UNC Charlotte. UTOP allowed me to evolve not only as an individual but also as a leader here on campus. “

Kayla Hensley (UTOP '19)

100%

Indicated they would recommend UTOP to other first-year students

100%

Indicated that they were glad they made the decision to attend UTOP

98%

Indicated UTOP addressed their greatest concern regarding starting college

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE



UTOP provides first-year students with the opportunity successfully transition and adjust to college academics by enrolling participants in two general education course during the summer second half term. Students earn seven credit hours by enrolling in two 3-credit hour general education courses and a 1-credit hour elective course or one 4-credit hour general education course and one 3-credit hour general education course.. General education courses available to UTOP participants include:

- ◆ University Writing Program (UWRT) 1103 – Writing in Academic Contexts I & II
- ◆ University Writing Program (UWRT) 1104 - Writing in Academic Contexts and Studio
- ◆ Earth Science (ESCI) 1101 – Earth Science: Geography
- ◆ Chemistry (CHEM) 1200 – Fundamentals of Chemistry
- ◆ Liberal Studies (LBST) 1103 – Arts & Society: Music
- ◆ Liberal Studies (LBST) 2101 – Western History and Culture
- ◆ Liberal Studies (LBST) 2102 - Liberal Arts: Global Connections
- ◆ Mathematics (MATH) 1100 - College Algebra
- ◆ Sociology (SOCY) 1101 - Introduction to Sociology

UTOP students are enrolled in course sections with other UTOP students with the exception of CHEM 1200; class size average for UTOP 2019 was 16 students. Participation in UTOP allows students to ease the transition academically with a lighter course load than they would have in the Fall semester; instructors teach course content but also assist students in developing college survival skills. Small UTOP class sizes encourage interact between faculty and program participants.

“The University Transition Opportunities Program was an amazing experience both socially and academically. In the classroom setting, it was wonderful that as a group we were able to experience a college professor in a more personal way. We were able to develop relationships with these professors as life-long mentors, and it has allowed us to become more comfortable in our classrooms now.”

Destiny Coe (UTOP '19)

3.71

Average Summer GPA

52%

Percentage of Students
with a 4.0 Grade Point
Average at Program
Completion

MENTOR EXPERIENCE



To assist with the successful transition of UTOP participants from high school to college, the program employs upper classmen mentors to help participants to acclimate to UNC Charlotte academically and socially, and assist in participant awareness of campus resources.

Benefits of UTOP Mentorship:

- ◆ Academic support
- ◆ Improved self-confidence and self-esteem
- ◆ Increased motivation
- ◆ Broadening horizons and experiences
- ◆ Raised achievements and aspirations
- ◆ Networking
- ◆ Building relationships
- ◆ Increased awareness of campus resources and opportunities

Beginning with the Spring 2018 semester, UTOP mentor training transitioned into a 3-credit hour course (COMM 3050: UTOP Leadership). The UTOP Leadership seminar includes readings, presentations, and projects which helps students develop as peer mentors.



"UTOP sets out to help you transition into college smoothly by letting you dip your toe in the water before diving in head first. The resources it gave me helped to ease into my first semester because I already had people looking out for me. The UTOP has your best interest at heart and push you to be your best self and it does not end in the summer. Your mentors, graduate assistants, student coordinators and Mr. Simmons are all pushing for your success even before they meet you!"

Ashanti Lovett (UTOP '19)





UTOP 2019 STUDENT STAFF

Graduate Assistants

Nasir Grayman, Sierra Sledge

Student Coordinators

Alex Barrera, Amani Wicker

Mentors

Daequan Alston, Kevin Castillo, K' monie Chavies, Jada Dove, Emilee Elston, Jake Escarcha, Jada Flowers, Mikalah Hall, Alyssa Lopez, Diana Maruri, Ashton Miller, Jeshaiiah Moore, Jamilia Na-Aata, Jalyn Peoples, Neud's Saint-Cyr, Tahlieah Sampson, De'Shaun Taylor, Tyzhane Young