

TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY  
DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE

**Administration of the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI)  
"Your First College Year (YFCY) Survey"  
Academic Year 2009-2010**

**Summary of Key Findings**

- In relation to the comparison groups, first-year Tarleton students demonstrate:
  - *lower* levels of the constructs: *Habits of Mind; Academic Self-Concept; and Pluralistic Orientation*
  - *higher* levels of the constructs: *Academic Disengagement; and Negative Cross-Racial Interaction*
- From fall to spring, first-year Tarleton students report an *increase* in:
  - the number of hours spent studying (81%)
  - self-rating of artistic ability (29%)
  - how often they study with other students (25%)
- From fall to spring, first-year Tarleton students report a *decrease* in:
  - how often they attended a religious service (54%)
  - hours per week attending to household/childcare duties (50%)
  - how often they performed volunteer work (48%)
- First-year Tarleton students:
  - reported 98% decrease in overall grade point average from high school to the end of their first college year
  - indicated a 13% movement of political views toward the far right
- Of the 20 Tarleton specific questions, first-year students:
  - found the academics to be challenging (57.4%)
  - were confident they will succeed at Tarleton (82.5%)
  - were unfamiliar with the Center for Global & Multicultural Initiatives (75.4%)
  - agreed they could connect classroom learning with real life experiences (47.1%)
  - believe Tarleton to be a diverse environment (51.1%)

**Introduction**

The Freshman Survey (TFS) is administered to entering first-year students and collects demographical, nascent educational and career aspirations, and personal values data. The YFCY is administered at the end of the student's first-year and measures academic, social, and community development (Higher Education Research Institute, 2010). The two instruments share 86 questions allowing for longitudinal analysis of changes in students

perceptions/attitudes/beliefs during their first-year experience. Additionally, the YFCY and TFS allows for the inclusion of 20 questions developed by Tarleton administrators.

### **Methodology**

The Freshman Survey was administered to entering freshmen in August, 2009, during Texan 2 Texan week (n=1,015). The YFCY was administered to persisting first-year students during the spring 2010 semester (n=542). Five hundred and twenty three (523) students completed both instruments, providing the sample for the longitudinal analysis. All Tarleton TFS and YFCY responses were compared to two comparison groups identified by HERI and defined by the *Integrated Postsecondary Data System's* (IPEDS) parameters related to institutional type, control, and selectivity.

### **Data Analysis**

The YFCY contains 15 constructs for which mean values and effect sizes, or magnitude of differences, were computed for Tarleton and the two comparison groups. Statistically significant differences and effect sizes between the 86 paired TFS and YFCY questions were calculated as well. Finally, frequency distributions were calculated for the YFCY 20 Tarleton specific questions.

This report contains the following:

- A listing of the YFCY constructs and examples of questions that comprise each construct
- Graphical comparison of construct mean values for Tarleton and comparison groups
- Graphical comparison of effect size differences (magnitude of differences) on construct means for Tarleton and comparison groups
- A listing of the two institutional groups to which Tarleton's student responses are compared
- Results of the 86 paired 2009 Freshmen Survey and 2010 YFCY Survey questions by effect size differences (magnitude of differences) and statistical significance by alpha level
- Frequency summaries for the 20 Tarleton specific questions

## Your First College Year Constructs and Example Questions

### Habits of Mind

- *Look up scientific research articles*
- *Ask questions in class*
- *Support opinions with logic*

### Academic Adjustment

- *Develop effective study skills*
- *Adjust to demands of college*
- *Understand academic expectations*

### Academic Disengagement

- *Come late to class*
- *Turned in assignment late*
- *Assignments that did not reflect best work*

### Student-Faculty Interaction

- *Asked a professor for advice after class*
- *Communicated with professors*
- *Amount of contact with faculty*

### Satisfaction with Coursework

- *Relevance of coursework to career plans*
- *Relevance of coursework to daily life*
- *First-year programs*

### Overall Satisfaction

- *Overall college experience*
- *Still choose this college?*
- *Overall academic experience*

### Sense of Belonging

- *Feel a member of this college*
- *Sense of belonging to campus*
- *Would recommend this college*

### Academic Self-Concept

- *Academic ability*
- *Intellectual self-confidence*
- *Drive to achieve*

### Social Self-Concept

- *Leadership ability*
- *Public speaking ability*
- *Social self-confidence*

### Pluralistic Orientation

- *Work cooperatively with diverse people*
- *Tolerance of different beliefs*
- *Openness to having views challenged*

### Positive Cross-Racial Interaction

- *Dined with student from different race*
- *Studied with student from different race*
- *Socialized with student from different race*

### Negative Cross-Racial Interaction

- *Tense interactions with student from different race*
- *Guarded/cautious interactions with student from different race*
- *Felt insulted because of your race/ethnicity*

### Social Agency

- *Promote racial understanding*
- *Becoming a community leader*
- *Helping others who are in difficulty*

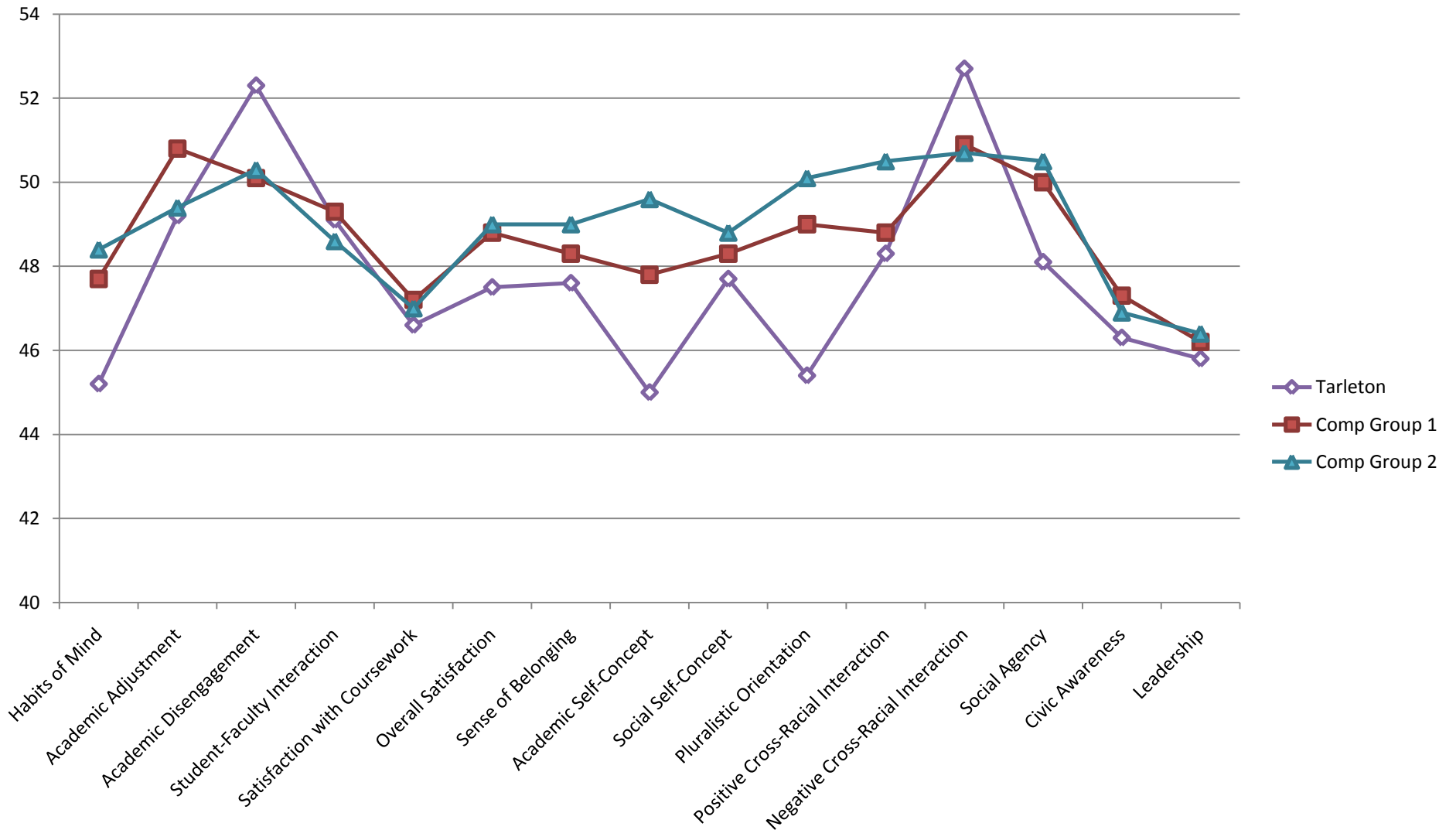
### Civic Awareness

- *Understanding of national issues*
- *Understanding of global issues*
- *Understanding of problems facing community*

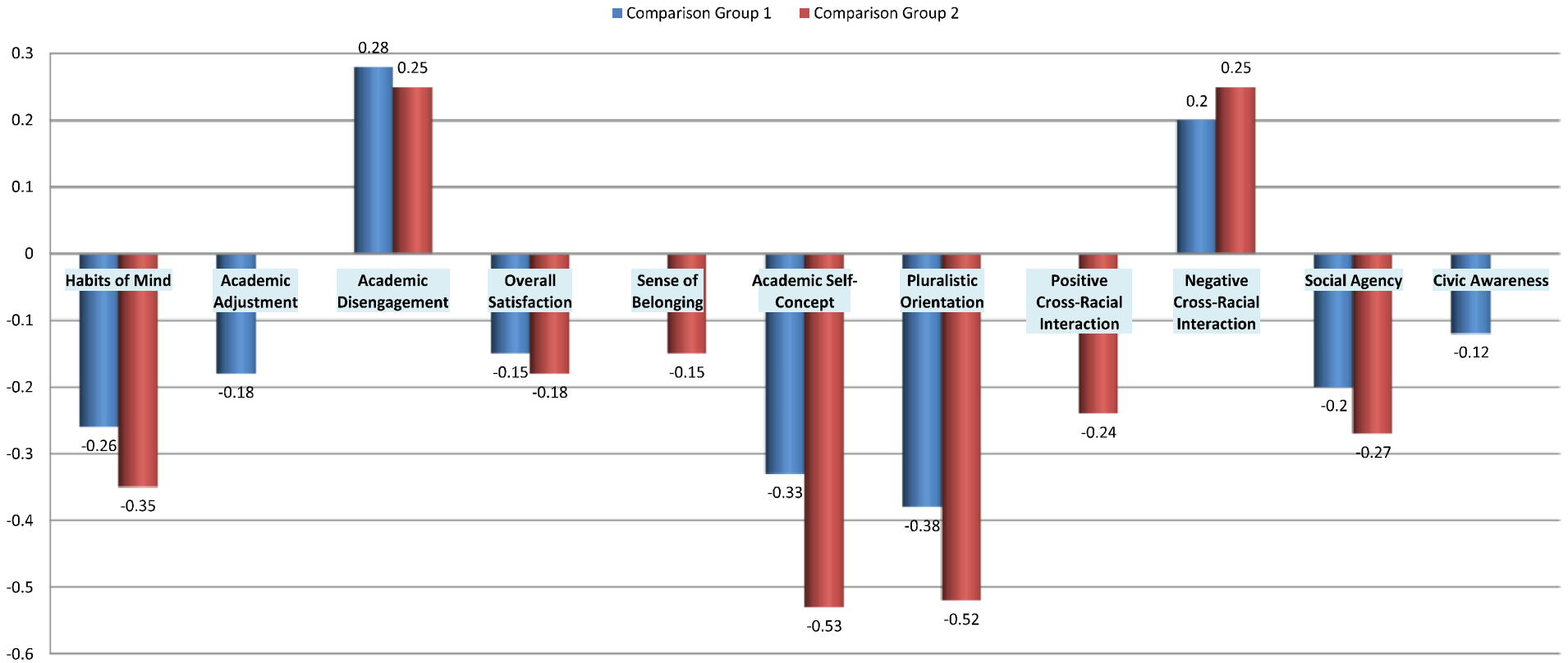
### Leadership

- *Leader in an organization*
- *Participated in leadership training*
- *Effectively led group for common purpose*

### Comparison of Construct Means: Tarleton, Comparison Group 1, and Comparison Group 2



## Construct Effect Size Differences between Tarleton and Comparison Groups



## Your First College Year Comparison Groups

### Comparison Group 1 (Public 4yr Colleges)

*Kennesaw State University  
Michigan Technological University  
Missouri Southern State University  
North Georgia College & State University  
Sonoma State University  
University of Arkansas-Fort Smith  
University of Central Missouri  
University of Hawaii-West Oahu  
University of North Carolina-Wilmington  
University of Wisconsin-River Falls  
Valdosta State University*

*(Selected by HERI based on institution type, control, and selectivity as reported in IPEDS)*

### Comparison Group 2 (Group 1 + Public/Private Universities)

*Colorado State University  
Miami University-Oxford  
University of Tennessee  
University of California-San Diego  
University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign  
University of Louisville  
Fordham University  
Howard University  
Southern Methodist University  
University of the Pacific  
Villanova University*

*(Selected by HERI based on institution type and control as reported in IPEDS)*

**Legend**

Statistically Significant Differences (probability that differences are due to chance): \*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

Effect Size Differences (magnitude of difference): small <.20; moderate .50; large .80 or >

***Self-reported greater levels of characteristic/attribute at end of first-year compared to beginning of first-year***

***Effect Size and Statistically Significant Differences***

<i>Hours per week</i>	Studying/homework	0.81	***
<i>Self-rating</i>	Artistic ability	0.29	***
<i>How often</i>	Studied with other students	0.25	***
<i>How often</i>	Smoked cigarettes	0.24	***
<i>How often</i>	Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do	0.24	***
<i>How often</i>	Come late to class	0.21	***
<i>Hours per week</i>	Online social networks	0.21	***
<i>How often</i>	Felt depressed	0.20	***
<i>How often</i>	Drank wine or liquor	0.16	***
<i>Self-rating</i>	Computer skills	0.14	**
<i>How often</i>	Drank beer	0.14	**
<i>Importance of</i>	Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts	0.13	**
<i>Importance of</i>	Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	0.13	**
<i>How often</i>	Tutored another student	0.11	*
<i>Importance of</i>	Keeping up to date with political affairs	0.11	*
<i>Importance of</i>	Adopting "green" practices to protect the environment	0.11	*
<i>How often</i>	Used internet for research or homework	0.10	*
<i>How often</i>	Look up scientific research articles and resources	0.10	*
<i>Importance of</i>	Developing a meaningful philosophy of life	0.09	*
<i>Importance of</i>	Creating artistic works (painting, sculpture, etc...)	0.08	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Mathematical ability	0.07	
<i>Hours per week</i>	Socializing with friends	0.07	
<i>Importance of</i>	Helping to promote racial understanding	0.07	
<i>How often</i>	Take notes during class	0.06	
<i>Importance of</i>	Becoming an authority in my field	0.06	
<i>Importance of</i>	Influencing the political structure	0.06	
<i>Importance of</i>	Influencing social values	0.05	
<i>Importance of</i>	Helping others who are in difficulty	0.05	
<i>Importance of</i>	Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures	0.05	
<i>How often</i>	Been bored in class	0.03	
<i>How often</i>	Discussed politics	0.03	
<i>Importance of</i>	Writing original works (poems, novels, etc...)	0.03	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Public speaking ability	0.02	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Creativity	0.01	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues	0.01	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Writing ability	0.00	

**Self-reported lower levels of characteristic/attribute at end of first-year compared to beginning of first-year**

**Effect Size and Statistically Significant Differences**

<i>How often</i>	Attended a religious service	-0.54	***
<i>Hours per week</i>	Household/childcare duties	-0.50	***
<i>How often</i>	Performed volunteer work	-0.48	***
<i>Hours per week</i>	Volunteer work	-0.47	***
<i>How often</i>	Voted in a student election	-0.44	***
<i>Hours per week</i>	Student clubs and groups	-0.42	***
<i>How often</i>	Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group	-0.38	***
<i>How often</i>	Ask questions in class	-0.37	***
<i>How often</i>	Seek solutions to problems and explain them to others	-0.36	***
<i>Hours per week</i>	Talking with professors outside of class	-0.35	***
<i>Hours per week</i>	Exercising or sports	-0.35	***
<i>How often</i>	Performed community service as part of class	-0.32	***
<i>How often</i>	Seek alternative solutions to a problem	-0.30	***
<i>How often</i>	Been a guest in a professor's home	-0.28	***
<i>How often</i>	Support your opinions with a logical argument	-0.28	***
<i>How often</i>	Asked a professor for advice after class	-0.27	***
<i>How often</i>	Seek feedback on your academic work	-0.26	***
<i>How often</i>	Take a risk because you felt you had more to gain	-0.25	***
<i>Self-rating</i>	Tolerance of others with different beliefs	-0.17	***
<i>Hours per week</i>	Watching TV	-0.16	***
<i>Self-rating</i>	Physical health	-0.14	**
<i>How often</i>	Evaluate the quality or reliability of information you received	-0.14	***
<i>Self-rating</i>	Drive to achieve	-0.13	**
<i>Self-rating</i>	Academic ability	-0.12	**
<i>Self-rating</i>	Self-understanding	-0.12	**
<i>How often</i>	Revise your papers to improve your writing	-0.12	**
<i>Importance of</i>	Being very well off financially	-0.12	*
<i>Self-rating</i>	Emotional health	-0.11	**
<i>How often</i>	Discussed religion	-0.11	**
<i>Hours per week</i>	Partying	-0.10	*
<i>How often</i>	Explore topics on your own, even though it was not required for a class	-0.10	*
<i>Self-rating</i>	Cooperativeness	-0.09	*
<i>Self-rating</i>	Self-confidence (intellectual)	-0.09	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Openness to having my own views challenged	-0.09	*
<i>Self-rating</i>	Ability to work cooperatively with diverse people	-0.09	*
<i>How often</i>	Accept mistakes as part of the learning process	-0.09	*
<i>Importance of</i>	Raising a family	-0.08	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Spirituality	-0.07	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Leadership ability	-0.06	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Self-confidence (social)	-0.06	
<i>Self-rating</i>	Ability to see the world from someone else's perspective	-0.06	



<i>Self-rating</i>	Understanding of others	-0.05	
<i>Importance of</i>	Making a theoretical contribution to science	-0.04	
<i>Importance of</i>	Participating in a community action program	-0.03	
<i>Importance of</i>	Becoming successful in a business of my own	-0.02	
<i>Importance of</i>	Becoming a community leader	-0.02	
<i>Importance of</i>	Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field	-0.01	

What is your overall grade average? (1=D...8=A+)	<i>decrease in overall grade average</i>	-0.98	***
Do you have any concern about your ability to pay for college? (3=Major...1=None)	<i>increase in concerns</i>	0.16	***
How would you characterize your political views? (1=Far right...5=Far left)	<i>moving toward far right</i>	-0.13	**

## **Additional YFCY Questions Specific to Tarleton**

### **Academics**

- 57.4% indicated their first year at Tarleton was challenging to very challenging
- 69.9% indicated they had to work harder to much hard for same academic achievement as in high school
- 79.5% agreed to strongly agreed that Tarleton offers the opportunity of an education that will benefit them for life
- 82.5% agreed to strongly agreed that they could succeed at Tarleton

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

- 51.1% believed Tarleton to be diverse to very diverse
- 24.6% were somewhat familiar to very familiar with the *Center for Global and Multicultural Initiatives*
- 67.8% agreed to strongly agreed that Tarleton makes students feel like part of the family

### **“Keeping it Real”**

- 47.1% agreed to strongly agreed that they could connect classroom learning to real life experiences
- 53.2% agreed to strongly agreed that Tarleton assisted them in connecting the classroom to real world situations

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

- 72.5% agreed to strongly agreed that expectations of student behavior are clear
- 74.2% agreed to strongly agreed that Tarleton protects student’s rights

### **Student Services & Programs**

- 43.4% agreed to strongly agreed that Duck Camp assisted in their transition to college (*note: not all Duck Camp Attendees completed the YFCY and vice versa*)
- 60.8% agreed to strongly agreed that Freshman Orientation helped to understand first-year expectations
- 63.6% were satisfied to very satisfied with resident hall assignment
- 81.4% agreed to strongly agreed that there are adequate opportunities to join a student organization
- 68.2% agreed to strongly agreed that Career Services provides adequate information about student employment opportunities

### **Wellness**

- 47.7% agreed to strongly agreed that they could receive treatment at the Health Center within 30 minutes
- 55.0% agreed to strongly agreed that the Health Center staff is knowledgeable and compassionate
- 47.5% agreed to strongly agreed that the Counseling Center staff is knowledgeable and attentive
- 79.8% agreed to strongly agreed that Tarleton provides programs to maintain a healthy lifestyle