



TEXANS^{SMART}

TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

Designed to improve financial wellness and well-being among Tarleton FTIC students during their first-year experience through a series of interventions that increase their knowledge and skills to manage financial resources effectively.

2021-2026

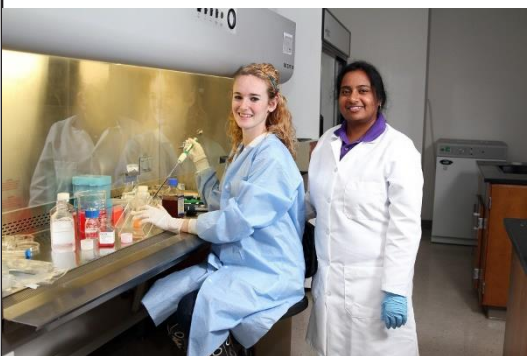
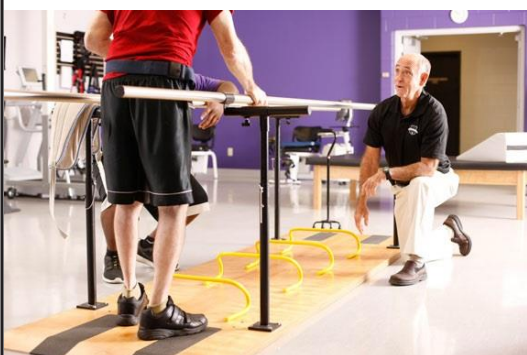


Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
Institutional Development of the QEP	7
Phase 1: Review of Data.....	7
QEP Planning Committee.....	7
Analysis of Existing Data Sources for Potential QEP Topics.....	9
Use of Institutional Surveys for Potential QEP Topics	10
Phase 2: Develop, Organize, and Assess the QEP	13
QEP Steering Committee.....	13
Informational and Feedback Sessions	14
Planning Meetings.....	16
Focus of the QEP.....	18
Topic and Scope.....	18
Operational Definitions	18
QEP Goals and Outcomes	18
Alignment with University Efforts.....	19
Alignment with State Efforts	20
Alignment with National Efforts.....	20
Review of Relevant Literature	22
Financial Wellness versus Financial Well-Being	22
Importance of Financial Wellness and Financial Well-Being	22
Current State of Financial Wellness	22
Effects of Low Levels of Financial Wellness among College Students.....	23
Promoting Financial Wellness and Enhancing Financial Well-Being among College Students	23
Financial Centers.....	23
Financial Coaching, Consulting, and Mentoring	25
Financial Education Activities	25
Timeline, Actions, and Resources Committed	26
Goal 1: Establish the Texan Smart Financial Center	26
Goal 2: Promote Development of Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Abilities for Financial Wellness and Well-Being	29
Budget	32
Personnel	32
Full-Time Employee	32
Student Workers.....	32
Programming	32
Materials.....	32
Professional Memberships and Travel	33
Office Supplies	33
Marketing Expenses	33
Assessment Plan	35
Trellis' Student Financial Wellness Survey.....	36
Texan Smart Assessment.....	36
WhichWay® Post-Assessments.....	39
Texan Smart Financial Center Evaluations and Questionnaires	39
EAB Navigate Reports	41
Baseline Data and Benchmarks of Key Indicators/Measures	41
Continuous Improvement	42
References	44
Appendix: Expanded Texan Smart QEP Budget Information.....	47



List of Tables

Table 1: QEP Planning Committee Members.....	7
Table 2: Department Head Meetings.....	9
Table 3: Student Demographic Information by FTIC Cohort.....	10
Table 4: Spring 2019 Pilot Survey Results for Rank Order Item.....	11
Table 5: Fall 2019 Final Survey Results for Rank Order Item	12
Table 6: QEP Steering Committee Members.....	13
Table 7: Informational and Feedback Sessions.....	15
Table 8: Operational Definitions.....	18
Table 9: Financial Well-Being Initiatives at Higher Education Institutions.....	20
Table 10: Student Financial Wellness Survey Findings among Tarleton Students.....	22
Table 11: Examples of University-Based Financial Centers	24
Table 12. Overview of Actions for Goal 1	26
Table 13. Overview of WhichWay® Modules	30
Table 14. Texan Smart QEP Assessment Calendar	35
Table 15. Texan Smart Assessment Items	37
Table 16. Items from Evaluations and Questionnaires	39
Table 17. Baseline Data & Benchmarks of Key Indicators/Measures	41
Table 18. Texan Smart QEP Implementation Committee Members.....	43





List of Figures

Figure 1: Similarities in Qualitative Findings	12
Figure 2: Example Slides from Phase 2 PowerPoint Presentation.....	15
Figure 3: Example Items from QEP Topic – Final Feedback Survey.....	17
Figure 4: Texan Smart QEP Goals and Outcomes.....	19
Figure 5: Mission/Vision/Core Values for Tarleton’s Strategic Plan	19
Figure 6: Texan Smart QEP Budget	34



Executive Summary

The connection between financial issues and student success in college is widely acknowledged and may follow students into their post-college years. In developing Tarleton's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), the University prioritized this issue and designed the Texan Smart QEP to improve financial wellness and well-being among Tarleton first-time-in-college (FTIC) students during their first-year experience through a series of interventions that increase their knowledge and skills to manage financial resources effectively. Pursuing a higher education involves a multitude of financial complexities and improving financial wellness and well-being among FTIC students will help contribute to their success while pursuing educational attainment.

The Texan Smart QEP emerged from a strategic planning process involving careful data analysis, meaningful dialogue, and collective decision-making. This two-year, two-phase process was inclusive and involved Tarleton stakeholders — administrators, faculty and staff members, current students, and alumni — who were affiliated with all Tarleton locations. The Texan Smart QEP is aligned with Tarleton's strategic plan, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) higher education strategic plan, and current national efforts focused upon addressing financial wellness and well-being among college students. Over five years (i.e., 2021-2016), Tarleton will commit resources totaling \$930,500 to support the following goals and student learning outcomes for the Texan Smart QEP:

Texan Smart QEP Goals

1. Establish the Texan Smart Financial Center to lead and reinforce efforts that promote financial wellness and well-being among FTIC students.
2. Promote development of cognitive and non-cognitive abilities for financial wellness and well-being among FTIC students.

Texan Smart QEP Student Learning Outcomes

1. FTIC students will demonstrate proficiency with topics related to personal finance.
2. FTIC students will demonstrate proficiency with topics related to financial aid in college.
3. FTIC students will express self-confidence and motivation in their financial abilities.

To meet the desired outcomes associated with the Texan Smart QEP, Tarleton will implement multiple actions in a well-timed and strategic manner. Actions associated with the Texan Smart QEP will involve stakeholders throughout the university community and beyond for maximum impact. The Texan Smart QEP will also formalize a comprehensive assessment plan with which to continuously evaluate progress of the Texan Smart QEP in comparison to benchmarks of key indicators/measures to evaluate success over time.

Assessment data will be gathered and reviewed by the Texan Smart QEP Implementation Committee semi-annually and shared with members of the President's Cabinet annually to determine any needed modifications. Additionally, progress of the Texan Smart QEP will be included in Tarleton's ongoing institutional practices towards SACSCOC continuous compliance, and the university community will be kept informed of the Texan Smart QEP progress through Tarleton's Texan Smart QEP website, periodic email communications, and annual checkpoints.

The Texan Smart QEP is an auspicious and relevant topic. Prior to the characterization of COVID-19 as a global pandemic in March 2020, institutional efforts were underway to address financial wellness and well-being among Tarleton students. However, the COVID-19 outbreak has induced increased financial hardships. With these circumstances in mind, the Texan Smart QEP is timely and has been designed to have a long-lasting, positive impact on financial wellness and well-being among FTIC students at Tarleton.

Institutional Development of the QEP

The process of selecting and developing Tarleton's QEP, Texan Smart, was based on multiple activities that occurred in two distinct phases. Phase 1 spanned one year and involved a thorough review of data sources from which to select the QEP topic. Phase 2 spanned one year and encompassed the development, organization, and assessment of Tarleton's QEP. It is important to note that during Phase 1, two major leadership changes occurred at Tarleton. First, Dr. Mark Morvant, Associate Vice President for Academic Administration and SACSCOC Liaison, left for a position at a different university in June 2019. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Jordan Barkley, Dean of the College of Education, was appointed to the position. Second, Dr. F. Dominic Dottavio stepped down as president at the end of August 2019 to serve as a tenured professor in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. During this same month, Dr. James Hurley was named the 16th president of Tarleton by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. Despite these changes, QEP development activities were uninterrupted and prioritized a structured approach that complemented Tarleton's efforts for continuous improvement. Below is a summary of activities that occurred during both phases.

Phase 1: Review of Data

QEP Planning Committee

In Spring 2018, Tarleton officially began a first set of planning processes under the direction of Dr. Mark Morvant. Dr. Morvant selected two co-chairs to lead this phase of QEP development, Dr. Keith Emmert and Dr. Jolena Waddell. Shortly thereafter, Drs. Morvant, Emmert, and Waddell formed the QEP Planning Committee, which included comprehensive representation of faculty and staff members from Divisions across the institution (see Table 1). The goal of the QEP Planning Committee was to review a wide range of data to explore possible QEP topics.

Table 1: QEP Planning Committee Members

Name	Title	Unit
Dr. Keith Emmert <i>Co-Chair</i>	Professor of Mathematics	College of Science and Technology
Dr. Jolena Waddell <i>Co-Chair</i>	Associate Dean & Associate Professor of Animal Science	College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Dr. Credence Baker	Associate Graduate Dean & Associate Professor of Educational Technology	College of Graduate Studies & College of Education
Mr. Mike Barnette	Director	New Student Programs
Dr. Jeremiah Bass	Associate Professor of Mathematics	College of Science and Technology
Dr. Melissa Becker	Professor of Curriculum and Instruction	College of Education
Mr. Gabriel Bermea	Assistant Vice President	Strategic Student Success Initiatives
Dr. Denae Dorris	Director	Center for Transformative Learning
Dr. Jennifer Edwards	Assistant Vice President & Professor of Communication Studies	Student Success and Multicultural Initiatives & College of Liberal and Fine Arts

Name	Title	Unit
Dr. Eileen Faulkenberry	Professor of Mathematics	College of Science and Technology
Dr. Rusty Freed	Associate Vice President & Professor of Management	Outreach and Off-Campus Programs & College of Business Administration
Dr. Jim Gentry	Associate Director & Professor of Literacy	Center for Instructional Innovation & College of Education
Dr. Lora Helvie-Mason	Assistant Dean & Professor of Communication Studies	College of Liberal and Fine Arts
Mr. Chris Ireland	Associate Professor of Art and Digital Media	College of Liberal and Fine Arts
Dr. Nathalie Jones	Associate Professor of Social Work	College of Health Science and Human Services
Dr. ShaRhonda Maclin	Assistant Vice President	Student Affairs
Ms. Paula McKeehan	Assistant Professor of Nutrition	College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Dr. Denise Martinez	Associate Dean & Professor of Engineering	College of Science and Technology
Dr. Julie Merriman	Associate Dean & Associate Professor of Counseling	College of Health Science and Human Services
Dr. Kayla Peak	Associate Dean & Professor of Kinesiology	College of Education
Dr. Beth Riggs	Associate Professor of Mathematics	College of Science and Technology
Dr. Chris Shao	Dean & Professor of Marketing	College of Business Administration
Dr. Joseph Schuessler	Associate Dean & Associate Professor of Computer Information Systems	College of Business Administration
Dr. Jason Sharp	Professor of Computer Information Systems	College of Business Administration
Dr. Julie Thomas	Department Head Pre-Nursing Licensure & Assistant Professor of Nursing	College of Health Sciences and Human Services
Ex-Officio		
Ms. Ashley Ayers <i>Staff Council Representative, 2018-2019</i>	Operations Coordinator	Information Technology Services
Dr. Jordan Barkley <i>SACSCOC Liaison, 2019 - present</i>	Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Administration & Professor of Literacy	Academic Affairs & College of Education
Dr. Mark Morvant <i>SACSCOC Liaison, 2018-2019</i>	Associate Vice President for Academic Administration & Professor of Chemistry	Academic Affairs & College of Science and Technology
Mr. Clayton Gillespie <i>Staff Council Representative, 2019-2020</i>	Research Compliance Coordinator	Sponsored Projects-Research Compliance

Name	Title	Unit
Ex-Officio		
Dr. Jarrod Schenewark <i>Faculty Senate President, 2019-2020</i>	Associate Professor of Sport Science	College of Education
Dr. Laurie Sharp <i>First- and Second- Year Initiatives, 2019 - present</i>	Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Studies for First- and Second-Year Experiences & Associate Professor of Literacy and Educational Leadership	Academic Affairs & College of Education
Dr. Pam Winn <i>Faculty Senate President, 2018-2019</i>	Professor of Educational Leadership	College of Education

Note. The table denotes administrative titles and academic titles and ranks upon appointment to serve on the QEP Planning Committee.

While serving as QEP Planning Committee Co-Chairs, Drs. Emmert and Waddell attended the SACSCOC summer institutes and annual conferences held in 2018 and 2019. They held monthly meetings with members of the QEP Planning Committee and met with Dr. Morvant on a regular basis to evaluate their progress. Drs. Emmert and Waddell also served on Tarleton's University SACSCOC Reaccreditation Steering Committee to give updates on behalf of the QEP Planning Committee. During the Fall 2018 semester, Drs. Morvant, Emmert, and Waddell held separate meetings with department heads for each academic college to explain the QEP process and solicit ideas for possible topics (see Table 2).

Table 2: Department Head Meetings

Date	Academic College
October 24, 2018	College of Education
October 25, 2018	College of Business Administration
October 31, 2018	College of Health Sciences and Human Services
November 6, 2018	College of Science and Technology
November 7, 2018	College of Liberal and Fine Arts College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

Analysis of Existing Data Sources for Potential QEP Topics

During the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters, Drs. Emmert and Waddell gathered and shared multiple points of institutional, state, and national data with members of the QEP Planning Committee. These existing data sources included:

- institutional retention rates among the previous six first-time-in-college (FTIC) cohorts at Tarleton (see Table 3 for student demographic information);
- institutional data for first-generation status among FTIC students;
- institutional and state data from the Texas Public University Report Card produced by ScholarShot, a 501(c)(3) Texas Corporation;
- institutional and national results from the Diverse Learning Environments Survey produced by the Higher Education Research Institute; and
- national completion, retention, and persistence data published by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

While analyzing existing data sources, members of the QEP Planning Committee noted several downward trends in retention and completion rates among full-time, degree-seeking FTIC students at Tarleton, particularly among: (a) underrepresented students, (b) first-generation students, and (c) students who were

Pell eligible. Among these student groups, members of the QEP Planning Committee also noted that first-generation students typically had higher levels of unmet financial need than their counterparts.

Table 3: Student Demographic Information by FTIC Cohort

	2013 FTIC Cohort N = 1827	2014 FTIC Cohort N = 2073	2015 FTIC Cohort N = 1955	2016 FTIC Cohort N = 2169	2017 FTIC Cohort N = 1899	2018 FTIC Cohort N = 2161
Gender						
Female	60.3%	62.7%	63.4%	63.9%	62.8%	63.0%
Male	39.7%	37.3%	36.6%	36.2%	37.2%	37.0%
Ethnicity						
Asian	0.6%	0.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%
Black	7.6%	10.9%	9.4%	8.4%	6.5%	5.7%
Hispanic	16.5%	17.1%	19.4%	20.7%	21.6%	20.6%
Multiracial	2.7%	4.5%	3.4%	3.8%	3.4%	3.8%
White	71.8%	65.8%	65.3%	65.5%	66.7%	67.9%
Other	0.8%	1.2%	1.7%	1.0%	1.0%	1.3%
First-Generation Status						
First Generation	42.9%	41.9%	54.2%	52.7%	52.2%	50.1%
Not First Generation	34.5%	34.1%	44.2%	46.1%	42.6%	47.8%
Not Reported	22.6%	24.0%	1.6%	1.2%	5.2%	2.1%
Pell Eligible						
No	61.7%	58.9%	57.0%	58.7%	58.1%	59.7%
Yes	38.3%	41.1%	43.0%	41.3%	41.9%	40.3%

Use of Institutional Surveys for Potential QEP Topics

Pilot Survey. In Spring 2019, Drs. Morvant, Emmert, and Waddell identified the following broad focus areas for potential QEP topics: (a) first- and second-year retention and completion rates among FTIC Cohorts, (b) first- and second-year retention and completion rates among underrepresented student groups, and (c) globalization and cultural diversity. From these, a Qualtrics survey instrument was developed that consisted of separate sections containing:

- snapshots of aggregated data on first- and second-year retention and six-year completion rates for the six previous FTIC cohorts;
- snapshots of disaggregated data for first- and second-year retention and six-year completion rates by first-generation status, gender, and race/ethnicity;
- program-level academic assessment information for Tarleton's Globalization and Cultural Diversity learning outcome; and
- selected findings from the Diverse Learning Environments Survey administered in Spring 2018.

Each section of the survey instrument required respondents to indicate their viewpoint for level of importance for each broad focus area using a five-point Likert scale (i.e., Extremely Important, Very Important, Moderately Important, Slightly Important, Not at All Important). The survey instrument also included a final survey item that required respondents to rank all broad focus areas in order of importance, with "1" being the highest priority.

The Qualtrics survey was piloted among faculty and staff members in April 2019. An invitation email with an embedded survey link was sent to 1,788 full-time faculty and staff members, followed by a couple of reminder emails. When the survey period closed, a total of 237 responses were received. Of these, 186 respondents completed the final survey item, for which first-year retention received the highest priority ranking (see Table 4). These data were presented to members of the QEP Planning Committee

and the President's Cabinet in June 2019. These presentations provided valuable feedback from which to revise the Qualtrics survey instrument into its final form. Additionally, these presentations helped ensure that Tarleton's newly appointed Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Administration and SACSCOC Liaison, Dr. Jordan Barkley, was fully informed about the QEP development process.

Table 4: Spring 2019 Pilot Survey Results for Rank Order Item

Broad Focus Areas	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-Year Retention Rates for FTIC Cohorts	2.77	1.91
Retention and Completion Rates for First-Generation Students	3.50	1.54
Second-Year Retention Rates for FTIC Cohorts	3.68	1.95
Six-Year Completion Rates for FTIC Cohorts	3.73	2.03
Retention and Completion Rates for Underrepresented Race/Ethnicity Groups	4.44	1.74
Retention and Completion Rates for Females and Males	4.91	1.66
Globalization and Cultural Diversity Learning Outcome	4.98	2.12

In June 2019, Dr. Laurie Sharp was appointed as the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Studies for First- and Second-Year Experience at Tarleton. In her role, Dr. Sharp was responsible for the implementation of programs designed to increase academic engagement and success for students during their first two years of college. Since Dr. Sharp's administrative position aligned seamlessly with the broad focus areas for potential QEP topics, Dr. Barkley invited her to join the QEP Planning Committee and attend the QEP Co-Chair meetings.

Final Survey. Based on feedback received from the pilot survey, Drs. Barkley, Emmert, Waddell, and Sharp revised the survey instrument in the Fall 2019 semester. These revisions involved adding qualitative items and changing the broad focus areas for potential QEP topics to: (a) first- and second-year retention rates among FTIC cohorts; (b) overall undergraduate student retention rates; (c) math competency among incoming students; (d) identifying and removing barriers to student progression; and (e) closing academic discrepancies between groups of students. To ascertain feedback from a broader range of stakeholders, the target population was set to include all full- and part-time faculty and staff members, current students, and alumni from the past five academic years. As such, slight modifications to the final survey instrument were made to create different versions that fit the context for each group (e.g., faculty and staff member surveys included more data, alumni surveys included qualitative questions about the Tarleton experience). Similar to the pilot survey instrument, each version of the final survey instrument included a concluding survey item that required respondents to rank the broad focus areas in order of importance, with "1" being the highest priority.

In October 2019, an invitation email with an embedded survey link was sent to 2,692 full- and part-time faculty and staff members, 13,489 current students, and 15,525 alumni from the past five academic years, followed by a couple of reminder emails. When the survey period closed, a total of 1,122 responses were received. Of these, 336 surveys were from faculty and staff members, 292 surveys were from current students, and 494 surveys were from alumni.

Quantitative survey data were analyzed separately by version and together as a single group. This data analysis approach revealed congruence with the final survey item among all stakeholders (see Table 5). Specifically, these findings showed that survey respondents ranked the broad topics areas related to student retention rates and identifying and removing barriers to student progression as their top priorities. Drs. Barkley, Emmert, Waddell, and Sharp also analyzed qualitative survey data to find recurring patterns and themes. Qualitative analyses were conducted with survey data separately and then findings for each group were compared. Upon comparisons, there were similarities concerning different challenges reported by each group (see Figure 1).

Table 5: Fall 2019 Final Survey Results for Rank Order Item

Broad Focus Areas	M	SD
Faculty & Staff Members		
Overall Undergraduate Student Retention Rates	2.78	1.30
First- and Second-Year Student Retention Rates	2.79	1.36
Identifying and Removing Barriers to Student Progression	2.81	1.52
Closing Academic Discrepancies between Groups of Students	3.50	1.71
Six-Year Completion Rates	4.46	1.41
Math Competency for Incoming Students	4.65	1.75
Current Students		
Identifying and Removing Barriers to Student Progression	2.69	1.62
Overall Undergraduate Student Retention Rates	2.93	1.40
First- and Second-Year Student Retention Rates	3.14	1.58
Closing Academic Discrepancies between Groups of Students	3.42	1.63
Six-Year Completion Rates	4.39	1.42
Math Competency for Incoming Students	4.43	1.74
Alumni		
Identifying and Removing Barriers to Student Progression	2.71	1.56
First- and Second-Year Student Retention Rates	2.84	1.45
Overall Undergraduate Student Retention Rates	2.95	1.41
Closing Academic Discrepancies between Groups of Students	3.57	1.68
Math Competency for Incoming Students	4.34	1.70
Six-Year Completion Rates	4.59	1.41

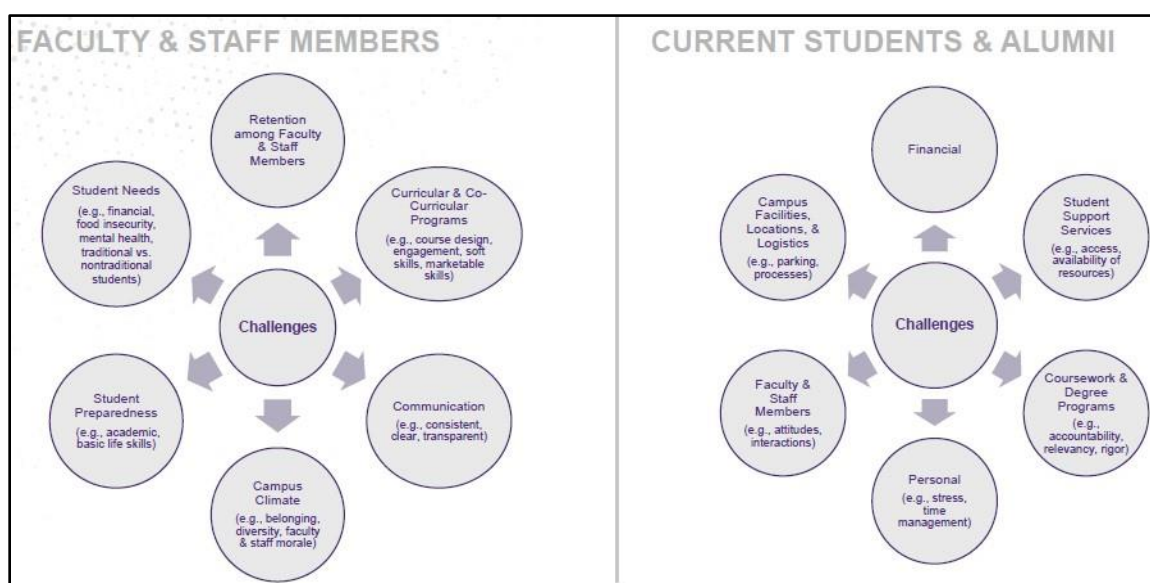


Figure 1: Similarities in Qualitative Findings

Findings from the final survey were presented to members of the QEP Planning Committee and President's Cabinet in November 2019. Both groups agreed that Phase 1 activities uncovered key issues that needed to be further refined into a QEP topic with a narrow, manageable scope.

Phase 2: Develop, Organize, and Assess the QEP***QEP Steering Committee***

In February 2020, Tarleton began a second set of planning processes and formed the QEP Steering Committee (see Table 6). Dr. Barkley authorized and charged the QEP Steering Committee to finalize selection of Tarleton's QEP topic and lead the development of the QEP proposal. Dr. Sharp was selected to serve as Chair and Dr. Waddell continued to serve as Co-Chair. Drs. Barkley and Sharp worked with executive and academic leaders across campuses to select a representative group of faculty and staff members who would serve as steering committee members.

Table 6: QEP Steering Committee Members

Name	Title	Unit
Dr. Laurie Sharp <i>Chair</i>	Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Studies for First- and Second-Year Experiences & Associate Professor of Literacy and Educational Leadership	Academic Affairs & College of Education
Dr. Jolena Waddell <i>Co-Chair</i>	Associate Dean & Associate Professor of Animal Science	College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Dr. Melissa Becker	Professor of Curriculum and Instruction	College of Education
Mr. Darrell Brown	Executive Director	Student Affairs Outreach, Fraternity & Sorority Life
Dr. Teresa Davidian	Executive Director & Professor of Music	Office of Academic Advising & College of Liberal and Fine Arts
Dr. Denae Dorris	Director	Center for Transformative Learning
Dr. Jennifer Edwards	Professor of Communication Studies	College of Liberal and Fine Arts
Dr. Mweni Ekpo	Graduate Recruitment Manager	College of Graduate Studies
Ms. Melissa Eubank	Director & Instructor of Mathematics	Tutoring and Learning Center & College of Science and Technology
Dr. Eileen Faulkenberry	Professor of Mathematics	College of Science and Technology
Dr. Jim Gentry	Associate Director & Professor of Literacy	Center for Instructional Innovation & College of Education
Dr. Laura Gordey	Assistant Professor of Business Law	College of Business Administration
Dr. Chris Haynes	Assistant Professor of Agricultural and Consumer Sciences	College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Ms. Alana Hefner	Director	Career Services
Dr. Nathalie Jones	Associate Professor of Social Work	College of Health Science and Human Services

Name	Title	Unit
Dr. Kim McCuistion	Vice President & Professor of Animal Science	External Operations – Fort Worth & College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Dr. Diana Ortega-Feerick	Assistant Vice President	Student Affairs
Dr. Joseph Schuessler	Associate Dean & Associate Professor of Computer Information Systems	College of Business Administration
Dr. Jason Sharp	Professor of Computer Information Systems	College of Business Administration
Dr. Lisa Taylor-Cook	Assistant Professor of Child and Family Studies	College of Education
Dr. Julie Thomas	Department Head & Assistant Professor of Nursing	College of Health Sciences and Human Services
Dr. Elizabeth A. Wallace	Director for Student Affairs Retention and Assessment	Student Affairs
Colonel (Ret.) Kenny Weldon	Commandant & Senior Director of Strategic Studies	College of Liberal and Fine Arts
Ms. Kathy Wright	Executive Director	Office of Financial Aid
Ex-Officio		
Dr. Jordan Barkley <i>SACSCOC Liaison, 2019-2020</i>	Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Administration & Professor of Literacy	Academic Affairs & College of Education
Mr. Clayton Gillespie <i>Staff Council Representative, 2019-2020</i>	Research Compliance Coordinator	Sponsored Projects-Research Compliance
Dr. Jarrod Schenewark <i>Faculty Senate President, 2019-2020</i>	Associate Professor of Sport Science	College of Education

Note. The table denotes administrative titles and academic titles and ranks upon appointment to serve on the QEP Steering Committee.

Informational and Feedback Sessions

The goal of holding multiple informational and feedback sessions was to garner broad-based support of institutional stakeholders. Dr. Sharp created a PowerPoint presentation that provided general information about the QEP process, key issues that emerged from data analyses conducted during Phase 1 and the broad focus areas for potential QEP topics (see Figure 2).

Multiple informational and feedback sessions were held among Tarleton administrators, faculty and staff members, and students who represented distinct groups (see Table 7). During each informational and feedback session, Dr. Sharp delivered the PowerPoint presentation and invited attendees to give input. Dr. Sharp collected and shared input from each group with Drs. Barkley and Waddell during regularly scheduled weekly QEP Chair meetings and members of the QEP Committee during regularly scheduled monthly QEP Committee meetings.

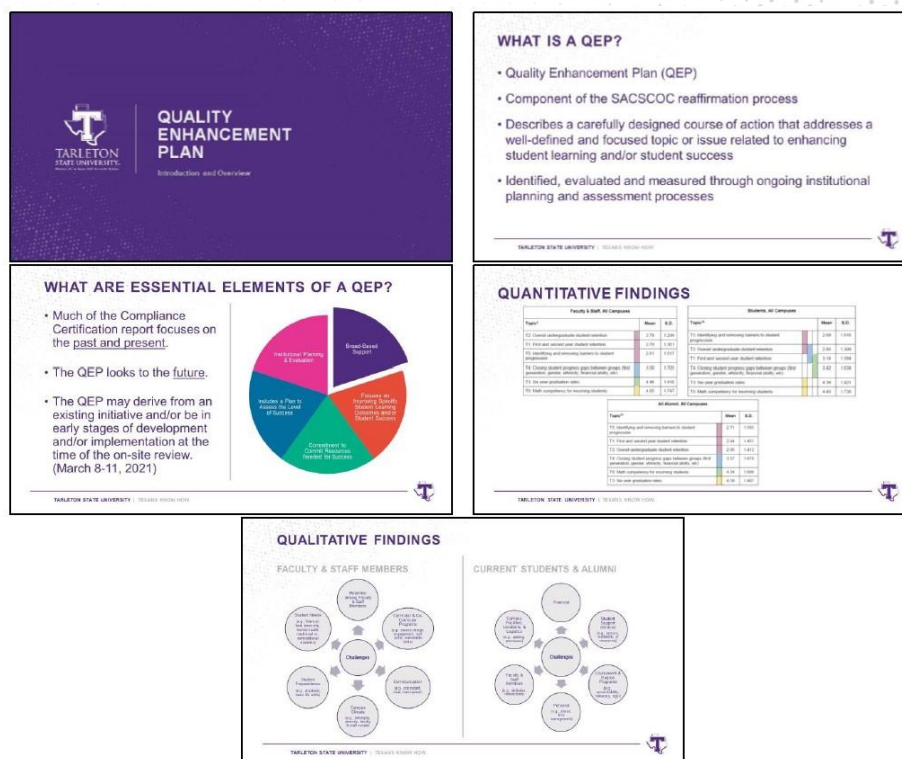


Figure 2: Example Slides from Phase 2 PowerPoint Presentation

Table 7: Informational and Feedback Sessions

Group Name	Group Description	Date
Academic Innovation & Planning Council	Group within the Division of Academic Affairs that develop, implement, and evaluate innovative academic initiatives and programs.	02/18/20
Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and International Programs	Group within the Division of Student Affairs that celebrates diversity, promotes inclusion, and pursues equity for the whole Tarleton community.	03/06/20
Tarleton Student Organizations	Student leaders from campus-based student organizations who promote identity and unity among marginalized students.	03/06/20
Division of Student Affairs	Division that supports and enhances the students' academic experience through services and co-curricular programs.	03/18/20
Division of Enrollment Management	Division that oversees the admissions, financial aid, and registration processes.	03/19/20
Office of New Student Programs	Group within the Division of Student Affairs that coordinates programming for new students.	03/19/20
Division of Institutional Advancement	Division that oversees fundraising, alumni engagement, community relations, and advancement services.	03/20/20
Office of Business Services	Group within the Division of Finance & Administration that manages business functions, including accounts payable, collections, and compliance with rules and regulations.	03/23/20
Dean's Council	Group within the Division of Academic Affairs that provides vision and leadership for the academic enterprise.	03/24/20

Group Name	Group Description	Date
Dean's Council	Group within the Division of Academic Affairs that provides vision and leadership for the academic enterprise.	03/24/20
Division of Finance & Administration	Division that oversees overall administration, budgeting, financial operations, and facilities management.	03/25/20
Student Government Association	Representative governing body of and for the students.	03/25/20
Senior Residential Leaders	Undergraduate students with senior class standing who support their peers in residential living communities.	03/27/20
Collaboration & Communication Team	Group comprised of representatives from all Divisions that make decisions based on the best interest of the university, students, faculty members, and staff members.	04/07/20
Faculty Senate	Group that represents Tarleton faculty members and is the principal liaison between the faculty and the Academic Council and/or the university president.	04/13/20
Division of External Operations	Division that oversees existing and new degree programs for delivery at the Fort Worth Campus, Global Campus, and outreach programs in Bryan, Midlothian, and Waco.	04/23/20
Tarleton First	Group of students who identify as first generation and/or low income and are seeking recognition as a campus-based student organization with FLIP National student chapter status.	04/24/20

Note. The table reflects information as of the date or time identified therein.

Informational and feedback sessions were an invaluable part of the QEP development process for two reasons. First, information and feedback sessions helped keep institutional stakeholders throughout Tarleton informed about the development of the QEP. Second, institutional stakeholders beyond the QEP Steering Committee were represented in the QEP development process with opportunities to offer meaningful insights and perspectives. Input from informational and feedback sessions also enabled the continuous refinement of Tarleton's QEP topic. During early sessions held in March 2020, wellness emerged as a possible QEP topic. In subsequent sessions, Dr. Sharp used input provided by each group to hone the broad area of wellness into a QEP topic with a more manageable and narrow scope. Towards the later sessions held in April 2020, financial wellness and well-being became the focus of Tarleton's QEP.

Planning Meetings

Once Tarleton's QEP topic narrowed to financial wellness and well-being, Drs. Sharp and Waddell facilitated multiple planning meetings with a broad base of institutional stakeholders. On April 6 and May 5, 2020, Dr. Sharp worked in collaboration with members of the QEP Steering Committee to solidify the QEP topic name, scope, and operational definitions for topic-related terms. During these meetings, Dr. Sharp also facilitated discussions with members of the QEP Steering Committee to develop Tarleton's QEP into an action plan with realistic, measurable student learning and student success outcomes.

On April 9, 2020, Dr. Waddell met with student leaders in with the College of Agricultural and Environmental Science. Dr. Waddell sought input from them concerning Tarleton's QEP topic and its potential impact on student learning and success. Ten student leaders were in attendance and included the Student Government Association's President; the Student Leadership Council President and University Ambassador; and students who served as President for other student clubs, organizations, and teams.

At the conclusion of these planning meetings, Dr. Sharp designed the *QEP Topic – Final Feedback Survey* in Qualtrics to ascertain final input on the framework for Tarleton's QEP topic from members of the QEP Steering Committee and President's Cabinet. The survey consisted of seven total items: (a) six

open-ended items that allowed respondents give open text answers for the QEP scope, operational definitions, and student learning and student success outcomes; and (b) one closed-ended item that allowed respondents to select one of two options for the QEP topic name (see Figure 3).

Operational Definitions	<p>Financial Well-Being – “A state of being wherein you have control over day-to-day, month-to-month finances, have the capacity to absorb a financial shock, are on track to meet your financial goals, and have the financial freedom to make the choices that allow you to enjoy life.” (CFPB, 2015, p. 5)</p> <p><i>Reference:</i> Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. (2015). <i>Financial well-being: The goal of financial education</i>. Retrieved from https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201501_cfpb_report_financial-well-being.pdf</p> <p>Please provide any feedback on the definition for financial well-being below:</p> <input type="text"/>
Student Learning and/or Student Success Outcomes	<p>The QEP Committee has identified six outcomes associated with Tarleton's QEP Topic:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completers will describe financial attitudes, behaviors, and skills that correspond to financial well-being. 2. Undergraduate and graduate students will recognize how student success is influenced by the interplay between personal financial circumstances and academic performance. 3. Degree completion rates among undergraduate students will increase by six percentage points among first-time-in college, transfer, and graduate student cohorts. (Goal 1 and Goal 2: 60x30TX) 4. Undergraduate students will identify and demonstrate marketable skills affiliated with their degree program and communicate those skills to potential employers. (Goal 3: 60x30TX) 5. Undergraduate students will graduate with student loan debt that is at or below 60% of their first-year, post-graduation annual wages. (Goal 4: 60x30TX) 6. Tarleton will improve processes and reduce student barriers to increase persistence and decrease time to degree. <p>Please provide any feedback on these outcomes below:</p> <input type="text"/>
QEP Topic Name	<p>Below are two possible names for Tarleton's QEP topic. Please indicate your preferred QEP topic name.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Texan SMART (Saving Money and Resources Together)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> SMART Texans (Saving Money and Resources Together)</p>

Figure 3: Example Items from QEP Topic – Final Feedback Survey

Dr. Sharp emailed the *QEP Topic – Final Feedback Survey* on May 11, 2020 to 34 individuals. The survey period remained open through May 18, 2020, and Dr. Sharp addressed non-response bias by sending an email reminder on May 14, 2020. When the survey period closed, seventeen survey submissions were received that supplied useful feedback from which to finalize the framework for the Texan Smart QEP and compose a draft document for submission. On July 20, 2020, Dr. Sharp made a final presentation for the Texan Smart QEP to members of the President’s Cabinet. During this presentation, Dr. Sharp provided an overview of the planning processes and all major components associated with the Texan Smart QEP. During this meeting, members of President’s Cabinet confirmed their support for the Texan Smart QEP.



Focus of the QEP

Topic and Scope

After a thorough set of planning processes conducted in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the QEP topic development, Tarleton chose its QEP topic, Texan Smart. The Texan Smart QEP seeks to improve financial wellness and well-being among Tarleton first-time-in-college (FTIC) students during their first-year experience through a series of interventions that increase their knowledge and skills to manage financial resources effectively. Pursuing a higher education involves a multitude of financial complexities, and financial wellness and well-being are principal factors that contribute to student success.

Operational Definitions

Since there is not a singular definition for the term “well-being,” and the terms “well-being” and “wellness” are often used interchangeably, it was essential for the Tarleton university community to have a clear understanding of precise meanings for terms associated with the Texan Smart QEP. During Phase 2 of the QEP topic development, Dr. Sharp worked in collaboration with members of the QEP Steering Committee to determine terms that required operational definitions. Afterwards, Dr. Sharp consulted with Dr. Christy Tabors, Manager of Research & Learning in the Dick Smith Library, to find existing sources from which to draw credible and valid operational definitions. Once Dr. Sharp assembled the operational definitions for each term, she elicited feedback among members of the QEP Steering Committee and President’s Cabinet. Table 8 reflects all approved operational definitions associated with the Texan Smart QEP.

Table 8: Operational Definitions

Term	Operational Definition
Financial Well-Being	“A state of being wherein you have control over day-to-day, month-to-month finances; have the capacity to absorb a financial shock; are on track to meet your financial goals; and have the financial freedom to make the choices that allow you to enjoy life” (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 2015, p. 5).
Financial Wellness	“All aspects of a person’s financial situation, including their awareness of their financial situation, goal setting to maintain or improve their current financial situation, and the capability to put these goals into action” (Montalto, Phillips, McDaniel, & Baker, 2019, p. 3).
Institutional Effectiveness	“Systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against mission in all aspects of an institution” (SACSCOC, 2018, p. 170).
Student Achievement	Student learning and successes as measured by “a broad range of criteria to include, as appropriate: enrollment data; retention, graduation, or course completion; job placement rates; state licensing examinations; student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals” (SACSCOC, 2018, p. 64).

QEP Goals and Outcomes

The Texan Smart QEP includes two goals that will be accomplished through three associated student learning outcomes (see Figure 4). Each student learning outcome associated with the Texan Smart QEP is aligned with either an objective in Tarleton’s strategic plan or a goal in the strategic higher education plan for Texas. Additionally, all three student learning outcomes are aligned with current initiatives in higher

education institutions across the United States.

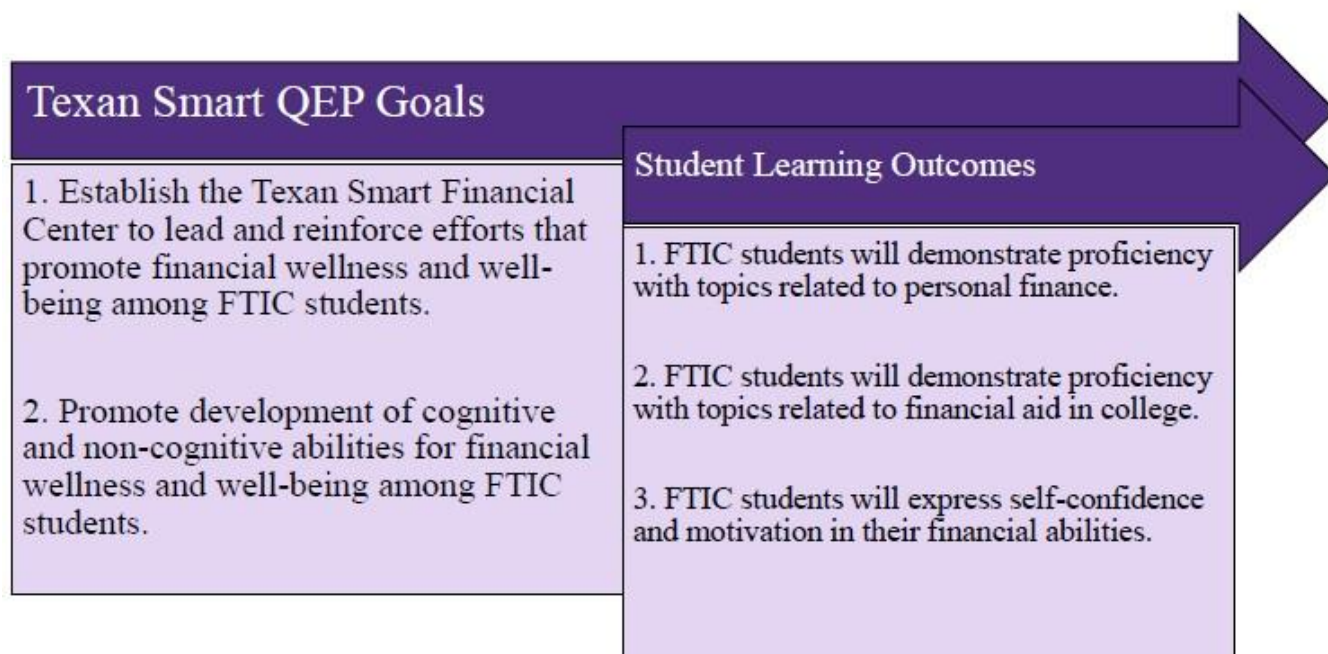


Figure 4. Texan Smart QEP Goals and Outcomes

Alignment with University Efforts

In 2013, multiple stakeholders engaged in an organized strategic planning process to help develop the University's strategic plan, *Tarleton 2021: Student Focused – Value Driven 2015-2021 Strategic Plan* (herein referred to as *Tarleton 2021*). *Tarleton 2021* set a clear direction, create a shared purpose, and communicate guiding principles for the institution (see Figure 5). The Texan Smart QEP was developed with the *Tarleton 2021* strategic plan goals and Tarleton's mission, vision, and core values in mind.

<i>Tarleton 2021: Student Focused - Value Driven</i>		
<u>Mission</u> Tarleton State University provides an academically challenging education where learning is grounded in real-world experiences and effective teaching, research, scholarship, and service. As a member of The Texas A&M University System, Tarleton is rich in history and tradition while being committed to student success and diversity. Tarleton strives to develop moral and ethical thinkers, scholars and leaders who demonstrate civility and integrity, while contributing meaningfully and responsibly to a global society.	<u>Vision</u> Tarleton will be the premier student-focused university in Texas and beyond. We will transform generations by inspiring discovery, leadership, and service through exceptional teaching and research in vibrant learning communities.	<u>Core Values</u> Integrity Leadership Tradition Civility Excellence Service

Figure 5: Mission/Vision/Core Values for Tarleton's Strategic Plan




Alignment with State Efforts



In 2015, the THECB launched a strategic higher education plan, the *60x30TX* plan (THECB, 2015). The *60x30TX* plan aims to build a more knowledgeable and skilled workforce to ensure a strong and sustainable economy in Texas. The *60x30TX* plan includes four broad goals and related targets intended to move the state towards achieving its goals by the year 2030. Advancing postsecondary attainment in Texas requires all stakeholders to recognize the role that finances and money play in student success. Harrison Keller, the Commissioner of Higher Education in Texas, noted, “Helping students understand the financial choices they will make before, during, and after their postsecondary education and giving them the tools they need to achieve financial wellness are critical to students’ long-term success” (THECB & Trellis Company, 2021, p. 4).

Alignment with National Efforts

Student wellness and well-being have become topics of growing importance in higher education (Harward, 2016; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators & National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association, 2019; Reich, 2014), and many higher education institutions have engaged in efforts that focus on one or more dimensions of well-being (e.g., Glowacki et al., 2018; Lothes & Nanney, 2020; Pfund et al., 2020). Among these initiatives, some higher education institutions have implemented initiatives with a specific focus on the dimension for financial well-being among students (see Table 9).

Table 9: Financial Well-Being Initiatives at Higher Education Institutions

Higher Education Institution	Description of Financial Wellness Initiative
 <p>Roger Williams University Providence, RI</p>	<p>The Division of Student Life compiled a list of resources to support students’ financial well-being. More information is available at: https://www.rwu.edu/undergraduate/student-life/about-student-life/financial-well-being-resources</p>
 <p>University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA</p>	<p>Launched on January 27, 2020, the Financial Wellness @ Penn initiative aims to enhance students’ financial well-being by providing personal finance education, tools, and resources. More information is available at: https://srfs.upenn.edu/financial-wellness</p>
 <p>University of Wyoming Laramie, WY</p>	<p>Through support from UniWyo Federal Credit Union, the University of Wyoming developed the Financial Wellness Program. This program offers students access to education, resources, and training to encourage lifelong, financially-sound practices. More information is available at: http://www.uwyo.edu/finwellness/</p>

Higher Education Institution	Description of Financial Wellness Initiative
 <p data-bbox="516 258 735 363">West Texas A&M University Canyon, TX</p>	<p data-bbox="800 226 1404 499">In partnership with the Education Credit Union, West Texas A&M University offers the Buff Smart Program. This mission of this program is to provide students financial education to prepare them to make wise financial choices and to become financially independent. More information is available at: https://www.wtamu.edu/student-support/student-success-center/ssc-buff-smart.html</p>
 <p data-bbox="516 552 735 615">Xavier University Cincinnati, OH</p>	<p data-bbox="800 510 1404 745">In partnership with U.S. Bank, Xavier's All Card center provides students access to interactive seminars that address basic understandings for financial responsibility. More information is available at: https://www.xavier.edu/health-wellness/prevention/ecological-wellness/occupational-and-financial-wellness</p>



Review of Relevant Literature

Financial Wellness versus Financial Well-Being

Financial wellness is a comprehensive, multidimensional concept derived from a host of objective determinants (Sorgente & Lanz, 2017). Financial wellness encompasses “all aspects of a person’s financial situation, including their awareness of their financial situation, goal setting to maintain or improve their current financial situation, and the capability to put these goals into action” (Montalto et al., 2019, p. 3). Individuals with an elevated level of financial wellness exhibit sound financial behaviors, have positive financial attitudes, and feel satisfied with their overall financial situation (Joo, 2008).

Financial well-being combines objective and subjective determinants (i.e., financial behaviors, financial stressor events, individual characteristics) into a single index (Gutter & Copur, 2011; Sorgente & Lanz, 2017). Using consumer input, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau defined financial well-being as “a state of being wherein [individuals] have control over day-to-day, month-to-month finances; have the capacity to absorb a financial shock; are on track to meet [their] financial goals; and have the financial freedom to make the choices that allow [them] to enjoy life” (p. 5). Thus, financial well-being is a function of financial security and freedom of choice with respect to an individual’s current and future financial circumstances (Netemeyer et al., 2018).

Importance of Financial Wellness and Financial Well-Being

An extensive body of literature supports financial wellness and financial well-being as topics of significant importance among both undergraduate and graduate students (Chan et al., 2012; Gutter & Copur, 2011; Yoon, 2010, 2012). While enrolled in college, students grapple with various financial stressors, such as determining how to finance their education (Robb, 2017) and manage their personal finances (Shim et al., 2009). Between rising costs associated with the pursuit of higher education and declining state funding, it is imperative for college students to develop positive financial behaviors and learn how to make complex and critical financial decisions (Hagadorn, 2017). By doing so, college students are more likely to improve their current and future quality of life (Xiao et al., 2009).

Current State of Financial Wellness

Finances are a significant concern among college students (Denecke et al., 2016; Klepfer et al., 2019a; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2012). Recent findings from the Student Financial Wellness Survey revealed that a great number of college students across the United States: (a) have low financial security and worry about paying for school, their ongoing living costs, and any unexpected expenses that emerge; (b) struggle to pay for basic necessities such as food, housing, and utilities; and (c) help support family members financially while in college (Klepfer et al., 2019a). Findings also revealed that college students underestimate the amount of student loan debt they borrowed and have concerns about their ability to repay. Additionally, college students often struggle with substantial credit card debt and may even engage in high-rate, high-risk borrowing practices, such as payday loans. As shown in Table 10, local administration of the Student Financial Wellness Survey uncovered similar findings among undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at Tarleton (Klepfer et al., 2019b, 2019c).

Table 10: Student Financial Wellness Survey Findings among Tarleton Students

Key Findings	Graduate Students	Undergraduate Students
Basic Needs Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 49% of students show signs of housing insecurity. ❖ 20% of students experience food insecurity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 54% of students show signs of housing insecurity. ❖ 32% of students experience food insecurity.

Key Findings	Graduate Students	Undergraduate Students
Financial Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 63% of students worry about paying for college. ❖ 41% of students have run out of money three or more times in the past year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 72% of students worry about paying for college. ❖ 51% of students have run out of money three or more times in the past year.
Paying for College & Student Debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 70% of students have low confidence in their ability to pay off student loan debt. ❖ 76% of students have more student loan debt than they anticipated. ❖ 36% of students use credit cards to pay for college. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 70% of students have low confidence in their ability to pay off student loan debt. ❖ 66% of students have more student loan debt than they anticipated. ❖ 37% of students use credit cards to pay for college.
Supporting Family Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 67% of students indicate the importance of supporting family members while in college. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 36% of students indicate the importance of supporting family members while in college.

Effects of Low Levels of Financial Wellness among College Students

Research has shown that undesirable financial situations may have negative consequences on college students. Financial anxiety and stress among college students has been linked to student loan debt (Archuleta et al., 2013), and college students who experience high levels of financial anxiety and stress are at a higher risk for poor academic performance, college attrition (Baker & Montalto, 2019; Joo, Bagwell Durband et al., 2008), mental health issues (Adams et al., 2016), and family distress (Cadaret & Rieder Bennett, 2019). College students who have perceptions of financial inadequacies are more susceptible to experience financial anxiety and stress, thus impacting high-risk and underrepresented college students (i.e., students who identify as first generation, low income, or non-White), to greater degrees (Adams et al., 2016; Cadaret & Rieder Bennett, 2019; Garrett & Nisle, 2017; Potter et al., 2017).

Promoting Financial Wellness and Enhancing Financial Well-Being among College Students

In the early 2000s, research demonstrated a clear need for promoting financial wellness among college students (Denecke et al., 2016; Trombitas, 2011, 2012). As such, many institutions of higher education began making efforts to enhance financial well-being among their students (Denecke et al., 2016; Trombitas, 2012). Early efforts typically involved housing financial education programs in financial aid offices that created stand-alone websites and facilitated in-person trainings for common financial literacy topics, such as budgeting, debt management, and student loans. Unfortunately, early efforts were poorly funded and seemed to be too narrow in scope (Trombitas, 2012).

Financial Centers

More recently, institutions of higher education have been making more concerted and holistic efforts to promote financial wellness and enhance financial well-being among college students. Some institutions have established comprehensive financial centers to increase financial confidence, knowledge, and skills among college students and their families. Financial centers are staffed by full- and/or part-time employees (including undergraduate and graduate student workers) who deliver a wide range of services to equip undergraduate and graduate students with the sound personal financial practices they need to make informed financial choices. Services often include coordinating events; hosting trainings; offering coaching, consulting, and mentoring services; and granting access to informational resources. Table 11 shows examples of comprehensive financial centers that were established at universities located in Texas and other higher education institutions located in the Southern states accredited by the SACSCOC.

Table 11: Examples of University-Based Financial Centers

Financial Center	Goal
<p>Student Money Management Center University of North Texas Denton, Texas https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-money-management-center</p> <p>Established in 2005</p>	<p>Our team helps students succeed in their financial lives. We give them the tools to increase their knowledge, skills, awareness, and confidence to become financially empowered.</p>
<p>Student Money Management Center Sam Houston State University Huntsville, Texas https://www.shsu.edu/dept/smmc/</p> <p>Established in 2007</p>	<p>The SMMC believes that all Bearcats should have the financial literacy skills to be successful during their collegiate years and beyond, so we will continue to offer quality consistent programming to bring that vision to Sam Houston State University.</p>
<p>Student Money Management Center University of North Georgia Dahlonega, Georgia https://ung.edu/student-money-management-center/index.php</p> <p>Established in 2007</p>	<p>The University of North Georgia Student Money Management Center is committed to providing opportunities for students to enhance their knowledge of effective money management through promoting financial literacy and empowering students to make responsible financial decisions.</p>
<p>Bull2Bull Financial Education University of South Florida Tampa, Florida https://www.usf.edu/financial-education/</p> <p>Established 2013</p>	<p>The Bull2Bull Financial Education Program (B2B) is a peer to peer financial education program. It is designed to enhance the financial wellness of USF Tampa's undergraduate students. B2B is grounded in research and current trends that support the use of a peer-to-peer education model as a method of increasing knowledge and financial awareness.</p>
<p>UTC Financial Wellness Center University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Chattanooga, Tennessee https://www.utc.edu/financial-wellness/index.php</p> <p>Established 2013</p>	<p>The Financial Wellness Center at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is dedicated to helping students with their overall financial satisfaction for the rest of their lives. The mission of the center is to equip students with prudent knowledge, tools, and techniques that will increase their overall financial literacy, capability, satisfaction, and wellness.</p>
<p>Money Education Center Texas A&M University College Station, Texas https://money.tamu.edu/</p> <p>Established in 2016</p>	<p>Through Research, One-On-One Advising, and Instruction (ROI) for Money Education (ME), we can help you do the following: (1) limit the cost of attending college, (2) navigate unexpected financial barriers, (3) minimize student loan debt and future struggles in repayment, and (4) prepare for a lifetime of financial decisions.</p>
<p>Student Financial Wellness Center University of Kentucky Lexington, Kentucky https://www.uky.edu/financialwellness/</p> <p>Established in 2017</p>	<p>Financial Wellness is geared toward engaging students in financial literacy programs and providing a place for peer mentorship through the MoneyCATS team. Financial Wellness also provides excellent resources for the University of Kentucky student body to stay connected and well equipped to handle their evolving financial needs.</p>

Financial Coaching, Consulting, and Mentoring

Within financial centers, a considerable number of institutions of higher education have implemented different models of financial coaching, consulting, and mentoring. Such services are free and voluntary for students and typically conducted in a one-to-one manner with peers (Britt et al., 2015) or staff mentors (Schickel, 2016). Financial coaching, consulting, and mentoring services provide students with a safe space to participate in entrance and exit loan counseling, as well as “continuing counseling,” which increases student awareness of available resources (p. 266). Researchers have reported that undergraduate students who participated in financial coaching, consulting, and mentoring services on a continuous basis throughout their enrollment in college significantly reduce the amount of student loan debt taken for expenses beyond tuition (Schickel, 2016) and were more likely to complete their degree in four years (Letkiewicz et al., 2014).

Financial Education Activities

Financial education activities are a longstanding way in which institutions of higher education help college students move towards financial well-being. Among undergraduate students, financial education activities may be the focus of an entire credit-bearing course, such as a personal finance course (Eichelberger et al., 2019), or financial topics covered in a credit-bearing general education course, such as a first-year seminar (Anderson & Card, 2015). Alternatively, financial education activities may be offered as non-credit activities that students elect to complete (Harrington & Smith, 2016) or financial resources that are pushed out periodically through various communication platforms (Chambers & Thorne, 2017; Schickel, 2016).



Timeline, Actions, and Resources Committed

To achieve the desired outcomes associated with the Texan Smart QEP, Tarleton has identified two specific goals from which respective actions will be implemented in an orderly and manageable sequence. Goal 1 encompasses the establishment of the Texan Smart Financial Center, and Goal 2 focuses on promoting development of cognitive and non-cognitive abilities for financial wellness and well-being among FTIC students. To ensure successful implementation of these two goals for the Texan Smart QEP, Tarleton is committed to providing the necessary resources.

Goal 1: Establish the Texan Smart Financial Center

The Texan Smart Financial Center will be an educational and outreach unit administered by Strategic Academic Initiatives. Established in February 2021, Strategic Academic Initiatives was organized under Academic Administration in the Division of Academic Affairs and is led by the Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives. The purpose of the Texan Smart Financial Center is to promote financial wellness and well-being among FTIC students at Tarleton by completing multiple actions intended to have a direct impact on improving financial wellness and well-being among FTIC students. Tarleton is committed to providing the resources needed to support successful implementation of Goal 1 actions.

To help establish and ultimately lead the Texan Smart Financial Center, Tarleton will hire a Director by Fall 2021. Tarleton will create a new position to recruit and hire an applicant who has: (a) a master's or doctoral degree in business, personal financial planning, higher education, or related field; (b) three or more years of relevant experience, (c) advanced analysis and problem-solving skills; and (d) strong communication skills. The Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center will report directly to the Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives and be responsible for coordinating the day-to-day operations of the Texan Smart Financial Center.

The Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center will oversee a team who curates, develops, and implements services offered within the Texan Smart Financial Center. Team members may include full- and/or part-time staff members, student workers, and students who are fulfilling course and/or degree program requirements in areas related to personal finance. All services offered through the Texan Smart Financial Center will target FTIC students and use a variety of modalities (i.e., in person, virtual) to maintain accessibility. Example services include educational trainings that develop students' financial capabilities and peer financial coaching services to engage student leaders as mentors on money matters.

The Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center will also develop collaborative and synergistic relationships with faculty and staff members throughout Tarleton, including but not limited to academic colleges and departments, Admissions, Athletics, Financial Aid, and Student Affairs. The goal of these relationships will be to create awareness about planned activities facilitated by the Texan Smart Financial Center. Additionally, the Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center will engage alumni, community partners, and employer networks to leverage talents, energy, and specialized skills needed to maximize the impact of services for FTIC students. Actions associated with Goal 1 of the Texan Smart QEP, as well as the proposed timeline and responsible party for each action, are delineated below in Table 12.

Table 12. Overview of Actions for Goal 1

Goal 1: Tarleton will establish the Texan Smart Financial Center within the University College.		
Action 1.1: Hire a Director for the Texan Smart Financial Center.		
Task	Timeline	Responsible Party
Develop job-related selection procedures for Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center.	January 2021 - March 2021	✓ Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Administration ✓ Employee Services Department
Post vacancy for Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center.	March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employee Services Department
Recruit, screen, and refer applicants.	March 2021 – August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employee Services Department
Interview and hire qualified applicant.	August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives ✓ Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Administration ✓ Employee Services Department
Action 1.2: Design and implement educational trainings that develop students' financial capabilities.		
Task	Timeline	Responsible Party
Identify relevant topics for educational trainings that develop students' financial capabilities.	September 2021 (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Tarleton faculty & staff members from all Divisions ✓ Current students at Tarleton ✓ Tarleton alumni
Develop educational trainings (e.g., presentations) based on identified topics using in-person and virtual delivery modes.	September 2021 (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Information Technology Services ✓ Office of Financial Aid ✓ Admissions ✓ College of Business - Department of Accounting, Finance, and Economics ✓ College of Agriculture and Natural Resources – Department of Agricultural Education and Communication ✓ Community bank partners
Schedule and deliver educational trainings that administer assessment and/or evaluative measures.	January 2022 (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Texan Smart Financial Center team members
Action 1.3: Curate and make available existing information resources for personal financial topics.		
Task	Timeline	Responsible Party
Assemble and categorize the most relevant, highest quality information for personal financial topics covered under fair use.	September 2021 (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ University Librarians ✓ College of Business - Department of Accounting, Finance, and Economics ✓ College of Agriculture and Natural Resources – Department of

		Agricultural Education and Communication ✓ Community bank partners
Store, manage, and maintain curated content on Texan Smart Financial Center webpage.	September 2021 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Office of Web Services ✓ Technical Communications Coordinator
Order, monitor, and replenish print copies of published information.	September 2021 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Texan Smart Financial Center team members
Disseminate print copies of published information directly to students.	January 2022 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Texan Smart Financial Center team members
Action 1.4: Develop and make available new information resources for personal financial topics.		
Task	Timeline	Responsible Party
Develop content for high-quality new information resources for personal financial topics.	September 2021 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ College of Business - Department of Accounting, Finance, and Economics ✓ College of Agriculture and Natural Resources – Department of Agricultural Education and Communication ✓ Community bank partners
Coordinate publication of new information resources for personal financial topics that follow Tarleton brand guidelines.	September 2021 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Technical Communications Coordinator ✓ Department of Marketing & Communications
Store, manage, and maintain newly developed content on Texan Smart Financial Center webpage.	September 2021 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Office of Web Services ✓ Technical Communications Coordinator
Action 1.5: Institute peer financial coaching services to engage student leaders as mentors on money matters.		
Task	Timeline	Responsible Party
Develop Texan Smart Financial Center peer financial coaching financial training guides and sessions.	September 2021	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center
Develop job-related selection procedures for Texan Smart Financial Center peer financial coaches.	September 2021	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Employee Services Department
Post vacancy for peer coaches.	October 2021	✓ Job Locator & Development Coordinator

Review, interview, and hire qualified applicants.	November 2021 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Employee Services Department
Facilitate new employee onboarding processes for peer financial coaches.	November 2021 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Employee Services Department
Train peer financial coaches for Texan Smart Financial Center.	December 2021 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center
Provide peer financial coaching services and monitor efficacy of services.	January 2022 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Texan Smart Financial Center team members
Action 1.6: Promote planned activities facilitated by the Texan Smart Financial Center.		
Task	Timeline	Responsible Party
Conduct media campaign announcing the establishment of the Texan Smart Financial Center.	January 2022	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Technical Communications Coordinator ✓ Department of Marketing & Communications
Establish and maintain a social media presence for the Texan Smart Financial Center on multiple platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	January 2022 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Technical Communications Coordinator
Conduct regular, recurring promotions of planned activities for the Texan Smart Financial Center.	January 2022 (ongoing)	✓ Director of Texan Smart Financial Center ✓ Technical Communications Coordinator ✓ Department of Marketing & Communications

Note. The table denotes administrative titles and academic titles and ranks at the time in which Goal 1 actions were developed and/or enacted.

Goal 2: Promote Development of Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Abilities for Financial Wellness and Well-Being

Goal 2 of the Texan Smart QEP focuses on promoting development of cognitive and non-cognitive abilities for financial wellness and well-being among FTIC students. This goal will be supported through planned activities facilitated through the Texan Smart Financial Center and the inclusion of WhichWay® modules in Tarleton's first-year seminar (FYS) course. WhichWay® modules have been developed by Student Connections, a company that provides student loan default prevention management software and services to colleges and universities. WhichWay® modules are accessible via a web platform and cover eleven specific topics in the areas of personal finance and financial aid in college (see Table 13). Each module contains a series of self-paced micro-learning lessons, interactive exercises, and a post-assessment for users to demonstrate content mastery with module topics. Tarleton is committed to providing the resources needed to support successful implementation of the WhichWay® modules, which intend to empower students with knowledge and skills critical to their financial wellness and well-being.

Table 13. Overview of WhichWay® Modules

<i>Module</i>	<i>Overview</i>	<i>Lessons & Exercises</i>
Understanding the Basics of Budgeting*	Learn how to calculate take-home pay, balance income and spending, and begin creating a budget.	3 lessons 4 exercises 40 minutes
Achieving Goals	Learn how to research and set realistic goals, utilize the SMART goal setting method, and create an action plan to achieve your goals.	3 lessons 5 exercises 45 minutes
Creating and Maintaining a Budget	Learn how to track income and expenses, monitor and evaluate your budget, and adjust spending habits to reduce expenses.	4 lessons 6 exercises 70 minutes
Understanding Credit	Learn how to determine the cost of various types of credit based on interest and other terms and differentiate which types of credit are better suited for particular purposes.	3 lessons 4 exercises 34 minutes
Obtaining Credit	Learn how to assess the costs and benefits of various types of credit and navigate the credit application process.	4 lessons 5 exercises 45 minutes
Managing Credit Cards	Learn the impacts of having and using a credit card, and if desired, how to choose a credit card to best fit your personal circumstances.	4 lessons 5 exercises 50 minutes
Managing Debt	Learn how to differentiate between good and bad debt and strategies to quickly and efficiently pay your debt.	3 lessons 4 exercises 45 minutes
Paying for College*	Learn how to find free sources to finance your higher education, analyze the various types of student aid, and determine how much student loan debt you can afford.	3 lessons 4 exercises 60 minutes
Applying for Financial Aid	Learn how to locate and apply for financial aid from government and private sources, as well as evaluate and accept offer of financial aid.	4 lessons 2 exercises 41 minutes
Managing Student Loans While in School	Learn how to estimate how much you will need to borrow in student loans, as well as what is affordable based on future earnings potential.	4 lessons 5 exercises 55 minutes
Repaying Student Loans	Learn how to prepare for paying back your student loans and utilize available resources and options if you experience difficulty making your payments.	4 lessons 1 exercise 45 minutes

Note. The asterisk indicates inclusion in the FYS course.

As shown in Table 13, the following two of the WhichWay® modules have been embedded into the curriculum of the FYS course: (1) Understanding the Basics of Budgeting, and (2) Paying for College. The FYS course at Tarleton is a one-semester-credit-hour course that is part of the institution's general education core curriculum. The FYS course was selected because it is required among FTIC students

during their entry semester at Tarleton and included a student learning outcome aligned with the THECB's efforts to promote a coordinated approach to improve personal financial literacy among college students. Post-assessment scores from these two WhichWay® modules are direct measures that evaluate student performance for Student Learning Outcomes #1 and #2. At the beginning of the semester, FYS instructors will provide FTIC students in their class with information about the registration process for creating an account on the WhichWay® platform. FYS instructors will also inform their students about the designated times in which they will complete the two required modules during the semester. To ensure the highest levels of participation among FTIC students, scores earned on the post-assessments associated with the two required WhichWay® modules will be factored into students' overall FYS grades.

The remaining nine WhichWay® modules will be used to reinforce and support student learning during planned activities facilitated by the Texan Smart Financial Center that occur throughout the first-year experience for FTIC students. For example, prior to facilitating either an individual session or small group presentation for a personal finance topic, a peer financial coach may ask FTIC students to complete a related WhichWay® module. FTIC students will also be encouraged to work through these nine modules on their own to increase their understandings with the Texan Smart QEP student learning outcomes.



Budget

Over the course of the Texan Smart QEP, Tarleton has committed a total of \$930,500 to ensure that the Texan Smart QEP goals and student learning outcomes are met. Figure 6 shows a projected budget that was created in partnership with key university stakeholders and QEP leaders to provide a collective and realistic commitment of resources that will support the development and implementation costs for the Texan Smart QEP sufficiently. Expenditures in the Texan Smart QEP budget are allocated for personnel, programming, materials, professional memberships and travel, office supplies, and marketing to benefit FTIC Tarleton students. Below are annotations for the specific budget line items delineated in the Texan Smart QEP budget.

Personnel

Full-Time Employee

The Texan Smart QEP budget adds one new full-time staff member within the area of Strategic Academic Initiatives. This staff member will be a Director who manages the Texan Smart Financial Center and will assist with oversight for the implementation and progress monitoring of the Texan Smart QEP. The Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center will be hired with a starting annual salary of \$85,000 plus benefits, which is calculated at 18% annually. The five-year Texan Smart QEP budget for this expense also reflects an estimated 3% annual increase to capture potential salary escalation over the duration of the five-year Texan Smart QEP budget projection.

Student Workers

Tarleton is committed to supporting part-time student employment, as it is mutually beneficial to students and the employing department in the institution. Once the Texan Smart Financial Center is established, it will be necessary to hire peer financial coaches who assist with its day-to-day operations. Peer financial coaches will be undergraduate student workers who report directly to the Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center. Six peer financial coaches will be hired at the pay rate of \$8 per hour plus fringe, which is calculated at 11% annually. Peer financial coaches will be employed for up to 20 hours per week over the duration of 48 weeks each academic year. This budget category reflects a fixed allocation annually over the duration of the five-year Texan Smart QEP budget projection.

Programming

Successful implementation of the Texan Smart QEP will require the development of specific programming. The Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center will use these funds to support content development for educational trainings, student resources, and printing costs associated with published information. This budget category also supports the purchase of giveaways and participation incentives for faculty members, staff members, and students who engage in programming related to the Texan Smart QEP. Lastly, this budget category will support the annual subscription fee associated with the WhichWay® modules that are embedded into the FYS course. This budget category reflects a fixed allocation annually over the duration of the five-year Texan Smart QEP budget projection.

Materials

The budget category for materials and supplies includes items that cost less than \$5,000 per unit and often have a one-time use. These items are needed for the general operation of the Texan Smart Financial Center and include technology (i.e., computer, software, electronic storage) for each of the peer financial coaches and a shared printer for the Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center and peer financial coaches. Expenses for this budget category will be used during the first two years only to support the establishment of the Texan Smart Financial Center.

Professional Memberships and Travel

Maintaining memberships with professional associations focused on financial wellness and well-being will ensure that the Texan Smart Financial Center stays informed about state and national conversations, public policy, and educational support services within the field. This budget category will support the purchase of institutional memberships with organizations, such as the Higher Education Financial Wellness Alliance and the Texas Association of Collegiate Financial Educational Professionals. This budget category will also support travel and/or conference registration expenses associated with continuous professional learning among the Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center and peer financial coaches. This budget category reflects a fixed allocation annually over the duration of the five-year Texan Smart QEP budget projection.

Office Supplies

General operations associated with the Texan Smart QEP will require the purchase of consumable one-time use office supplies, such as paper, pens, and printer ink. As such, this budget category reflects a fixed allocation annually over the duration of the five-year Texan Smart QEP budget projection.

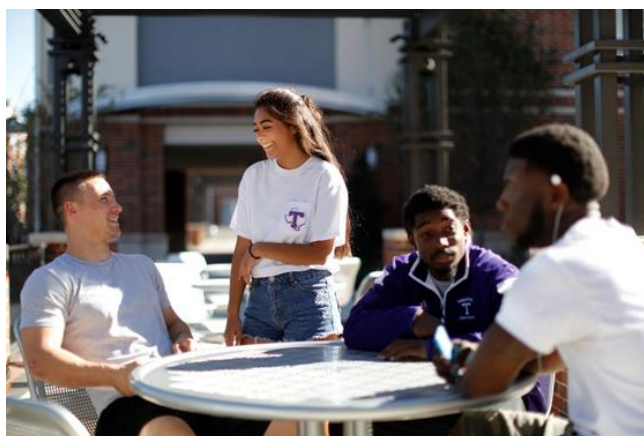
Marketing Expenses

Launching a marketing campaign for the Texan Smart QEP to the university community is essential to build excitement and create awareness. The marketing campaign will be geared towards administrators, faculty and staff members, and FTIC students. Marketing materials will be created in both electronic and print forms and communicate the goals and student learning and success outcomes for the Texan Smart QEP. This budget category is a variable allocation annually to support an intentional and well-timed campaign for activities and services associated with the Texan Smart QEP over the duration of the five-year Texan Smart QEP budget projection.



Texan Smart QEP Budget (2021 - 2026)						
	Year 1 (FY 2022)	Year 2 (FY 2023)	Year 3 (FY 2024)	Year 4 (FY 2025)	Year 5 (FY 2026)	Total
Marketing Expenses						
Promote Texan Smart as Tarleton's QEP and services available at the Texan Smart Financial Center	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00	\$9,000.00
Subtotal						\$9,000.00
Personnel: Full-Time Employees						
Texan Smart Financial Center Director (Salary: \$85,000 + Benefits (18%) + Estimated Annual Increase (3%))	\$103,000.00	\$106,000.00	\$111,000.00	\$113,000.00	\$116,000.00	\$549,000.00
Subtotal						\$549,000.00
Personnel: Student Workers						
Texan Smart Financial Center peer financial coaches (6 student workers at the pay rate of \$8/hour + fringe (11%) for up to 20 hours per week over the duration of 48 weeks/year)	\$52,000.00	\$52,000.00	\$52,000.00	\$52,000.00	\$52,000.00	\$260,000.00
Subtotal						\$260,000.00
Materials						
Equipment & technology (purchases under \$5,000 each)	\$10,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$15,000.00
Subtotal						\$15,000.00
Programming						
Content development for educational trainings, student resources, and printing for published information	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$25,000.00
Giveaways and participation incentives for faculty, staff, and students	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$22,500.00
Virtual educational modules (WhichWay®)	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$5,000.00
Subtotal						\$52,500.00
Office Supplies						
Consumables (ink, paper, pens, etc.)	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$12,500.00
Subtotal						\$12,500.00
Professional Memberships & Travel						
Professional memberships (e.g., HEFWA, TACFEP)	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$7,500.00
Travel to support Texan Smart Financial Center activities	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$25,000.00
Subtotal						\$32,500.00
					QEP Budget Total	\$930,500.00

Figure 6: Texan Smart QEP Budget



Assessment Plan

The Texan Smart QEP focuses on improving financial wellness and well-being among Tarleton FTIC students through a series of interventions during their first-year experience that increase their knowledge and skills to manage financial resources effectively. To evaluate the effectiveness of the Texan Smart QEP, a variety of quantitative and qualitative instruments will be used to ascertain formative and summative information through direct and indirect measures. Analysis of data from these assessments will also provide feedback for areas of improvement with the Texan Smart QEP.

Direct measures have been identified to capture levels of achievement for FTIC students with each of the student learning outcomes, and indirect measures have been identified to supplement direct measures and obtain understandings about the efficacy of planned activities. The comprehensive nature of the assessment plan will provide a complete portrait of the success of the Texan Smart QEP and highlight any needed adjustments during the next five years. Table 14 delineates an assessment calendar for the Texan Smart QEP that shows each planned assessment, along with a brief description, purpose, and timeframe for deployment for each assessment tool.

Table 14. Texan Smart QEP Assessment Calendar

Timeframe	Assessment Tool	Brief Description	Purpose
<i>Year 1</i> September 2021 and ongoing each fall semester	Texan Smart Assessment	Original Qualtrics questionnaire informed by evidence from past literature	Direct measure to gain pre-test information for Student Learning Outcome #3 on FTIC students' personal finance status and viewpoints upon entry to Tarleton
<i>Year 1</i> October 2021	Student Financial Wellness Survey	Web survey conducted by Trellis Research, a division of Trellis Company	Direct measure to collect data from FTIC students for Student Learning Outcomes #1-3, compare to initial baseline data, and determine whether any adjustments to the benchmark indicators of learning over time are needed
<i>Years 1-5</i> September 2021 – April 2022 and ongoing each academic year	Post-assessments from WhichWay® modules	Developed by Student Connections, WhichWay® modules contain a series of self-paced micro-learning lessons, interactive exercises, and a post-assessment	Direct measure to collect data that demonstrates content mastery with module topics related to Student Learning Outcomes #1-2 among FTIC students
<i>Years 1-5</i> October 2021 – April 2022 and ongoing each academic year	Texan Smart Financial Center Evaluations	Original Qualtrics questionnaires that FTIC students complete after attending an educational experience (e.g., presentations) hosted by the Texan Smart Financial Center	Indirect measure to provide formative data for educational experiences (e.g., presentations) hosted by the Texan Smart Financial Center
<i>Years 1-5</i> October 2021 – April 2022 and ongoing each academic year	Texan Smart Financial Center Intake and Exit Questionnaires	Original Qualtrics questionnaires that FTIC students complete before and after the delivery of personalized peer support	Indirect measure to provide formative data for delivery of personalized peer support (e.g., peer financial coaching) facilitated

Timeframe	Assessment Tool	Brief Description	Purpose
		(e.g., peer financial coaching) at the Texan Smart Financial Center	by the Texan Smart Financial Center
<i>Years 1-5</i> October 2021 – April 2022 and ongoing each academic year	EAB Navigate Reports	Reports housed in EAB Navigate that document appointments, early alerts, and notes for FTIC students	Indirect measure to provide formative data available in EAB Navigate for early alerts and planned activities (e.g., educational experiences, peer financial coaching) facilitated by the Texan Smart Financial Center
<i>Years 1-5</i> April 2022 and ongoing each spring semester	Texan Smart Assessment	Original Qualtrics questionnaire informed by evidence from past literature	Direct measure to gain post-test information for Student Learning Outcome #3 on FTIC students' personal finance status and viewpoints towards the end of their first academic year
<i>Years 2-5</i> October 2022 and ongoing each fall semester	Student Financial Wellness Survey	Web survey conducted by Trellis Research, a division of Trellis Company	Direct measure to collect summative data for Student Learning Outcomes #1-3 from FTIC students during their second year of college

Trellis' Student Financial Wellness Survey

The Student Financial Wellness Survey is conducted by Trellis Research, a division of Trellis Company. Trellis Research will host and deliver a web-based survey to document the financial wellness and well-being of postsecondary students within participating institutions and across the nation. Trellis Research will manage administration of the survey to potential participants and provide Tarleton with a deidentified dataset of respondents who are FTIC students. In Year 1 (i.e., Fall 2021), this will include first year FTIC students so that Tarleton may compare results to initial baseline data to determine whether any adjustments to the benchmark indicators of learning over time are needed. In Years 2-6 (i.e., Fall 2022-Fall 2025), the deidentified dataset will include second year FTIC students so that Tarleton may evaluate levels of achievement for FTIC students with for Student Learning Outcomes #1-3 and ascertain whether Texan Smart QEP activities are improving student learning by 3% each year, thereby moving toward the overall goal of 12%. Reports from Trellis Research will primarily consist of descriptive statistics; however, additional exploratory data analysis may be conducted to identify trends among FTIC students. Planned analyses include chi-square tests, *t*-tests, ANOVA, and regression with additional use of factor analysis and reliability tests to construct and validate indexes contained within the survey instrument.

Texan Smart Assessment

The Texan Smart Assessment was developed by the Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives and the Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center as an original Qualtrics questionnaire informed by evidence from past literature. The Texan Smart Assessment will serve as a direct measure to measure student performance for Student Learning Outcome #3. Specifically, data from the Texan Smart Assessment will provide information on FTIC students' personal finance status and viewpoints upon entry to Tarleton (i.e., pre-test) and towards the end of their first academic year (i.e., post-test). Year 1 data from FTIC Cohort 2021 will also provide data that may be compared to subsequent FTIC cohorts.

When accessed, the Texan Smart Assessment provides respondents with information about its purpose as part of the Texan Smart QEP and informed consent. Once respondents provide consent to participate, they are asked an eligibility screening question to determine their age. If a respondent indicates they are below 18 years of age, they are ineligible to participate and will be redirected from the questionnaire to a thank you page. If a respondent indicates they are 18 years of age or older, they will gain access to the questionnaire items.

The Texan Smart Assessment consists of 19 unique items separated into five distinct sections: (1) student demographic information, (2) financial demographics, (3) current financial status, (4) personal financial viewpoints, and (5) personal financial knowledge. The estimated completion time of the Texan Smart Assessment is 10-15 minutes, and eligible participants who complete the questionnaire will be directed to a thank you page. Partially completed surveys will be automatically recorded when the assessment period ends. An overview of items included in the Texan Smart Assessment by section is provided in Table 15.

Table 15. Texan Smart Assessment Items

<i>Student Demographic Information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your first name? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your last name? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your University Identification Number? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Are you 18 years of age or older? Single answer choices: No, Yes
<i>Financial Demographic Information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Are you financially independent? (i.e., You pay all of your own bills.) Single answer choices: No, Yes, Unsure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Not counting yourself, how many people do you pay for 50% or more of their basic life necessities (e.g., food, housing, clothing, utilities)? Single answer choices: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 or more
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your current work status? Single answer choices: Full-time job (30 or more hours per week); Part-time job (29 or fewer hours per week); Seasonal job (employment during the summer, winter, or other short-term intervals); No job
<i>Current Financial Status</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Which of these best describes your total income (i.e., money coming in) each month? Single answer choices: \$0; \$1-\$500; \$501-\$1,000; \$1,001-\$1,500; \$1,501-\$2,000; \$2,001-\$2,500; \$2,501-\$3,000; \$3,001-\$3,500; \$3,501-\$4,000; \$4,001 or more; Unsure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Which of these best describes your total expenses (i.e., money going out) each month? Single answer choices: \$0; \$1-\$500; \$501-\$1,000; \$1,001-\$1,500; \$1,501-\$2,000; \$2,001-\$2,500; \$2,501-\$3,000; \$3,001-\$3,500; \$3,501-\$4,000; \$4,001 or more; Unsure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Do you have one or more active credit cards right now? Single answer choices: No, Yes, Unsure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Approximately how much credit card debt do you have right now? Single answer choices: \$0; \$1-\$500; \$501-\$1,000; \$1,001-\$1,500; \$1,501-\$2,000; \$2,001-\$2,500; \$2,501-\$3,000; \$3,001-\$3,500; \$3,501-\$4,000; \$4,001 or more; Unsure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Do you have access to cash to cover unexpected expenses? Single answer choices: No, Yes, Unsure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Approximately how much cash do you have right now to cover unexpected expenses?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single answer choices: \$0; \$1-\$500; \$501-\$1,000; \$1,001-\$1,500; \$1,501-\$2,000; \$2,001-\$2,500; \$2,501-\$3,000; \$3,001-\$3,500; \$3,501-\$4,000; \$4,001 or more; Unsure
Personal Financial Viewpoints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: How satisfied are you with your current financial situation? Single answer choices: Extremely dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Satisfied, Extremely satisfied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: How stressed/irritable/anxious do you feel about your personal finances? Single answer choices: (Move the slider to indicate your current stress level, with 0 being Not Stressed and 10 being Extremely Stressed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items: Please select the option that best represents your response to each of the following statements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I make myself aware of the total amount of money I owe. Before I make a purchase, I shop around for the lowest price. I have a weekly or monthly budget that I follow. I have specific short- and long-term written financial goals. I set money aside for savings. I maintain adequate financial records. Single answer choices: Never, Sometimes, About half the time, Most of the time, Always
Personal Financial Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: How would you rate your current financial knowledge level? Single answer choices: Move the slider to rate your current financial knowledge level, with 0 being Not Knowledgeable and 10 being Extremely Knowledgeable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: In what ways do you gain financial knowledge? (Please select all that apply.) Multiple answer choices: Listening to audio resources, such as podcasts; Reading books, magazines, newsletters, or other written publications; Surfing the Internet for financial resources, tools, and tips; Taking a course in college; Taking a course outside of college; Visiting with a knowledgeable friend or family member; Visiting with a financial professional; Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Are you aware of how to access resources at Tarleton through TexConnect? Single answer choices: No, Yes, Unsure

The Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives and the Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center will collect data from the Texan Smart Assessment in two phases each academic year. In Phase 1, the Texan Smart Assessment will be sent to FTIC students during the first week of September to collect pre-test data. Data will be collected in Phase 1 over a three-week assessment period. In Phase 2, the Texan Smart Assessment will be sent to the same group of students during the first week of April to collect post-test data. Data will be collected in Phase 2 over a three-week assessment period.

When an assessment period begins, students will be sent an initial email to their Tarleton student email account inviting them to complete the Texan Smart Assessment. Two follow-up reminder emails will be sent each week during an assessment period to students who have yet to complete the questionnaire. Supportive recruitment strategies also include class announcements made by faculty members, reminders made by residential leaders to students who live on campus, and a global announcement posted in the Canvas learning management system. These strategies will encourage students to check their Tarleton student email account for information and access to the Texan Smart Assessment.

When the Phase 1 and Phase 2 assessment periods end, the Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives will send the Director of Institutional Analytics, Effectiveness, and Accreditation the Qualtrics data set who will then collaborate with the Director of Financial Aid to gather additional institutional data available for respondents. These data will include financial award information, student loan debt information, and academic progression information. After data have been gathered, the final

dataset will be shared with the Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives who will collaborate with the Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center to complete data analysis. Data analysis will involve the reporting of descriptive statistics and findings from statistical testing, such as paired *t*-tests, with additional use of factor analysis and reliability tests to construct and validate indexes contained within the survey instrument. Data will be reported in aggregated and disaggregated forms by gender, first-generation status, Pell eligibility, and racial/ethnic background.

WhichWay® Post-Assessments

The Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives and the Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center will oversee the collection and analysis of levels of participation and post-assessment data for the WhichWay® modules. Post-assessment data will be collected at the end of each fall semester and reported in an aggregate manner in partnership with the Director of Institutional Analytics, Effectiveness, and Accreditation to gain student demographic information, including first-generation status, gender, Pell eligibility, and race/ethnicity. To ensure equity among FTIC students, statistical methods will be used for analyzing post-test assessment data to measure and compare differences in learning across groups based on certain demographic characteristics.

Texan Smart Financial Center Evaluations and Questionnaires

Throughout the first-year experience, the Texan Smart Financial Center will facilitate planned activities that include hosting educational experiences (e.g., presentations) and delivering personalized peer support (e.g., peer financial coaching) for FTIC students. Evaluations will be given to FTIC students who engage in educational experiences, and intake and exit questionnaires will be given to FTIC students who access personalized peer support. Data from evaluations and intake and exit questionnaires will serve as indirect measures to ensure planned activities facilitated by the Texan Smart Financial Center are impactful and relevant for FTIC students, as well as guide the development of future activities. Table 16 presents items included on the evaluations and questionnaires for planned activities facilitated by the Texan Smart Financial Center.

Table 16. Items from Evaluations and Questionnaires

Evaluations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your first name? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your last name? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your University Identification Number? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Overall, how would you rate the presentation? Single answer choices: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Overall, how would you rate the presenter(s)? Single answer choices: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What was your confidence level in [insert topic] <u>before</u> this activity? Single answer choices: Extremely Confident, Moderately Confident, Somewhat Confident, Slightly Confident, Not at All Confident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What was your confidence level in [insert topic] <u>after</u> this activity? Single answer choices: Extremely Confident, Moderately Confident, Somewhat Confident, Slightly Confident, Not at All Confident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What did you learn from this activity? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Do you have any feedback you would like to share? Answer: Open ended

<i>Intake Questionnaire</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your first name? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your last name? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your University Identification Number? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What topic for financial wellness and well-being are you most concerned about today? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Please rate the level of stress you have about your finances right now. Single answer choices: Extremely Stressed, Moderately Stressed, Somewhat Stressed, Slightly Stressed, Not at All Stressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: I am confident I can manage my money. Single answer choices: Extremely Confident, Moderately Confident, Somewhat Confident, Slightly Confident, Not at All Confident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: I have access to \$500 - \$1,000 in the event of an unplanned event. Single answer choices: No, Yes, Unsure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: I have a good understanding of how to create and accomplish financial goals. Single answer choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: I have a good understanding of how to create and follow a budget. Single answer choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: I have a good understanding of how to manage credit or debt. Single answer choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
<i>Exit Questionnaire</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your first name? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your last name? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: What is your University Identification Number? Answer: Open ended
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Overall, how would you rate the session? Single answer choices: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Overall, how would you rate your peer financial coach? Single answer choices: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: Please rate the level of stress you have about your finances right now. Single answer choices: Extremely Stressed, Moderately Stressed, Somewhat Stressed, Slightly Stressed, Not at All Stressed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: I am confident I can manage my money. Single answer choices: Extremely Confident, Moderately Confident, Somewhat Confident, Slightly Confident, Not at All Confident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: I have access to \$500 - \$1,000 in the event of an unplanned event. Single answer choices: No, Yes, Unsure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: I have a good understanding of how to create and accomplish financial goals. Single answer choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item: I have a good understanding of how to create and follow a budget.

▪ Single answer choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
▪ Item: I have a good understanding of how to manage credit or debt. ▪ Single answer choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
▪ Item: Do you have any feedback you would like to share? ▪ Answer: Open ended

EAB Navigate Reports

Tarleton uses EAB Navigate as its enterprise-level technology platform for student success. As such, the Texan Smart Financial Center will document engagement with FTIC students during planned activities in EAB Navigate. Examples of documentation include student attendance at presentations, appointment reports for peer financial coaching sessions, and notes from early alert cases. Data from EAB Navigate reports will serve as indirect measures to track student engagement with planned activities facilitated by the Texan Smart Financial Center and evaluate the efficacy of its planned activities over time. Specific EAB Navigate reports that will provide assessment data include Appointment Summaries, Alert Report, Cases Report, Notes on Students, and Student Services Report.

Baseline Data and Benchmarks of Key Indicators/Measures

Baseline data provide information about students' level of performance prior to implementation of an intervention and allow for comparative analysis of groups. In 2018, Tarleton participated in the fall administration of the Student Financial Wellness Survey conducted by Trellis Research, a department within Trellis Company. This web survey provides insights into the financial wellness and well-being of postsecondary students across the nation, including those who attend Tarleton. To monitor the success of the Texan Smart QEP over time, initial baseline data were generated from undergraduate student responses to specific survey items in Tarleton's Fall 2018 Semester Report of the Student Financial Wellness Survey. Using initial baseline data, benchmark indicators/measures of learning over time of the Texan Smart QEP implementation were established (see Table 17).

Table 17. Baseline Data & Benchmarks of Key Indicators/Measures

Student Learning Outcome #1: FTIC students will demonstrate proficiency with topics related to personal finance.						
	Fall 2018*	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2025
Have trouble getting \$500 in cash or credit in case of an emergency	60%		57%	54%	51%	48%
Ran out of money at least once in the past 12 months	69%		66%	63%	60%	57%
Ran out of money five or more times in the past 12 months	29%		26%	23%	20%	17%
Student Learning Outcome #2: FTIC students will demonstrate proficiency with topics related to financial aid in college.						
	Fall 2018*	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2025
Do not know how to pay for college next semester	28%		25%	22%	19%	16%
Have more student loan debt than expected at this point	66%		63%	60%	57%	54%

Either did not receive any student loan counseling or were unaware of completing student loan counseling	45%		42%	39%	36%	33%
Demonstrated financial knowledge from student loan counseling:						
One correct response	22%		25%	28%	31%	34%
Two correct responses	39%		42%	45%	48%	51%
Three correct responses	26%		29%	32%	35%	38%
Student Learning Outcome #3: FTIC students will express self-confidence and motivation in their financial abilities.						
	Fall 2018*	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Fall 2025
Worry about having enough money to pay for school	72%		69%	66%	63%	60%
Worry to some degree about paying for their current monthly expenses	52%		49%	46%	43%	40%
Feel total debt is overwhelming	52%		49%	46%	43%	40%
Feel confident or very confident in their ability to pay off student loan debt acquired while being a student	31%		28%	25%	22%	19%

* Indicates initial baseline year

As shown in Table 17, Trellis' Student Financial Wellness Survey will serve as a summative key assessment that measures the effectiveness of Tarleton's focus on financial wellness and well-being among FTIC students throughout the duration of the Texan Smart QEP. Although findings from the Fall 2018 administration of the survey provided initial baseline data with which to construct the assessment plan, survey responses from FTIC students who participate in the Fall 2021 administration will be collected and compared to initial baseline data determine whether any adjustments to the benchmark indicators/measures of learning over time are needed. Since FTIC students are the target group for the Texan Smart QEP during their first-year experience, responses from second year FTIC students in subsequent years of administration of Trellis' Student Financial Wellness Survey (i.e., Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Fall 2025) will be included in the Texan Smart QEP assessment plan. The overall goal for Student Learning Outcomes #1-3 is to improve how students respond to each survey item by 12% through incremental improvements of 3% each year.

Continuous Improvement

Tarleton will use data from the planned assessments to continuously assess, modify, and improve planned activities for the Texan Smart QEP. Tarleton formed the Texan Smart QEP Implementation Committee, a cross-divisional committee of internal stakeholders, to oversee the continuous improvement process. To further ensure success of the Texan Smart QEP, the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Finance & Administration restructured the scope of two existing staff member positions to include job responsibilities for the Texan Smart QEP. The Division of Academic Affairs restructured a staff member position in University College, Technical Communications Coordinator, to support communication tasks for the Texan Smart QEP. Likewise, the Division of Finance & Administration restructured a staff member position in Business Services, Director of Student Accounts/Texan Smart Liaison, to support students in meeting their financial obligations responsibly.

The Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives will hold two meetings annually with members of the QEP Implementation Committee, with one meeting occurring in February and one meeting occurring in October. During these meetings, data from the Texan Smart QEP assessments will be shared and report progress towards achieving benchmark indicators/measures of learning for each of

the student learning outcomes. Members of the QEP Implementation Committee will provide feedback and make data-informed suggestions regarding possible modifications to the Texan Smart QEP. Table 18 is a listing of the members by job title who will serve on the QEP Implementation Committee.

Table 18. Texan Smart QEP Implementation Committee Members

Academic Affairs
Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives
Director of the Texan Smart Financial Center
Director of Institutional Analytics, Effectiveness, & Accreditation
Deans and Department Heads
Faculty Senator
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
TRIO Student Support Services
Enrollment Management
Assistant Director of Financial Aid
Director of Scholarships
Manager of Information Technology
Finance & Administration
Director of Student Accounts/Texan Smart Liaison
Manager, Student Employment
Institutional Advancement
Associate Director of Development
Intercollegiate Athletics
Associate Athletic Director for Compliance & Student Services
Student Affairs
Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
University Relations
Assistant Vice President for Marketing & Communications
Director of Web Services
Student Representatives
Three or more student representatives

Following each meeting with members of the QEP Implementation Committee, the Assistant Vice President for Strategic Academic Initiatives will share data from the Texan Smart QEP assessments, report progress towards achieving benchmark indicators/measures of learning for each of the student learning outcomes, and communicate suggestions for modifications made by members of the QEP Implementation Committee with the SACSCOC Liaison and members of the President's Cabinet. During these semi-annual checkpoints, this group of university administrators will determine which Texan Smart QEP actions and activities require modifications and develop action plans for the following year. Furthermore, progress of the Texan Smart QEP will be included in Tarleton's ongoing institutional practices towards SACSCOC continuous compliance.



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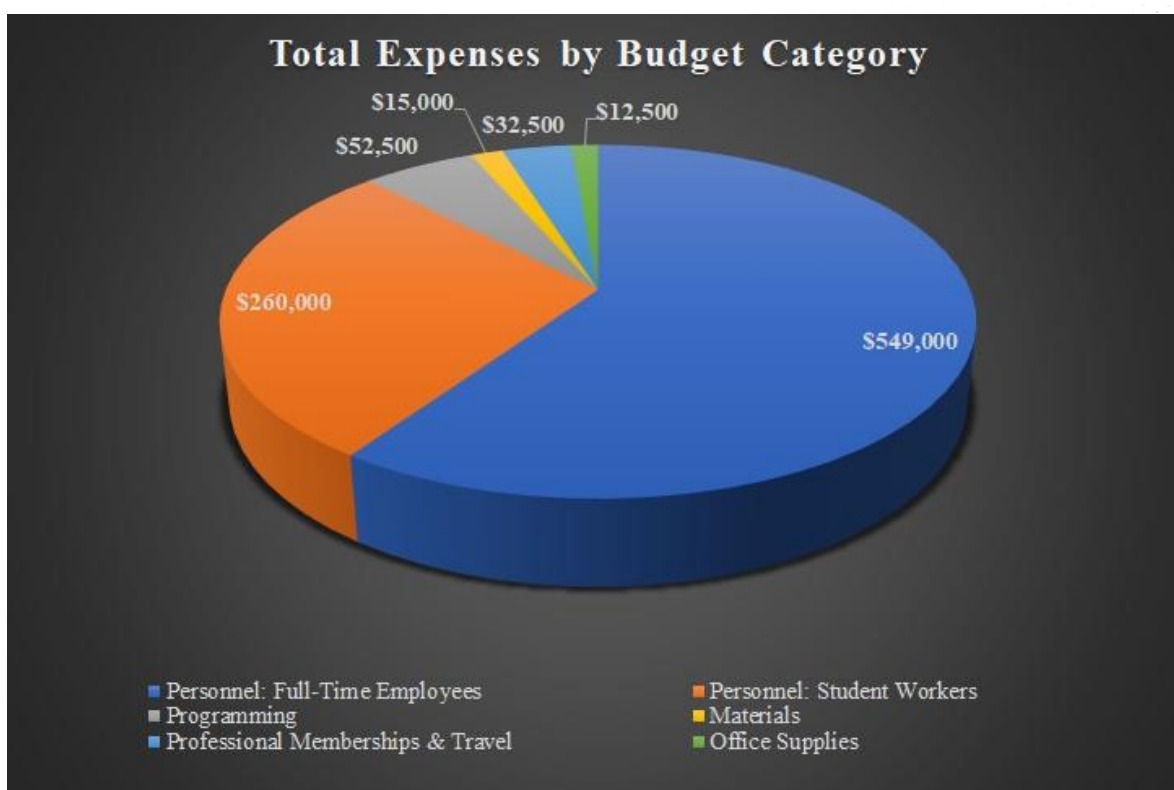
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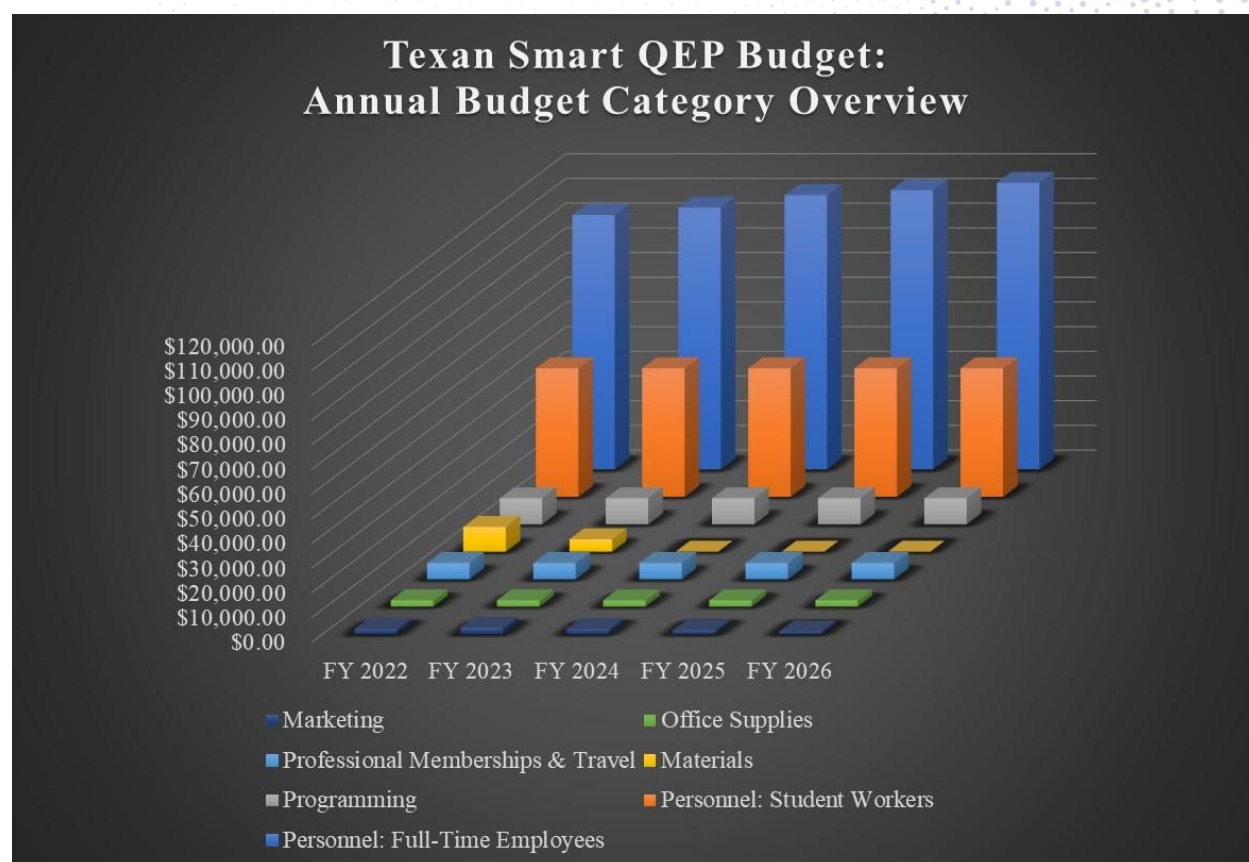
Appendix: Expanded Texan Smart QEP Budget Information

The Texan Smart QEP aims improve financial wellness and well-being among Tarleton FTIC students during their first-year experience through a series of interventions that increase their knowledge and skills to manage financial resources effectively. Improving financial wellness and well-being among college students is of paramount importance, particularly during the current conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve this objective, Tarleton State University will commit a total of \$930,500 for the Texan Smart QEP budget over the next five years. As shown in the chart below, the Texan Smart QEP budget allocates funding for seven different categories: (1) Personnel: Full-Time Employees, (2) Personnel: Student Workers, (3) Programming, (4) Materials, (5) Professional Memberships and Travel, (6) Office Supplies, and (7) Marketing.



The Texan Smart QEP includes new initiatives that will be implemented in a well-timed and strategic manner over the next five years. As shown in the table and chart below, the annual funding that Tarleton has committed to support actions associated with the Texan Smart QEP represent economical and judicious expenditures.

Budget Category	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Personnel: Full-Time Employees	\$103,000.00	\$106,000.00	\$111,000.00	\$113,000.00	\$116,000.00
Personnel: Student Workers	\$52,000.00	\$52,000.00	\$52,000.00	\$52,000.00	\$52,000.00
Programming	\$10,500.00	\$10,500.00	\$10,500.00	\$10,500.00	\$10,500.00
Materials	\$10,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Professional Memberships & Travel	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00
Office Supplies	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Marketing	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,000.00
Total	\$186,500.00	\$185,000.00	\$184,500.00	\$186,000.00	\$188,500.00



In addition to meeting goals and student learning outcomes, the Texan Smart QEP presents a significant return on investment (ROI) to the University. The table below delineates an estimated (ROI) per student using the *Return on Investment Estimator* worksheet published by Noel-Levitz®:

<https://www.ruffalonl.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/ReturnonInvestmentEstimator.pdf>.

Short-Term ROI Per Student	
Average of FY 2022 – FY 2026 Investments	\$186,100
Average number of additional FTIC students retained annually	100
Average net tuition revenue per undergraduate student annually	\$2,828
Short-term ROI formula: Short-term revenue gain – cost ÷ cost	52%
Long-Term ROI Per Student	
Longer-term revenue gain	\$1,222,833
Longer-term ROI formula: Short-term revenue gain + discounted future revenue gain – cost ÷ cost	657%





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