Tarleton State University
Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

Glossary of Terms

A

**Academic Year** - An "academic year or its equivalent" is defined as one complete school year or two half years that are:

- from different school years, excluding the summer sessions
- complete>
- consecutive, and>
- Generally fall within a 12-month period.

**Accreditation** - Accreditation in higher education is defined as a collegial process based on self- and peer assessment for public accountability and improvement of academic quality.

**Analysis of Variance** (ANOVA) - A statistical technique used to determine if statistically significant differences exists between two or more groups (gender, ethnicity, student classification, etc.....) on a continuous variable (GPA, SAT scores, etc.....).

B

**Banner**- The student information management system (SIMS) used by Tarleton State University

C

**CBM** – Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Management Reports. Various CBMs are submitted throughout the academic year to report on enrollments, graduation rates, and other academic performance measures.

**Common Data Set (CDS)** - The Common Data Set (CDS) initiative is a collaborative effort among data providers in the higher education community and publishers as represented by the College Board, Peterson's, and U.S. News & World Report. The combined goal of this collaboration is to improve the
quality and accuracy of information provided to all involved in a student's transition into higher education, as well as to reduce the reporting burden on data providers. The CDS is a set of standards and definitions of data items rather than a survey instrument or set of data represented in a database. Each of the higher education surveys conducted by the participating publishers incorporates items from the CDS as well as unique items proprietary to each publisher. Consequently, the publishers' surveys differ in that they utilize varying numbers of items from the CDS.

**Census Date** – The official day of record that public higher education institutions must determine the enrollments that qualify to be reported to the Coordinating Board for state reimbursement. Also referred to as the Official Reporting Date (ORD). For fall and spring semesters, it is the 12th class day. For summer semesters, it is the 4th class day. The count of class days begins on the first day that classes are held in the term and includes each calendar day on which classes are normally held at the institution (e.g., Monday through Friday) until the official census date is reached. The official census day must be on a day that the Registrar's office is scheduled to be open so that a student will be able to drop or withdraw from class.

**Chi-Square Statistic** - A statistical technique used to determine if differences between two categorical variables are due to chance or some other factor.

**CIP (Classification of Instruction Programs) Discipline Code** - These codes represent a nationally used, common taxonomy for the classification of higher education degree programs. The CIP is the standard method for reporting academic programs to the Federal government.

**Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)** - CIRP is a national longitudinal study of the American higher education system. It is administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California, Los Angeles (see HERI)

The CIRP longitudinal program consists of the following surveys:

- CIRP Freshman Survey
- Your First College Year Survey
- Diverse Learning Environments Survey
- College Senior Survey

For more information, please see: [http://www.heri.ucla.edu/herisurveys.php](http://www.heri.ucla.edu/herisurveys.php)

**College Portraits** - As a part of the Voluntary System of Accountability (see VSA), the program provides college choice information to provide greater accountability through accessible, transparent, and comparable information about colleges and universities. For more information, please see: [http://www.collegeportraits.org/](http://www.collegeportraits.org/)

**Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)** - The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has been the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs since its inception in 1979. For the ultimate purpose of fostering and enhancing student learning, development, and achievement, and in general to promote good professional practice, CAS continues to create and deliver a dynamic line of
products that are designed to lead to a host of high-quality programs, services, and outcomes. For more information, please see: www.cas.edu

**Credit** - The unit of measurement some institutions give for fulfilling course requirements. A credit typically represents one hour of class per week for one semester.

**Credit Hour** - A unit counted toward completion of an academic program. Each course is worth a number of credit hours (also known as “credits”). The number of credit hours reflects the number of hours a student spends in class for that course per week.

**Degree Seeking Student** - Students enrolled in courses for credit who are recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or other formal award.

**Digital Measures** - Digital Measures is an electronic portfolio system used by Tarleton faculty/staff to track academic and/or professional development activities. It is a secure, reliable web-based tool for faculty to manage their research, teaching, and service activities while at TSU. Reports generated from this information are then used for retention, promotion, and tenure.

**Dual Enrollment** - The simultaneous enrollment of a student at a high school and in a college course which is offered through regular campus schedule.

**Educational Testing Service** - A private nonprofit educational testing and assessment organization located in Lawrence Township, New Jersey. For more information, please see: http://www.ets.org/

**FSSE (Faculty Survey of Student Engagement)** – A product of the National Survey of Student Engagement (see NSSE), the FSSE is designed to measure faculty expectations of student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. Faculty members are asked questions on a variety of educational topics that mimic the questions students are asked in NSSE. The survey also collects information about how faculty members spend their time related to professional activities and the kinds of learning experiences their institution emphasizes. For more information, please see: www.fsse.iub.edu
Financial Aid: A comprehensive term used to describe monetary assistance for students in the form of grants/gift aid, scholarships, work-study, or loans from sources including the institution, private donors, and/or the state or federal government.

First Generation College Student - Tarleton classifies first-generation college students by one of three definitions:

- A student with neither parent having attended any college
- A student with at least one parent with a 2-year or associates degree
- A student with at least one parent with some college attendance but neither have a degree of any type

First-Time Freshman - An undergraduate student newly enrolled at Tarleton State University and not previously enrolled in a postsecondary degree program. Includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term. Also students who entered with advanced standings (college credits earned before graduation from high school

Fiscal Year – At Tarleton, the twelve-month budgetary period beginning September 1st and ending August 31st.

FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) Employee - A numerical designator for an appointment based on 100% effort for full-time. An FTE for a full-time employee is 1.00. (Two people each serving in half-time faculty positions would equal, together, one FTE faculty position.)

FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) Student - A measure of semester student enrollment calculated on the total number of student credit hours (SCHs). Every 15 SCHs at the undergraduate level equals 1.0 FTE; every 12 SCHs at the masters level equals 1.0 FTE; and every 9 credits hours at the doctoral level equals 1.0 FTE student.

Full-time Faculty - Tarleton State University employees who are employed on a full-time (100% effort) basis for instruction (including those with released time)

Full-time Staff - Tarleton State University employees who are employed on a full-time (100% effort) basis and do not meet the definition of faculty.

Gift Aid - Any form of financial assistance awarded by the institution, private sources, and/or the state or federal government that does not require repayment.

Graduation Rate - The percentage of a student cohort that graduate four, five, or six years from the date they first-enrolled.
Headcount - Number of individual students, whether full-time or part-time.

Higher Education Research Institute (HERI): an interdisciplinary center for research, evaluation, information, policy studies, and research training in postsecondary education. HERI is housed in the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles and is the home of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). (See CIRP) For more information about HERI, please see: http://www.heri.ucla.edu/index.php

Institutional Aid - Any form of financial assistance awarded and funded by the postsecondary institution that the student is attending.

IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) – the core postsecondary education data collection for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). For more information, please see: http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/

Legacy - A student whose relative has attended, or is attending, Tarleton State University (grandparent, mother, father, sibling, aunt, uncle, husband, wife, cousin, or child).

Major Field of Study - Students are classified as majors according to their selection of a primary field of study. This field must be selected from approved programs within each degree program.

Multiple Regression: a statistical technique that analyzes the variability of a dependent variable by manipulating two or more independent variable (Pedhazur, 1997).
**National Collegiate Athletic Association** - (NCAA) - a nonprofit association of 1,281 institutions, conferences, organizations and individuals that organizes the athletic programs of many colleges and universities in the United States and Canada.

**Noel Levitz** - a postsecondary education consulting firm that regularly conducts trend research and shares its findings widely, including with higher education media, through a variety of information tools.

**Non-Degree Seeking Student** - A student enrolled in courses for credit who is not recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or formal award.

**Non-Resident Alien** - A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

**NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement)** – Administered by Indiana University, NSSE annually collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development. The results provide an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college. For more information, please see: [http://www.nsse.iub.edu/](http://www.nsse.iub.edu/)

**Post baccalaureate Student** - A student with a bachelor’s degree who is enrolled in courses that are not credited toward a graduate degree or for graduate credit.

**Princeton Review** - a college choice organization, that offers test-preparation services, tutoring/admissions resources, online courses, and print/digital reference books. For more information, please see: [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)

**Qualtrics** - the web based program that Tarleton uses to collect survey data. For more information, please see: [www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)

**Race/ethnicity**: Categories developed in 1997 by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that are used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. The
designations are used to categorize U.S. citizens, resident aliens, and other eligible non-citizens.

Individuals are asked to first designate ethnicity as:
- Hispanic or Latino or
- Not Hispanic or Latino

Second, individuals are asked to indicate all races that apply among the following:
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

**Race/ethnicity (former definition):** Categories used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. A person may be counted in only one group. The groups used to categorize U.S. citizens, resident aliens, and other eligible non-citizens are as follows: Black, non-Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, White, non-Hispanic.

**Race/ethnicity unknown:** The category used to report students or employees whose race and ethnicity are not known.

**Retention rate** - The rate at which a cohort of college students continue, or re-enroll, from one year to the succeeding year.

**Semester Credit Hours (SCHs)** - A unit of measure of instruction consisting of 60 minutes, of which 50 minutes must be direct instruction, over a 15-week period in a semester system.

**Simple regression:** a statistical technique that analyzes the variability of a dependent variable by manipulating an independent variable (Pedhazur, 1997).

**Student/Faculty Ratio** - The number of FTE undergraduate students per FTE faculty.

**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)** - The regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Latin America and other international sites approved by the Commission on Colleges that award associate, baccalaureate, master’s, or doctoral degrees. For more information, please see: [http://www.sacscoc.org/](http://www.sacscoc.org/)
**Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)**- Administered by Noel Levitz, the SSI attempts to measure student satisfaction and priorities, indicating how satisfied students are as well as what issues are important to them (see Noel Levitz).

**Survey Research**- Research based on data collected via quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method assessment instruments/methodologies.

**Tenure** - A status granted to professors that gives protection from summary dismissal. A commitment by the University made to the individual faculty member. Promotion recognizes academic achievement not only in the University, but in the profession at large.

**Texas Association of Institutional Research (TAIR)**- The professional organization supporting institutional research, planning, evaluation, and policy analysis in Texas institutions of higher education. TAIR provides professional development opportunities through its annual conference, pre- and post-conference workshops, and other professional development activates held at various times of the year. For more information, please see: www.texas-air.org

**Texas Education Agency (TEA)**- The mission of the Texas Education Agency is to provide leadership, guidance and resources to help schools meet the educational needs of all students and prepare them for success in the global economy. For more information, please see: www.tea.state.tx.us/

**Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)** - The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's mission is to work closely with policymakers and education stakeholders to develop and implement a higher education framework focused on initiatives to:

- Dramatically increase the number of postsecondary completions;
- Keep college affordable and accessible for all Texans; and
- Align higher education outcomes with current and future workforce needs.

For more information, please see: www.thecb.state.tx.us/

**Texan Facts**- Tarleton State University's portal to the WebFOCUS reporting tool where data and information are displayed and summarized for both internal and external consumption.

**Transfer Student** - A student entering the reporting institution for the first time and who is known to have previously attended another institution at the same level (e.g., undergraduate to undergraduate, graduate to graduate; not undergraduate to graduate).

**Trends** - A reporting technique that measures one or more variables over a specified period of time to identify changes.
United States Department of Education (USDOE) - promotes student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. For more information, please see: www.ed.gov/

US News and World Report - a college ranking/choice organization that provides students and their families with information specific to college types, departments, and academic programs. For more information, please see: http://www.usnews.com/education

Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) - VSA works to achieve the following objectives: demonstrate accountability and stewardship to the public; support institutions in the measurement of educational outcomes and facilitate the identification and implementation of effective practices as part of institutional improvement efforts; assemble and disseminate information that is transparent, comparable, and understandable; and provide a useful tool for students during the college search process (VSA, 2014). Additional information is available at: http://www.voluntarysystem.org/

WEAVE Online- Tarleton State University’s central repository for assessment information associated with strategic planning and accreditation. For more information, please see: www.weaveonline.com

WEB Focus- WebFOCUS by Information Builders is the industry’s most comprehensive Business Intelligence (BI) platform. It offers easy-to-use BI, business analytics, and performance management capabilities to promote a proactive business culture that helps organizations gain a competitive edge.

Updated 04/2014