

## IE and Assessment Glossary of Terms

**Academic Progress of All Students** - Academic progress indicates if and how well students achieve their academic goals. Measures in this category include continued success by students in consecutive or subsequent courses, student progress through the developmental studies sequence, and other measures. This is one of the institutional performance indicators STC uses to evaluate how well it accomplishes its mission.

**Access** - Whether the college and its services are widely available to the residents of the College District service area. All public colleges are required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to ensure equity of access by gender, ethnicity and similar characteristics that have historically been subject to bias in higher education.

**Accreditation** - Process of certification by some external agency. Accreditation may be institutional (e.g. SACS) or programmatic. In either case, the purpose of accreditation is establishment and monitoring of minimum levels of acceptability and recognition of excellence.

**Accuplacer** – Accuplacer is a set of online assessment tests in Reading, Writing, and Math developed by the College Board. It is approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as one of the assessment tools used to gauge students’ college readiness. Many Texas Colleges or Universities use Accuplacer for placement purposes to determine if a student is in need of developmental education or if he or she is ready to take college level courses.

**ACTSSO** - The ACT Survey of Student Opinion is a student opinion survey widely used by two-year colleges. The survey results are used at STC as an assessment of effectiveness in meeting student needs and the college’s mission through annual administration to a randomly selected group of classes across the STC District. STC used this survey from 2000 to 2005. Beginning from 2006, STC used CCSSE in lieu of ACTSSO (See CCSSE definition).

**Articulation Agreements** - Contractual agreements negotiated between institutions of higher education that enable students to transfer credit from specified courses to receiving institutions, minimizing the loss of credit hours when a student transfers.

**Benchmarks** - Quantifiable standards against which achievement of a goal, objective or strategy can be measured. They are also used to gauge “added value” for the client or improved progress.

**Campus** - Principal locations where STC courses are taught: Pecan Campus (3201 W. Pecan, McAllen); the Ramiro R. Casso, M.D. -Nursing and Allied Health Campus (NAHC, 1101 E. Vermont, McAllen); the Technology Center (TECH, 3700 W. Military Hwy., McAllen); the Mid-Valley Campus (400 N. Border, Weslaco); and the Starr County Campus (142 FM 3167, Rio Grande City). Many courses are offered in temporary locations to serve the needs of the people in Hidalgo and Starr Counties. The reports in the Fact Book group these in presenting information about course offerings and enrollment by campus. All teaching sites in the Mid-Valley region (i.e. Knapp Medical Center, Donna H.S., Weslaco H.S., Med High, Science Academy, physical education facilities, et. al.)

are grouped with the Mid-Valley Campus. All teaching sites in Starr County (i.e. Roma H.S., Starr County Memorial Hospital, et. al.) are grouped with the Starr County Campus. Since these two campuses serve distinctive regions they serve as a hub for the temporary teaching sites by providing student services, faculty office space, learning resource centers, student success centers and other services.

The two satellite facilities close to the Pecan Campus (Ware Road and Pecan Plaza) are grouped with the Pecan Campus. All other temporary teaching sites (those generally in the McAllen, Edinburg, Mission, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo area not associated with a regular campus) are grouped in a category labeled “Other” in most reports.

**CCSSE** – CCSSE refers to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement. Developed and administered by the College of Education at the University of Texas at Austin, this survey gauges students’ level of engagement in community colleges. South Texas College began conducting CCSSE in 2006. It was administered at STC annually from 2006 to 2009. Starting from 2009, it was administered every other year. CCSSE results are used for designing interventions to improve the institutional and instructional practices.

**Cohort** - Group of individuals entering an institution or process at the same time and level. Cohort tracking is a useful tool for identifying progress and comparing groups.

**College Profile** - The College Profile is an overview of STC, which provides general information about the College and its service area.

### **College Readiness**

College readiness refers to students’ ability to succeed in the college level coursework as indicated by students passing the TSI approved college readiness tests. Included in this section are reports on the TSI completion rates of STC Developmental students in Reading, Writing, and Math areas. Other reports about students’ college preparation and college going rate are also included in this section.

**Completion** - Finishing a course, degree, or certificate program. This may be measured more broadly to include completion of an individual student’s educational objective.

**Contact Hours (CH)** - Lecture and laboratory hours in which a student has contact with an instructor. Since this represents the actual instructional time spent by faculty and students, the state uses contact hours to compute reimbursement to the College.

**Contract Enrollment** - Workforce development instruction to high school students that allows them to enroll in technical courses.

**Course Completion** - Students finishing a course with a letter grade or Pass/No Pass grade. Course completion does not include those who withdraw from a course, which results in a grade of W.

**Data** - Facts or figures on which analyses can be made and from which conclusions may be drawn; singular form of “data” is “datum.”

**Declared Majors** - A student’s declared and recorded program of study. A student’s declared major should represent the curriculum that they are following, however, many students will not adhere completely to their major degree plan or will begin taking courses for another major before officially changing their declared major.

**Delinquency** - Amount of student tuition and fees that are past due.

**Demographics** - Characteristics of persons (students, staff, etc.) that are used to categorize those persons as members of identifiable groups (e.g. by age, ethnicity, and gender).

**Developmental Sequence** - Arrangement of courses in a specific developmental studies discipline (reading, writing, or math) that prepares students for college-level courses. One of the performance indicators measures student progress through their developmental courses to summarize how many students are successful at developing college-level skills.

**Dual Enrollment** - Students enrolled both at a high school and a college, taking college level courses that fulfill college and high school degree requirements.

**Duplicated Headcount** - Students enrolled in more than one place, department, program, major, or belonging in more than one demographic classification are counted for each category, yielding “duplicated” headcount. Duplicated headcount is greater than simple (unduplicated) headcount.

**Economically Disadvantaged** - Special populations category for low-income persons, defined by the THECB as those whose annual income is at or below the federal poverty line or who are eligible to participate in one of several needs-based public assistance programs (e.g. WIC, TANF, Pell, WIA, et. al.).

**Employment** - Title of one of the ten categories of Institutional Performance Indicators (related to STC’s impact on the preparedness of students seeking a job that pays wages or a salary. Indicators in this group include: Number of graduates employed in their field of study, employer satisfaction with STC graduates, and graduate satisfaction with their preparation for work.

**Facilities** - Structures and grounds used by the College; one of the eleven categories used to group the Institutional Performance Indicators. The indicators in this category address the adequacy of STC physical facilities to meet the needs of various constituent groups. Indicators in this category include the number of teaching stations (classrooms) per campus, campus square footage per student FTE, square footage of leased and owned facilities, an assessment of facility needs, and other measures.

**Finance** - Title of one of the ten categories used to group the Institutional Performance Indicators; the indicators in this area cover issues of fiscal accountability and solvency. Some indicators in this category include performance on state financial benchmarks, expenditures per student FTE, revenue per student FTE, student receivables delinquency rate, and the ratio of expenditures to revenues.

**FTE** - Full-Time Equivalent refers to the approximate number of full-time persons (students, faculty, employees, etc.) that would equal the combined full-time and part-time persons. Although there are many different formulas used to determine an FTE, the Fact Book uses 12 semester credit hours (SCH) per long semester for one credit FTE student. There is also an annual measure of FTE that is equal to 30 SCH for the whole year (this assumes 12 hours in fall, 12 hours in spring, and 6 hours in the summer). FTE for non-credit students is calculated by dividing the number of contact hours per quarter by 120 since STC's non-credit instruction is operated on the quarter system.

**FTIC** - First-Time in College (FTIC) refers to students new to STC who have no prior college experience. The FTIC cohorts used in the Fact Book also include high school students taking dual enrollment classes for the first time.

**Fund Balance** - Uncommitted Funds.

**Graduation Rate** - Proportion of a given group of students (cohort) who graduate within a specified period. The standard used for the federal (Department of Education) definition is the number of students from a first-time in college cohort who complete their program within one and one-half the program length, or three years to complete a two-year program and one and a half years to complete a one-year program.

**Headcount** - Total number of students enrolled.

**HERI Faculty Survey** - The Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey measures faculty members' instructional practices and their satisfaction with the institutional support. Results from the HERI Faculty Survey can be used as a base for discussing pedagogical strategies, policy changes, faculty professional development, and student learning experience improvement. STC started administering the HERI survey and using the results since 2004.

**IE** - IE refers to the institutional effectiveness process of determining how effective and how closely STC and specific units are carrying out their mission IE is a measure of how successful we are in meeting meaningful, pre-specified strategic outcomes that support STC's comprehensive mission.

**Median** - Mid-point in a series of numbers (i.e. half of the numbers in a series are below the median value and half are above the median value). The median is often used as a method of expressing average (besides the arithmetic mean) when the series of numbers is heavily skewed by large or small numbers.

**NACUBO** - The National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), a professional organization representing chief administrative and financial officers at more than 2,100 colleges and universities nationwide. NACUBO's mission is to promote sound management and financial practices at colleges and universities. NACUBO has been instrumental in developing financial benchmarks for colleges and universities.

**Non-Traditional Gender Enrollment** - Minority gender (thus “non-traditional”) in programs in which the other gender represents 75% or more of all students enrolled. A woman enrolled in Automotive Technology is often an example of non-traditional gender enrollment.

**Performance Indicators** - Specific measures that are used to assess whether a particular intended outcome has been met. The Institutional Performance Indicators are grouped into eleven broad categories at STC (See the list of STC Institutional Performance Indicators from the link).

**Public Magnet Schools** - Public high schools focusing on a specialized curriculum and serving students from multiple independent school districts. The magnet schools within the STC District are all part of the South Texas Independent School District (See the link to these schools).

**Quartile** - A range that represents 25%. The top quartile of a graduating class of seniors would be those students graduating in the top 25%.

**Receivable** - Student tuition and fees that have not been paid.

**Retention** - Continued student enrollment at the College, often measured from the fall semester to the spring semester and from one fall semester to the fall semester of the following years. These retention rates provide a standard measure to compare to benchmarks and give an indication of the number of students making progress towards completing a degree or certificate.

**SCH** - Semester Credit Hour.

**SENSE** - The Survey of Entering Student Engagement is administered by the Center for Community College Student Engagement. It gauges community college students’ experience with the college during the first three weeks of school on six benchmarks. Results of the survey can help community colleges design interventions to improve students’ retention and college completion. STC started administering SENSE as a pilot survey in 2008. Formal implementation of SENSE at STC started in 2010, and results of the 2010 SENSE serve as the benchmark data to gauge improvement in the future.

**Service Area** - Hidalgo and Starr Counties, designated as the geographical region served by STC and the taxing district for the STC District.

**Special Populations** - One of a number of categories (academically disadvantaged, economically disadvantaged, individuals with disabilities, limited English proficiency, non-traditional program enrollment, displaced homemakers, and single parents) of specific student populations that have been either historically underserved by higher education or that represent students “at risk” of not succeeding. The College is required to evaluate the access and equity of services offered to these populations. The College is also evaluated on the outcomes of these student groups and must ensure that they perform as well as all other students.

**Stakeholder Satisfaction** - Degree to which individuals and groups with an interest in the College, its work, and the outcomes of that work are satisfied.

**Student Development** - Students' growth in learning skills essential to the achievement of educational goals, as well as the cultural, social, moral, intellectual, and physical development. Student Development is one of the eleven categories used to group the Institutional Performance Indicators.

**Successful Course Completion/Course Pass Rate** – Successful course completion refers to completing a course by earning a course grade of “C” or better. Although students may still pass a course with a “D” in most areas of the college, this is not considered “successful completion” since a student must maintain a 2.0 GPA to graduate.

**Surveys** - Research method for collecting data from individuals about themselves, their households, or other large social units.

**Suspension** - Denial of fall or spring enrollment to students previously placed on Academic Probation, when cumulative GPA and current semester GPA is below 2.00. Students placed on academic suspension may enroll for summer sessions for the purpose of raising their cumulative GPA to the level required for good standing.

**TASP** - The Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP), mandated in Spring 1987 by House Bill 2182, assesses students' skills in reading, writing, and math necessary for success in college-level courses and ensures assistance to those who need it. (See THEA below.)

**THEA** - The TASP test has been renamed the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA). The THEA is one of the tests that can be administered to students to determine if they are college ready.

**THECB** - Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is a state agency that oversees all public postsecondary education in Texas.

**Transfer** - Leaving one educational institution to enroll in another. Transfer may be in-transfer (entering STC) or out-transfer (leaving STC).

**Transfer Rate** - Number of students leaving STC to enroll in other institutions.

**Transfer Success** - Academic success of students following transfer.

**Workforce Development** - Development of entry-level knowledge, skills and abilities needed by students for successful entry into local employment.