

Guidelines for DSA Departments Requesting Retention or GPA Analysis

Texas A&M University has emphasized efforts to improve retention for all students. The Division of Student Affairs has experienced an increase of requests for information about student retention rate of specific participants. To help programs/units/department (now only referred to as 'unit') decide if their request will add value or confuse, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research is providing the following guidelines.

- ❖ Texas A&M undergraduate student retention goal has a narrow focus
 - TAMU is tracking first-time, full-time (FTFT) undergraduate students who start in the fall term and who reenroll the following fall term at TAMU
 - First-time in college (FTIC) students are those who have enrolled at TAMU for their first post-secondary educational experience
 - First-time Full-time (FTFT) student status is based on course enrollment – a minimum of 12 credits in their first fall term at TAMU
 - TAMU's goal is to retain 95% of the first-time full-time students from first to second year
 - *Note: To contrast a program's student retention rate to the University's current goals, all of the criteria above need to be met*
- ❖ *Continuing students* – those that enroll in subsequent terms. Continuing students is a more accurate way to describe a typical DSA request for how many students in an organization are reenrolling. It does not have similar limitations as retention outlined above.
- ❖ When requesting analysis for continuing students, units should first determine if they have a *meaningful* impact on a student's experience at Texas A&M University (please note, that data is not available for this analysis until late fall)
 - Meaningful impact is intentionally open to interpretation
 - A unit believes the time a student spends engaging in programming has such an impact that a student will be more likely to remain enrolled
 - A program's impact could be supported by research literature
 - Factor(s) to consider for meaningful impact on a student's experience include:
 - Time spent engaging in active programming (clock hours)
 - Purpose of programming (topic, engagement, etc.)
 - Programming through student's TAMU experience (involved over semesters)
 - GPA is rarely appropriate for DSA units
- ❖ Examples that *meet* the criteria to request rates for continuing students
 - Student organization members who are engaged throughout their first year of enrollment at TAMU
 - Student organization leadership who remained engaged during their time at TAMU
- ❖ Examples that *do not meet* criteria to request continuation rates
 - Programming where students are required to attend due to course assignment or sanctions
 - Short programs intended to inform
 - One-time programs/events
 - Providing a space for activity with no intentional experiences
- ❖ Data *required* for analysis
 - Minimum – UINs from prior semester(s)
 - Preferred – Student UINs associated with a specific semester they engaged with programming
 - Ideal – A defined group of students organized by specific date(s) they engaged with programming
 - A defined group should be a clear understanding by the unit of who is included and excluded in analysis based on their level of engagement and will remain unchanged over time.

Questions or concerns please contact Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research – sapar@tamu.edu