



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 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, 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.

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