Carl Sandburg College is committed to assuring that all data it makes public are accurate and complete. This assurance includes, but is not limited to, data reported on student achievement of learning and student persistence, retention and completion. The college is committed to utilizing timely, accurate, valid and reliable data in order to act with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel and auxiliary functions.

This procedure is an institutional level process and all functions that gather, disseminate, and make decisions based on data follow this procedure. However, it is understood that at the functional level different methodologies, guidelines, and processes will be utilized. These specific processes are documented and stored within each function's process and procedure documents.

It is also important to state that the reporting of outcome data on student achievement of learning including, but not limited to student persistence, retention and completion, is managed through the iDashboards system and is aligned with transparency for the College community and meeting compliance requirements.

Procedure Definitions

Accurate- the data values stored for an object are the correct values. To be correct, a data value must be free from error and must be represented in a consistent and unambiguous form.
Timely- the data with the shortest lapse of time between the end of the reference period (or the reference date) and dissemination of the data.
Valid- the data that is correct and can be used.
Validity- the extent to which a data measurement does what it supposed to do; in research the extent to which a concept is accurately measured.
Reliable- the data values that are consistent, stable, and dependable. A reliable measurement is one that if repeated a second time will give the same results as it did the first time.

Data Assurance Procedure

1. Determine the goal for the use of the data as driven by a key performance indicator, compliance requirement, proposed hypothesis or knowledge gathering. This goal drives the level of attention and focus on reporting and decision-making. For example, student outcomes and compliance reporting will, in most cases, carry a higher level of attention and focus then knowledge gathering with no specific hypothesis in mind.

2. Research projects, proposed hypothesis or knowledge gathering, requiring data mining will complete the research project form.

3. Request data as needed from the Data team. The data team will ask for the goal, guidelines and definitions associated with the request at this time.

4. Refer to the institutional data calendar for due dates in order to assure timeliness.

5. Review compliance guidelines and current processes to assure data query is timely, accurate, valid and reliable.

6. Review definitions in compliance guideline and processes to assure input data is aligned with these definitions.

7. Review queries to assure data mined is aligned with requirements and definitions.

8. Store data collected and associated queries on the protected drive for each function (red drive) or in the case of queries created in Informer, stored in Informer. In some cases of compliance, the data is housed within the documents required and copies of the submission are kept on the protected drive.

9. Assure data input is the shortest lapse of time between the end of the reference period (or the reference date) and dissemination of the data.

10. Utilize a methodology to assure accurate input data; i.e. checklist, comparison to previous reports, etc.

11. Conduct a reasonableness check on the output data; i.e. the same data from different data sets, checklists, data from previous reports, checklists, second review by a colleague, etc.

12. Document noteworthy differences found during the reasonableness check. File this information with the report.

13. Perform Internal Audits on a sampling of the data for each report. The input and output data are reviewed for alignment with timely, accurate, valid and reliable data.

14. Perform External Audits as required by compliance agencies; i.e. Illinois Community College Board, Higher Learning Commission, Department of Education, Department of Labor, financial auditors. The input and output data are reviewed for alignment with timely, accurate, valid and reliable data.

15. Report the output data and trends, differences, decisions, and changes made based on the data during institutional meetings; i.e. faculty assembly and committee meetings, key performance indicator report outs, professional development days, Cabinet meetings and Board of Trustee meetings, etc.

16. Analyze and assess the data and make decisions based on the data at all levels of the College, from institution to individual class and student. These data are used for assessment of the College, departments, programs, classroom, and students, key performance indicator development, strategic planning, resource allocation, and compliance.

17. Link decisions back to the goal setting, when appropriate, step one of this procedure.