



Data Dictionary

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Official Data Dictionary for Blackfeet Community College (BFCC), organized by the categorical numbering used in reporting standards.

1. Institutional Governance & Framework

Accreditation: The recognition that BFCC maintains the standards necessary for its graduates to gain admission to other reputable institutions or achieve credentials for professional practice. This status is required to be eligible for federal funding, such as Pell Grants.

AIHEC (American Indian Higher Education Consortium): An organization of TCU presidents that provides leadership and influences public policy on American Indian higher education. BFCC reports specific metrics to AIHEC via the AKIS AIMS system.

Community College: A postsecondary educational institution typically providing programs of up to two years, resulting in either an undergraduate certificate or an associate degree. Community colleges may offer vocational training that directly prepares students for employment or transfer degrees that enable students to continue their education at four-year colleges or universities. Some community colleges have begun offering bachelor's degrees, and a few occasionally offer master's degrees.

Data Sharing Agreement: An agreement used to share data between organizations to better understand student success trends; such an agreement typically is designed to inform each organization's decision-making. For an institution, this may mean implementing internal changes to support systems or program design, and for external entities, it may relate to funding. There are a wide variety of reasons such an agreement may exist. See also "Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)."

Data Snapshots: Happen at specific points in the semester (see "Census Date or Freeze Date") to collect targeted data. They document important moments for the institution, often right after the last day to add or drop courses, even though those changes do not appear on the record. This process improves data accuracy. Moreover, these snapshots make reporting easier by structuring data in formats that align with common national submission standards, saving campus staff time and effort during busy reporting periods.

Data Sovereignty: The principle that data is subject to the laws and governance of the nation where it is collected. For BFCC, this conveys a sense of ownership and responsibility to ensure data is communicated with the proper cultural and tribal context.

Declared Major: The declaration of a major by a student in a specific program, which is completed through established procedures adopted by the college.

Independent Study: Instruction in which the student works one-on-one with the instructor. The course delivery may be individually tailored to accommodate the student's needs. Course(s) must be of an approved course of study and listed in the college catalogue.

Instructional Methods: The types of instructional methods/experiences used to deliver curriculum content. Traditional (in-person), online/distance, or hybrid are the typical instructional methods offered at BFCC.

IPEDS: The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is a national data repository for numerous baseline institutional trends, including enrollment and basic demographics such as gender and race. This data enables colleges to compare trends over time with a comparison group, informs each participating college of baseline metrics, and supports data-informed institutional decisions. For IPEDS to obtain this data, colleges and universities must first report it.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS): The inherent right of the Blackfeet Nation to govern the collection, ownership, and application of its own data. This includes the authority to determine how data about Blackfeet citizens and lands is interpreted and shared.

Jenzabar: A database management system (DMS) that stores most of BFCC's internal institutional data. Data points such as registration demographics, course history, grades, and graduation records are housed in this system.

Jenzabar Modules: Modules enable specific services within the Jenzabar product. One example is the retention module, which helps BFCC better understand students' obstacles and how to intervene to support student success.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI): A quantifiable measure used to evaluate the success of an activity.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): A non-binding agreement outlining terms and responsibilities between parties, often serving as the first stage of a formal contract or Data Sharing Agreement.

Registration: A process of enrolling students for courses or programs.

2. Enrollment & Student Identity

Academic Advising: The act that involves an advisor guiding students through enrollment and offering educational information to help them develop, implement, and complete academic plans that support their career and life goals, including transferring to a college or university.

Admission: Formal acceptance into a program of study; the student is considered program active.

Amskapi Piikani: The specific designation for the Southern Peigan (Blackfeet) people in Northwest Montana, used to distinguish local tribal affiliation in demographic reporting.

Blackfeet Enrollment Status: Explicitly defining whether a student is an Enrolled Member, a Descendant, or an Enrolled Member of another tribe.

Census Date (Freeze Date): The official reporting date occurring after the last day to add/drop courses. At this time, a Data Snapshot is taken to capture enrollment and demographics for IPEDS and other agencies.

Cohort: A set group of students who share common characteristics and a starting point, such as first-time students, whose progress is tracked over time to assess retention and graduation. This includes details such as the year they started, the semester they entered, first-time student status (no transfer credits), and transfer status.

Disabled: The term "individual with a disability" means an individual with any disability as defined in Section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Full-Time Equivalency (FTE): A calculation of enrollment determined by dividing the sum of all student credits by the number of credits in a standard full-time load.

First-Generation Student: An undergraduate for whom neither parent earned a postsecondary degree.

Educational Planner: The sequence of courses a student must follow each semester to complete graduate requirements or degree attainment.

Graduate: A student who has fulfilled all the requirements of a program and has earned a degree or certificate.

Graduation: Successful completion with a degree or certificate from an approved program.

Indian Student Count (ISC) Funding: In technical data reporting systems (such as AIHEC or AKIS), this funding is often tracked by the ISC. This is the specific formula used by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to distribute funds based on the number of "Indian Students" (enrolled members or descendants) attending the college.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): The statistical branch of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, a principal operating component of the United States Department of Education. This governmental entity broadly oversees data collection and analysis for all colleges in the US. (See "IPEDS.")

Non-degree seeking: Student taking classes but not in the pursuit of a degree, certificate, or endorsement.

Non-Traditional Student: Students defined by being over age 25, or those who delay enrollment, work full-time, or have dependents.

Open Enrollment: All individuals, regardless of prior education, achievement level, or other factors, can enroll.

Part-Time Student: A student enrolled for fewer than 12 credits per term in Fall or Spring, or enrolled for seven or fewer credits per term in Summer.

Passing Grade: A final grade of A, B, C, D, or P. However, even though D grades award the credit for that course, they are seen as a negative institutional indicator; the more D grades there are across the college, the lower the “health” of the educational system is.

Student Engagement: The action of students making a psychological investment in learning. This engagement can occur in or out of the classroom and on or off campus.

Student Identification (SID) Number: A randomized, database-generated sequence of numbers that allows students to be identified in a way that is not associated with any identifiable data (such as social security number (SSN)). This level of anonymity protects student identities when working with data across systems or organizations.

Single Parent Status: An individual who is unmarried or legally separated and has custody or joint custody of one or more minor children.

Student-to-Faculty Ratio: The ratio of full-time equivalent students to full-time equivalent faculty for a semester. This ratio is calculated by dividing the full-time equivalent student workload by the full-time equivalent faculty.

Tribal-Based Funding: Definitions for specific local scholarships or funding sources unique to the Blackfeet tribe or other Federally Recognized Tribal Enrolled Members.

Transfer: A student entering an institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a different postsecondary institution. The student may transfer with or without credit. An institution may have both transfer-in and transfer-out students.

Unduplicated Headcount: A method of counting where each student is counted only once during a term or academic year, regardless of class load.

Veteran Student: A student who is a former member of the Armed Forces of the United States (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) who served on active duty and was discharged.

Waiver: A document or process that allows students to be exempt from certain degree, program, or institutional requirements. Students who receive a waiver must meet the requirements specific to that waiver.

3. Academic Progression & Success

Academic Advisor: A faculty member formally assigned to a student to help guide them in choosing appropriate classes to achieve their educational goals. Degree-seeking students are assigned a faculty

academic advisor in their program. Non-degree-seeking students are assigned a faculty advisor whose goal it is to help funnel the students into the appropriate programs.

Course Success Rate: The percentage of students receiving a passing grade (A, B, C, D, or P) divided by the total number of students enrolled in the course.

Early Alert Status: A flag used to identify students struggling before the Census Date.

Earned Credit Hours: The total credit hours posted to the student's transcript at the time of reporting.

Enrollment: 1) As a headcount, enrollment is the number of students enrolled in credit courses offered by an institution. Higher education institutions generally measure enrollment by headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE). See also "Headcount" and/or "FTE." 2) As a course enrollment, it is the number of courses students are enrolled in. See also "Headcount."

Ethnicity: Refers to categories that describe groups individuals belong to or identify with, based on community perception. An ethnic group is a socially recognized group defined by shared social experiences or ancestry. These categories are not based on scientific anthropological classifications.

Major: The program identifier that describes a student's concentration of courses and/or declared program completion goal.

Persistence: A measure of students who started in the fall semester and continued into the subsequent spring semester.

Registration: A process of enrolling students for courses or programs.

Retention: A measure of a cohort's progress from one fall term to the next fall term of the following academic year.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP): A student's standing based on their cumulative GPA (0.0 to 4.0 scale) and their Pace of Progression (credits earned vs. attempted).

Strategic Enrollment Management: The whole process of support systems, academic pathways, programs, advising, and other services that get a student from first learning about college to application, then to successful engagement throughout their learning journey, and then to graduation and/or transfer. Decisions to support students are made at every stage, and data is often used to inform them.

4. Instructional, Terms, Delivery & Programs

Adjunct Instructor: Part-time instructors hired to teach specific courses on a temporary, as-needed basis with no guarantee of continued employment from semester to semester.

Articulation Agreements: BFCC primarily transfers to the University of Montana, Montana Western, and Montana State University, Northern.

Blackfeet Language/Culture Requirements: BFCC has a specific "Core" requirement for Indigenous Studies, which is a mandatory component for degree completion.

Developmental Education: Credit or non-credit courses designed to provide remedial instruction in basic skills; these typically do not count toward graduation or transfer.

CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs): A national numerical standard used to track and report fields of study and program completions.

Credit Hour: A unit of measure/recognition awarded and recognized by higher education for the completion of an activity, course, and/or program. A credit hour is referred to as 50 minutes of instruction.

Concurrent Enrollment: Partnerships allowing high school students to take college-credit courses taught by college-approved high school teachers.

Consortium: An entity created by educational agencies to carry out projects, activities, programs, and services for its members.

Contact Hours: The hours of a scheduled course offering when students are expected to be in attendance.

Course Contact Hour: Equals 50 minutes of instructional contact per credit hour between an instructor and student in a scheduled course offering for which students are registered.

Course Outline: A detailed outline of a course including the content required, objectives, competencies or expected outcomes, expectations of students, and evaluation procedures.

Common Course Number: The combination of alpha/numeric characters assigned by a college to a course. The first six positions must match the common course number.

Cumulative Credits Earned: Number of credits a student has earned at a particular institution.

Cumulative Grade Point Average: A student's cumulative grade point average in the program. Scale from 0.0 to 4.0.

Instructional Methods: The college offers Traditional (in-person), Online (SSO-based), and Hybrid delivery.

Incomplete: A temporary grade, if the student has completed most of the coursework, but is unable to finish because of unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, family emergency, or unexpected change in job requirements.

Non-Credit Course: An educational course offered to students that does not award credit towards completion of a certificate or a degree.

5. Financial Aid & Fiscal Metrics

Books and supplies: The average cost of books and educational supplies (e.g., calculators, lab equipment, software) for a student for an academic year. This is a component of the Cost of Attendance used to calculate financial aid eligibility.

Book Buyback: The college bookstore offers a program that allows students to sell their used textbooks back to the institution, which affects the net cost of education.

Cost of Attendance: The estimated budget for a student, including tuition, fees, and books, is used to determine financial aid eligibility.

Fiscal Year: The 12-month period for institutional budgeting, typically running from July 1 through June 30.

Fees: Incidental fees collected from students, such as lab, transcript, and other similar services.

Pell Grant (PELL): A federally funded, need-based grant for undergraduates, with eligibility determined by the FAFSA.

Student Aid Index (SAI): This is a number calculated using information submitted on a student's FAFSA application. It serves as an eligibility index number that the financial aid office uses to determine federal student aid awards based on attendance.

Transcript: A document issued by the college that shows a student's academic progress. It lists grades, classes, credit hours, majors, GPA, and other academic information. Students can download their unofficial transcript from the JICS Portal or obtain a transcript from the registrar's office. Official transcripts will not be released for any student who has an outstanding balance on their student bill.

Tuition: The charges established by a community college for student enrollment in programs, courses, or individualized learning situations. The tuition rate varies according to students' residency status.

Withdrawals: Students are liable for tuition and fees upon withdrawal. Checking the school's refund schedule and contacting the financial aid office is required to understand the resulting financial impact.

Official Withdrawal: The student is officially considered to have withdrawn when the date the student provided is an official notification of intent to withdraw, in writing or orally, or the day the student began the withdrawal process with a counselor. A student can rescind this notification in writing to the Registrar and continue the program. If the student subsequently drops, the student's withdrawal date is the original date of notification of intent to withdraw.

Unofficial Withdrawal: An unofficial withdrawal means a student stopped attending classes without formally withdrawing, which results in the need to return a portion or all of their financial aid received during that term, as they are only considered to have "earned" the aid up to the date of their last documented attendance, and any excess must be repaid to the funding source; essentially, the student may only keep the financial aid they used for the time they were actively enrolled in classes.

6. Blackfeet Institutional Core Values

Nin-na-wa-tsin (Being a Leader): Professionalism, integrity, and responsibility in human interaction.

Ini-yimm (Respect): Respect for oneself, all other people, all ideas, and each thing in the natural world.

Nii-tsi-ta-pi (World of Knowledge) The foundational philosophy of BFCC that integrates Blackfeet culture, spirituality, and traditional knowledge into the academic curriculum.

Niitsipussin (The Blackfeet language) In data reporting, this refers to the tracking of language proficiency or enrollment in revitalization courses.

Ni-ta-pi-pa-ta-pi-tsin (Living in a Good Way): Honesty in all thoughts and actions.

Li-yi-kah-kii-ma-tsin (Trying Hard): Commitment, dedication, and sincerity in the pursuit of all goals.

Tsi-Ksi-Ka-Ta-Pi-Wa-Tsin (Blackfeet Way of Knowing) The integration of Blackfeet Culture and Spirituality into philosophy, thought, and action across the college.