

COURSE ATTRIBUTE AND STUDENT GROUP MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL

DATA BRIEF

The Data Governance Committee is seeking feedback on the following proposal:

Course Attributes and Student Groups are codes in PeopleSoft that allow for tracking characteristics of courses or students. The strength of these fields lies in the ability to have an unlimited number of values. However, this strength can also be a weakness if not managed correctly.

During the PeopleSoft pre-go-live activities, it was determined that Global Course Attribute and Student Group PeopleSoft codes would begin with the letter “S” to represent a State defined code. Colleges would have the ability to create their own local codes that would not begin with “S”. However, since post-go-live, it has become apparent that we need more control over the management of these codes.

Course Attributes and Student Groups have similar purposes, to associate a characteristic with a Course or group of students respectively; however they have two fundamental differences: institutional association and security. For this reason, this proposal will address Course Attributes separately from Student Groups.

Course Attributes

Course Attributes are global codes that are not associated to a specific college. For example, if one college creates a Course Attribute of LCOM to track their learning communities, all other colleges using PeopleSoft will have access to view and use this code. Depending upon the level of security, employees from other colleges may also have the ability to change the description of this code, not realizing that it was originally created for a different college’s purpose.

Each Course Attribute can have many values. For example, the Course Attribute SFND (Fund Source) designates the funding source for the class and has five values (1 thru 5) to designate each of the funding categories such as state-support or contract funded.

There are currently 43 Course Attribute codes configured in PeopleSoft. Of these, 21 are locally defined. Within these codes, there are 259 values. These numbers may sound small at this point, but it is expected that the number of locally defined Course Attributes will increase as more colleges go live and begin to use PeopleSoft.

The Data Governance Committee believes that we need to implement a data governance/management approach for these Course Attribute codes before it becomes an unmanageable situation. It is the recommendation of the Data Governance Committee to create a Course Attribute for each college in the PeopleSoft system. This Institution Course Attribute code can then contain that college’s locally defined



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values. Each college may then locally determine and monitor their own values. For example, we would configure a Course Attribute of "Tacoma Course Attributes" with a code of "C220". Within this attribute Tacoma could then add a "LCOM" Course Attribute value that would act as the Course Attribute for their learning communities.

Currently, if a new Course Attribute or Course Attribute value is needed, the college must submit a request to the ctcLink Advisory Board (CAB) because of the global nature of the code. If we move to Institution Course Attribute codes, a CAB request will no longer be necessary. To add a new value, colleges would simply submit a service desk ticket.

Course Attributes are included in the default class search, advanced options section. The Data Governance Committee recommends that only globally defined Course Attributes are included in the default class search. Students have three ways to search for classes; the default class search, the My Planner and My Requirements (Academic Advisement Reports). Searching for classes using My Requirements is the best way for students to select classes that will meet their degree requirements. Institutions are encouraged to use Course Topic categorization to allow students to search for characteristics of courses or degree pathways from within the Academic Advisement Reports. For example, a college may designate certain sections of English 101 as recommended for Health Science majors. The Open Education Resources course attribute (SOER) is currently the only Course Attribute configured to allow students to use it as a search filter.

A demonstration of the functionality in PeopleSoft for student class searches in support of this proposal will be demonstrated via WebEx on May 1st at 2pm. This WebEx will be recorded and available on the State Board website at <http://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/commissions-councils/dgc/default.aspx>

It is also the recommendation of the Data Governance Committee that any non- Institution Course Attribute be considered a Global Course Attribute and begin with "S". This will entail changing current locally created codes to either begin with "S" or be moved under the appropriate Institution Course Attribute code. Only Global Course Attributes may be configured to be searchable. Not all system Course Attributes would be searchable.

The committee also recommends that all colleges implement a local data governance program and determine management approaches for maintaining the values configured within each college's Course Attribute.

Student Groups

Student Groups are institution specific and can have code level security applied to limit the access, ability to update and the use of the code. This makes Student Groups much less problematic than Course Attributes; however, we still need to consider the best approach for managing these codes. Unlike Course Attributes, a Student Group does not have values associated to it; each Student Group has its own code. We currently have 408 active Student Group codes available in the system.



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Student Groups are effective dated codes. The use of effective dating differs between operational and reporting purposes. For example, the globally defined Student Group codes are used for reporting to the SBCTC Data Warehouse and the Student Group code effective dating is term begin and end date dependent. Locally defined Student Groups may require the effective dating to be set prior to the term begin date for student communication purposes. Because the business use of the Student Groups may differ, it is important that there be a subject matter expert(s) defined by the college to guide the use of these codes. Therefore, we recommend the implementation of a local data governance program for this additional purpose.

