UTSA. AUDITING & CONSULTING SERVICES

The University of Texas at San Antonio™

Memorandum

Date: October 30, 2018

To: Taylor Eighmy, Ph.D.
                President, The University of Texas at San Antonio

                Dr. Celeste D. Alexander
                Director, Education Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin

                Dr. Julie A Eklund
                Assistant Commissioner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

From: Mr. Paul Tyler   *Paul A. Tyler*
                Chief Audit Executive, The University of Texas at San Antonio

Subject: Education Research Center (ERC) Collaborating Partner Contract Compliance
                Review

In August of 2016, UTSA *(ERC Collaborating Partner)* entered into an Interagency Cooperation Contract with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) ERC *(ERC Operating Partner)* for the purpose of providing an additional ERC off-site access location to further the mission of both the ERC and the Texas Demographic Center (TDC). The THECB has authorized the UT Austin ERC to provide access to longitudinal education data to contracted researchers. The confidential data handled in the ERC requires a combination of procedural and technical controls to be in place per the contract. The overriding principle of ERC operations is that the de-identified data provided by the agencies be maintained within the ERC, and that strict procedures be in place to ensure student-level data remain protected within the confines of the ERC environment and that removal of aggregated data or reports from the ERC meet required standards for release.

Per terms in the contract, Internal Audit or designated audit authority at the ERC Collaborating Partner's institution shall certify annually to the ERC Operating Partner and the THECB that the authorized access location site is in full compliance with all terms of the contract and applicable state and federal laws and regulations. In October 2018, UTSA Internal Audit performed a Contract Compliance Review of the ERC Collaborating Partner's off-site access location. The ERC Collaborating Partner's off-site access location contains one UT Austin owned and configured workstation housed within a physical secure clean room. The workstation is connected to the UT Austin network and researchers utilize UT Austin VPN remote services to securely connect to the ERC Operating Partner's data servers.

Internal audit observed and validated that the technical and procedural controls were implemented to provide assurance that confidential student data is not housed on or disclosed at the UTSA off-site access location. Based on the audit procedures performed, Internal Audit concluded that the UTSA access location is in compliance with the Interagency Cooperation Contract terms and applicable state and federal laws and regulations.