

The Push for 3-year degrees

Understanding the Characteristics of
Students and Effects on Institutions

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Cost

Students/families
Institutions



Accountability

Graduation Rates
Outcomes focus



International competitiveness

Globalization
Bologna Process



Core Study Objectives

- How many students take less than 4 years to complete a bachelor's degree?
- What are characteristics of students taking less than 4 years to complete a bachelor's degree?
- What are ripple effects of shortened time-to-degree for both students and institutions?

Methods

- 2004, 2005, 2006 First-time, Full-time cohorts at Midwest Master's-large institution
- Less than 4 year grads OR 4 years or more
- Descriptive statistics, t-tests, logistic regression

Institutional Context

- ◉ 73% 6-year grad rate
- ◉ No programs designed as “less than 4 years”
- ◉ Financial aid aspects
 - > 98% receive institutional aid
 - > 70% graduate with loan debt
 - > Current cost: tuition and fees \$26,960; total with room and board \$35,090
- ◉ Students
 - > Average ACT score \approx 27
 - > Average high school GPA \approx 3.7
 - > 5% international; 59% female

	4 years or more	Less than 4 years
Male	41%	30%
Female	59%	70%
Arts & Sci	50%	59%
Business	31%	33%
Education	5%	3%
Journalism	14%	6%

	4 years or more	Less than 4 years
Black	2%	3%
Asian	3%	6%
Hispanic	2%	2%
White	85%	74%
Other	3%	1%
Multiracial	1%	2%
Unknown	4%	1%
International	3%	12%

T-test Results

		N	Mean	Sig.
Gender	Less than 4 years	120	.70	0.021
	4 years or more	1119	.59	
International Student	Less than 4 years	120	.12	0.000
	4 years or more	1119	.03	
A&S Graduate	Less than 4 years	120	.59	0.053
	4 years or more	1119	.50	

T-test Results

		N	Mean	Sig.
Exam Credit	Less than 4 years	120	10.27	0.000
	4 years or more	1119	4.16	
Transfer Credit	Less than 4 years	120	14.16	0.000
	4 years or more	1119	6.31	
Study Abroad	Less than 4 years	120	.15	0.299
	4 years or more	1119	.19	
Earn 2 Degrees	Less than 4 years	120	1.13	0.302
	4 years or more	1119	1.16	

Logistic Regression

	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	.582	.013	1.790
International Stu.	1.190	.003	3.287
Exam Credit	.086	.000	1.089
Transfer Credit	.104	.000	1.110
Study Abroad	-.363	.198	.695
Earn 2 Degrees	-.824	.012	.439

Analysis

- Gender & International—significant, and not entirely surprising
- Exam and Transfer Credit & 2 degrees—significant, but not surprising; many implications
- Study Abroad & College—not significant, but important; many implications

Implications

- Graduation requirements
- J-term or 12-month calendar configurations
- Student financial savings
- Budget planning
- Admissions/recruiting approach

Limitations

- No financial aid data at this time
- Incomplete data on graduates
- Additional data points needed
- Definitions of variables are institutionally specific

What's next

- Integrate additional data on 4 years or more population
- Pursue some qualitative data on “less than 4 years” population (survey or interview)
- Report to President’s Cabinet, Enrollment Task Force (charged by Trustees) and other relevant parties

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