

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Section 1 H.B. 1172 Timely Graduation Report
Presented to the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents
November 30, 2008

Undergraduate Degree Program Completion Data

Section 1 of HB 1172 requires that information regarding undergraduate graduation rates shall be provided to the governing board of each Texas public higher education institution. A subsection of the bill provides that the report must state, for each undergraduate degree program area, the average number of semester credit hours attempted and the average number of fall and spring semesters attended by a student completing the program.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has provided the following information for FY2007. The table below shows the required information for Texas A&M University-Commerce, along with the state-wide data, also provided by THECB. State-wide data for “credits attempted” and “mean semesters” are shown in parentheses in the table.

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Average Credits Attempted and Mean Semesters toward Baccalaureate Degree
In Program Areas

Program	# Graduates	Credits Attempted	Mean Semesters
Science & Math	55	147.5 (147.9)	10.0 (10.0)
Agriculture	31	147.9 (147.5)	9.8 (9.9)
Arts & Architecture	384	151.7 (148.4)	10.3 (10.3)
Business	119	145.7 (144.5)	10.1 (10.0)
Engineering	8	167.5 (149.4)	12.0 (10.2)
Health	6	162.3 (151.7)	9.5 (10.4)
Social Sciences & Services	163	143.1 (146.0)	9.7 (10.0)
Technology	17	145.8 (167.2)	10.5 (11.2)
Total Graduates	1	783	
Institutional Average		148.6 (147.4)	10.1 (10.1)

As shown in the above table, A&M-Commerce graduates compare favorably to the state-wide data. Credit hours attempted are close to (or lower) for A&M-Commerce graduates in six of the program areas, and the institutional average is only 1 semester credit hour above the state-wide average. Mean semesters to completion for A&M-Commerce graduates show either the same (or lower), as the state-wide averages, except for Engineering (only 8 graduates), and the institutional average is equal to the state-wide average.

Efforts to Help Students Graduate More Quickly

1. To ensure that undergraduate students graduate in a timely manner.

While A&M-Commerce has traditionally attracted and graduated a substantial number of first-generation college students, economically disadvantaged students, minority students, and non-traditional students (all of whom usually take longer to complete a degree), A&M-Commerce is dedicated to providing a quality education in a timely manner. To this end, A&M-Commerce has taken several steps to ensure timely graduation. These include:

- Mandatory orientation sessions, emphasizing the importance of timely graduation, have been instituted for all new students.
- An online degree audit allows students to view their progress to degree at any time in their academic careers.
- The Registrar's Office monitors course load and drop data to track students who consistently take courses and subsequently drop.
- A procedure is in place that requires students to meet with their advisors when 90 hours have been completed. Advisors are responsible for ensuring that students are on the proper path to graduation and removing the blocks so that students can register.
- An additional advisor has been added for the College of Arts and Sciences.
- The University has purchased and installed online catalog software to assist advisors and students.
- The University is being reorganized to focus on student access and success. Student support services will be centralized and there will be a prioritized focus on providing support to students as they complete the traditional "gatekeeping" courses in mathematics and science.
- Implementation of supplemental skills instruction and tutoring for students enrolled in engineering and pre-professional programs.

2. To ensure that undergraduate students do not attempt excessive number of semester credit hours beyond minimum number required to complete the students' degree programs.

Again, A&M-Commerce has taken several steps to monitor students' progress and reduce the number of excessive semester credits. Students' progress is monitored by the Registrar's Office and a system is in place to charge tuition at the nonresident rate for any semester credit hours in excess of those allowed by state guidelines, as well as for those students who are attempting a course for the third time. The policy is currently under review to ensure the goals of the program are being achieved in the most responsible, equitable, and efficient manner. We are also generating reports from the D/F midterm list to identify students who are in a "twopeat" situation. They will be contacted in time to impact their grade in the second attempt, so they do not end up in a threepeat situation.

3. To provide academic counseling concerning timely graduation.

A&M-Commerce has recently instituted a new system of undergraduate advising, using dedicated advisors at the College level. Students' progress toward degree is monitored, by both counselors and students, through an on-line degree audit tracking system. Departments have also implemented departmental academic advising and tracking of student progress toward degree. An additional advisor has been added to the College of Arts and Sciences.

4. To develop an online student degree progress report which compares the course taken and credit received by a student to the courses completed and needed for degree and graduation requirements for each academic term.

As noted previously, A&M-Commerce has developed and implemented an on-line system that allows students, as well as college and departmental academic advisors, to track individual progress toward degree completion. This allows students to plan and schedule classes more efficiently, which should reduce time to graduation. All undergraduate programs are included in this system.

5. To implement tuition policies that encourage timely graduation.

As mentioned previously, the Registrar's Office tracks and flags any student who enrolls in either excessive hours, or triggers the 'three-peat' rule. Additional tuition is then charged for the courses that exceed the maximum allowable number. Students are notified when they approach the point of triggering the excessive hours. The new University Strategic Plan addresses the issue of alternative tuition and fee structures. The University is currently evaluating alternatives to the current tuition and fee structure that will encourage timely graduation.

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Undergraduate Degree Program Completion Data

Section 1 of HB 1172 requires that information regarding undergraduate graduation rates shall be provided to the governing board of each Texas public higher education institution. A subsection of the bill provides that the report must state, for each undergraduate degree program area, the average number of semester credit hours attempted and the average number of fall and spring semesters attended by a student completing the program.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has provided the following information for FY2006. The table below shows the required information for Texas A&M University-Commerce, along with the state-wide data, also provided by THECB. State-wide data for “credits attempted” and “mean semesters” are shown in parentheses in the table.

Average Credits Attempted and Mean Semesters toward Baccalaureate Degree In Program Areas

Degree Program	# of Grads	Credits Attempted	Mean Semesters
Science & Math	54	150	10
Agriculture	28	150	9
Arts & Architecture	333	150	10
Business	132	149	10
Engineering	2	216	12
Health	14	150	10
Social Sciences & Services	180	147	10
Technology	19	146	10
Total Graduates	762		
Institutional Average		149	10

*Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

As shown in the above table, A&M-Commerce graduates compare favorably to the state-wide data. Credit hours attempted are lower (or equal) for A&M-Commerce graduates in four of the program areas, and the institutional average is only 1 semester credit hour above the state-wide average. Mean semesters to completion for A&M-Commerce graduates show either the same (or lower), as the state-wide averages, except for Agriculture (marginally higher), and Engineering (only 2 graduates), and the institutional average is equal to the state-wide average.

The legislation requires information on efforts implemented to help students graduate more quickly:

1. To ensure that undergraduate students graduate in a timely manner.

While A&M-Commerce has traditionally attracted and graduated a substantial number of first-generation college students, economically disadvantaged students, minority students, and non-traditional students (all of whom usually take longer to complete a degree), A&M-Commerce is dedicated to providing a quality education in a timely manner. To this end, A&M-Commerce has taken several steps to ensure timely graduation. These include:

- Mandatory orientation sessions, emphasizing the importance of timely graduation, have been instituted for all new first-year students.
- An online degree audit allows students to view their progress to degree at any time in their academic careers.
- The Registrar's Office has begun monitoring course load and drop data to track students who consistently take courses and subsequently drop.
- A procedure is in place that requires students to meet with their advisors when 90 hours have been completed. Advisors are responsible for ensuring that students are on the proper path to graduation and removing the blocks so that students can register.
- All degree programs are under review to reduce to 120 hours unless accreditation or standards of the industry prescribe otherwise.

2. To ensure that undergraduate students do not attempt excessive number of semester credit hours beyond minimum number required to complete the students' degree programs.

Again, A&M-Commerce has taken several steps to monitor students' progress and reduce the number of excessive semester credits. Students' progress is monitored by the Registrar's Office and a system is in place to charge tuition at the nonresident rate for any semester credit hours in excess of those allowed by state guidelines, as well as for those students who are attempting a course for the third time.

3. To provide academic counseling concerning timely graduation.

A&M-Commerce has recently instituted a new system of undergraduate advising, using dedicated advisors at the College level. Students' progress toward degree is monitored, by both counselors and students, through an on-line degree audit tracking system. Departments have also implemented departmental academic advising and tracking of student progress toward degree.

4. To develop an online student degree progress report which compares the course taken and credit received by a student to the courses completed and needed for degree and graduation requirements for each academic term.

As noted previously, A&M-Commerce has developed and implemented an on-line system that allows students, as well as college and departmental academic advisors, to track individual progress toward degree completion. This allows students to plan and schedule classes more efficiently, which should reduce time to graduation. All undergraduate programs are included in this system.

5. To implement tuition policies that encourage timely graduation.

As mentioned previously, the Registrar's Office tracks and flags any student who enrolls in either excessive hours, or triggers the 'three-peat' rule. Additional tuition is then charged for the courses that exceed the maximum allowable. Students are notified when they approach the point of triggering the excessive hours. The new University Strategic Plan addresses the issue of alternative tuition and fee structures. During the next year the University will be evaluating proposed changes in the tuition and fee structure that will encourage timely graduation.

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Section 1 H.B. 1172 Timely Graduation Report
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Section 1 of HB 1172 requires that information regarding undergraduate graduation rates shall be provided to the governing board of each Texas public higher education institution. A subsection of the bill provides that the report must state, for each undergraduate degree program area, the average number of semester credit hours attempted and the average number of fall and spring semesters attended by a student completing the program.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has provided the following information for FY2005. The table below shows the required information for Texas A&M University-Commerce, along with the state-wide data, also provided by THECB. State-wide data for “credits attempted” and “mean semesters” are shown in parentheses in the table.

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Average Credits Attempted and Mean Semesters toward Baccalaureate Degree
In Program Areas

Program	# Graduates	Credits Attempted	Mean Semesters
Science & Math	61	146 (149)	10 (10)
Agriculture	26	150 (151)	10 (10)
Arts & Architecture	297	151 (149)	10 (10)
Business	88	149 (147)	10 (10)
Engineering	1	172 (152)	9 (10)
Health	17	166 (147)	10 (10)
Social Sciences & Services	151	143 (147)	10 (10)
Technology	17	151 (165)	10 (11)
Total Graduates	1	658	
Institutional Average		149 (148)	10 (10)

As shown in the above table, A&M-Commerce graduates compare favorably to the state-wide data. Credit hours attempted are lower for A&M-Commerce graduates in four of the program areas, and the institutional average is only 1 semester credit hour above the state-wide average. Mean semesters to completion for A&M-Commerce graduates show either the same, or lower, as the state-wide averages, and the institutional average is equal to the state-wide average.

Efforts to Help Students Graduate More Quickly

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- Mandatory orientation sessions, emphasizing the importance of timely graduation, have been instituted for all new first-year students.
- An online degree audit allows students to view their progress to degree at any time in their academic careers.
- The Registrar's Office has begun monitoring course load and drop data to track students who consistently take courses and subsequently drop.
- A procedure was approved last year that requires students to meet with their advisors when 90 hours have been completed. Advisors are responsible for ensuring that students are on the proper path to graduation and removing the blocks so that students can register.
- All degree programs are under review to reduce to 120 hours unless accreditation or standards of the industry prescribe otherwise.

B. To ensure that undergraduate students do not attempt excessive number of semester credit hours beyond minimum number required to complete the students' degree programs.

Again, A&M-Commerce has taken several steps to monitor students' progress and reduce the number of excessive semester credits. Students' progress is monitored by the Registrar's Office and a system is in place to charge tuition at the nonresident rate for any semester credit hours in excess of those allowed by state guidelines, as well as for those students who are attempting a course for the third time..

C. To provide academic counseling concerning timely graduation.

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D. To develop an online student degree progress report which compares the course taken and credit received by a student to the courses completed and needed for degree and graduation requirements for each academic term.

As noted previously, A&M-Commerce has developed and implemented an on-line system that allows students, as well as college and departmental academic advisors, to track individual progress toward degree completion. This allows students to plan and schedule classes more efficiently, which should reduce time to graduation. All undergraduate programs are included in this system.

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As mentioned previously, the Registrar's Office tracks and flags any student who enrolls in either excessive hours, or triggers the 'three-peat' rule. Additional tuition is then charged for the courses that exceed the maximum allowable. Students are notified when they approach the point of triggering the excessive hours.