

Texas A&M University

Prepared by the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, Texas A&M University

Average credits attempted and mean semesters for baccalaureate graduates in eight broad program areas. FY 2006 baccalaureate graduates at Texas A&M averaged 143 credits attempted and took, on average, 9 semesters, or four and one-half years, to complete their degrees.

Average Credits Attempted and Mean Semesters toward Baccalaureate Degree in Program Areas*

<u>Degree Program</u>	<u># of Grads</u>	<u>Credits Attempted</u>	<u>Mean Semesters</u>
Science and Math	1,054	139	9
Agriculture	937	149	10
Arts and Architecture	1,367	142	9
Business	1,300	131	9
Engineering	813	146	10
Health	90	157	10
Social Sciences and Service	1,467	146	10
Technology	255	168	11
Total Graduates	7,283		
Institutional Average		143	9

*Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Note: Texas A&M University's 7283 graduates represents an increase of 5.5% over the 6906 students reported last year.

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

Texas A&M University is committed to helping students graduate in a timely fashion and has recently taken a number of steps to promote even quicker graduation. We see timely graduation as a win for students, taxpayers, and the university. By helping students graduate in fewer semesters, we help individual families save on the cost of a college education. By helping students graduate with fewer semester credit hours, we promote efficient use of tax payer support for higher education. By graduating students more efficiently, we increase the capacity of the university and make it possible for more desiring students to come to Texas A&M.

1. Efforts to ensure that undergraduate students graduate in a timely manner.

Texas A&M University engages in a number of efforts to encourage students to graduate in a timely manner. Those include academic counseling and flat-rate tuition (both described in more detail later), promotion of the \$1000 tuition rebate program, and streamlining of academic degree programs.

Because decisions made in a student's first semester can affect his/her ability to qualify for the \$1,000 rebate, the University president sends a letter to all freshmen their first semester at TAMU explaining the importance of course selection and the opportunity to receive a \$1,000 rebate if they graduate with no more than three hours in excess of the minimum number of SCH required to complete the degree.

The Texas A&M undergraduate catalog includes 4-year course plans to show students how they can graduate in four years. Our counseling process has been revised to encourage full-time students to carry the course load they would need to graduate in four years.

During the fall of 2006, we began a systematic review of all undergraduate programs that are longer than 120 hours. Texas A&M University's Academic Operations Council and Council of Deans have endorsed the following short list of compelling academic reasons for degrees to be longer than 120 hours:

1. Accreditation and Certification Requirements
 - a. Depth and breadth of content necessary to satisfy professional accreditation
 - b. Percentage of degree devoted to content (as required by some accreditation agencies)
 - c. Standards and requirements for teacher certification.
2. Courses required to meet standards for professional certification and licensure.
3. National norms for comparable degree programs.

Last year, when we made this report, we had just begun to review programs. At this point in October, 2007, 149 of 194 degree options or 77% have been reviewed. And 113 out of 194 or 58% have been reduced to 120 hours. To date only our ABET accredited engineering programs and some of our teacher certification programs have been determined to merit hours beyond 120 hours. We believe that these program changes will promote timely graduation and help us increase our four-year graduation rate.

Last year, we also mentioned the implementation of a new interdisciplinary undergraduate degree in University Studies that is designed, in part, to help students who are in good standing but who have had problems finding a major of interest. That degree is now available to students and should promote timely graduation.

We believe that, collectively, these efforts will help us improve our already high graduation rates. We hope to see the most improvement, over time, in 4-year graduation rates.

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

We provide a variety of student counseling and information tools to students to help them avoid attempting an excessive number of semester credit hours.

Excess credit hours and the financial consequences of exceeding the funding limit are mentioned in the materials distributed to students and parents at the New Student Orientation Conferences.

We make available 95-hour degree audit to all academic departments for their advisors to use to advise and distribute to their student.

We have developed through SIMS a fully integrated degree audit system that is available to students via MyRecord and to academic advisors via SIMS. This degree audit can be accessed at anytime once a student completes at least one semester at TAMU.

3. Efforts to provide academic counseling concerning timely graduation.

Advisors on the TAMU campus encourage students to stay on track with degree requirements as well as advise students to take the maximum number of hours that will allow that student to be successful.

Organizations, such as University Advisors and Counselors, provide professional development opportunities for advisors about curriculum and policy changes that may affect their students' academic careers. In addition, a number of advising offices across campus have instituted requirements and procedures that encourage students to meet with advisors on a regular basis to discuss issues such as progress toward degree. All of these efforts combine to help students progress through their degree programs in the most timely manner possible.

In conjunction with our recently adopted flat-rate tuition policy, we have developed extensive workshops for all academic advisors to encourage students to take more hours on a semester by semester basis. This effort has been most effective with incoming freshmen, who are taking an average of an hour per semester more than freshmen were before flat-tuition was instituted. Academic advisors report growing student awareness of the advantages of the flat-rate tuition policy.

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

We have developed through SIMS a fully integrated degree audit system that is available to students via MyRecord and to academic advisors via SIMS. This degree audit can be accessed at anytime once a student completes at least one semester at TAMU.

5. Efforts to implement tuition policies that encourage timely graduation.

We have instituted a flat-rate tuition policy to encourage students to graduate in a timely fashion. Students taking 12 or more hours pay the same flat rate. Fall 2005 and Fall 2006 results show that students are taking significantly more hours on average than students from Fall 2004. For example, in Fall 2004, 9,000 students carried 12 hours, and fewer than 6,000 took 15. In Fall 2006 that situation was almost exactly reversed. Fewer than 6,000 students carried 12 hours, and almost 9,000 took 15. The greatest participation in flat-rate tuition has been with our 1st and 2nd year students. We expect the flat-rate tuition effect, along with other actions we are taking, to result in significant improvements in our 4-year graduation rates in coming years.

Texas A&M University
Report of Efforts Concerning Timely Graduation for FY 2005

Prepared by the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, Texas A&M University
November 27, 2006

This report on efforts concerning timely graduation is required by Texas Education Code, Section 51.4032 and follows the format prescribed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

1. Average credits attempted and mean semesters for baccalaureate graduates in eight broad program areas. FY 2005 baccalaureate graduates at Texas A&M averaged 143 credits attempted and took, on average, 9 semesters, or four and one-half years, to complete their degrees.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY. (Data for 2006 report.)

Average Credits Attempted and Mean Semesters toward Baccalaureate Degree in Program Areas				
Institution Name	Program	# Grads	Credits Attempted	Mean Semesters
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.	Science and Math	952	139	9
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.	Agriculture	830	149	10
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.	Arts and Architecture	1267	142	9
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.	Business	1246	134	9
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.	Engineering	819	147	10
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.	Health	84	163	10
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.	Social Sciences & Service	1446	144	9
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.	Technology	262	168	11
Total Graduates		6906		
Institutional Average			143	9

Calculated and reported by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for FY 2005 graduates. Reported November, 2006.

2. Efforts to help students graduate more quickly. Texas A&M University is committed to helping students graduate in a timely fashion and has recently taken a number of steps to promote even quicker graduation. We see timely graduation as a win for students, taxpayers, and the university. By helping students graduate in fewer semesters, we help individual families save on the cost of a college education. By helping students graduate with fewer semester credit hours, we promote efficient use of tax payer support for higher education. By graduating students more efficiently, we increase the capacity of the university and make it possible for more desiring students to come to Texas A&M.

2.1 Efforts to ensure that undergraduate students graduate in a timely manner.

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3. National norms for comparable degree programs.

A number of our colleges have already worked to reduce bachelor's programs to 120 hours, where possible. We believe that this additional review will result in even more changes.

We are also in the process of implementing a new interdisciplinary undergraduate degree in University Studies that is designed, in part, to help students who are in good standing but who have had problems finding a major of interest.

We believe that, collectively, these efforts will help us improve our already high graduation rates. We hope to see the most improvement, over time, in 4-year graduation rates.

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

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