



Texas Higher Education
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MEMORANDUM

September 17, 2010

To: Chief Academic Officers
Texas Public General Academic Teaching Institutions

From: Susan E. Brown

RE: Timely Graduation Report Requirements from Section 51.4032, TEC

House Bill 1172 of the 79th Texas Legislature (codified as Section 51.4032, TEC) sets an annual November due date for general academic teaching institutions to report timely graduation information to their governing boards. The bill has two major reporting requirements: the first concerns data on undergraduates completing programs, and the second relates to institutional efforts to promote timely graduation. The bill stipulated that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), in consultation with the institutions, should determine the report's form.

The methodology used for determining undergraduates' semester credit hours and fall and spring semesters attended was changed in FY 2009 to exclude developmental education hours. The FY 2010 data attached to this memo does not include developmental education.

For this year's data, the area of study category previously called "Liberal and Fine Arts and Architecture" has been split into "Liberal Arts" and "Fine Arts and Architecture."

Undergraduate Degree Program Completion Data

To meet the directive to "state, for each undergraduate degree program, the average number of semester credit hours attempted and the average number of fall and spring semesters attended by a student completing the program," we are providing data derived from the THECB's student database. The attached Excel file gives data on FY 2009 baccalaureate graduates in nine broad program areas for each general academic institution by FICE Code on separate worksheets. The program categories were previously used in the THECB's *Texas Public Universities' Academic Data and Performance Report*, with the exception of the Liberal and Fine Arts and Architecture change.

Students receiving bachelor's degrees as reported on the CBM-009 (Graduation Report) in FY 2009 (the most recent academic year available) were tracked as follows:

- Staff searched backward through ten years of data to determine when each graduate was reported as first-time in college.
- Students without a first-time in college indicator or who received a prior bachelor's degree were excluded.
- Developmental education semester credit hours (SCH) as reported on the CBM-001 are not included. Hours earned through AP or before high school graduation also are not included.
- A more detailed description of the methodology for this process and statewide results are given in Attachment 1.

Efforts to Help Students Graduate More Quickly

Regarding the directive to report timely graduation efforts, we suggest that each institution provide its governing board brief responses to the five specific statements in the legislation. Links to web pages that give greater details may be included. The summary responses should be sufficiently detailed to give legislators and others a general impression of your institution's activities. The legislation requires information on timely graduation efforts implemented:

- To ensure that undergraduate students graduate in a timely manner.
- 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.
- To provide academic counseling concerning timely graduation.
- 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.
- To implement tuition policies that encourage timely graduation.

The timely graduation summary responses that we received last year have been posted on the THECB's website at: <http://www.txhighereddata.org/reports/performance/hb1172/>. We will add this year's submissions when we receive the versions submitted to your Boards.

By **November 24, 2010**, please send either an electronic copy of information that was provided to your institution's governing board or a link to the information on your website to Sue Sutton at Sue.Sutton@thecb.state.tx.us.

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Attached to this email is an Excel file with multiple spreadsheets giving detailed FY 2009 results for each institution. If you have difficulty opening this file, please email Sue Sutton.

Attachments: 1 - Time-to-Degree Methodology
2 - Section 1, H.B. 1172

PA/ss

Attachment 1

Time-to-Degree Methodology

Section 1 of H.B. 1172 requires that information regarding undergraduate graduation rates shall be provided to the governing board of each Texas public higher education institution. Subsection b (1) directs that:

b) The report must: (1) state, for each undergraduate degree program, the average number of semester credit hours attempted and the average number of fall and spring semesters attended by a student completing the program.

Towards this end, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has produced undergraduate graduation information for FY 2009.

Methodology

Every student who earned a baccalaureate degree at a public general academic institution in FY 2009 was traced back for ten years (FY 2000 - FY 2009) to find when he/she was reported as a first-time student. Only those with a first-time indicator were included in the analysis. For each of these students, the number of college-level semester credit hours attempted (developmental education credits are excluded) was recorded for fall, spring, and summer semesters, as well as the number of fall and spring semesters attended. The graduates were classified into broad fields based on the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Codes of their majors. The number of graduates by field, the average number of undergraduate credit hours attempted, and the average number of fall and spring semesters attended were calculated for each institution's graduates. The statewide results are shown below in Table 1.

**Table 1
Time-to-Degree in Eight Program Categories for
All Texas Public General Academic Institutions**

General Program Areas	CIP Codes	Number of Graduates	Mean Semesters ¹	Mean Credits Attempted ²
Science & Math	03,11,26,27,40	5,589	9.89	145.74
Agriculture	1	1,566	9.7	141.7
Business	52	11,361	9.89	139.22
Engineering	14	3,003	10.06	147.94
Health	51	2,490	10.4	146.18
Liberal Arts	05,09,10,16,22,23,24, 25,29,30,38,	12,860	10.23	141.61
Fine Arts and Architecture	04, 50	2,878	10.66	150.33
Social Sciences and Service	12,19,31,42,43,44,45,54	13,244	10	141.11
Technology	15,41,46,47,48,49	730	10.78	279.25
Grand Mean		53,721	10.08	142.66

¹ Fall and spring semesters only.

² College-level semester credit hours attempted during fall, spring, and summer semesters

Students who transferred into Texas public institutions from elsewhere, in addition to students who had received baccalaureates at Texas public higher education institutions in the nine years prior to FY 2009, were excluded from the analysis. Additionally, credits obtained by flexible entry students and credits obtained prior to matriculation were excluded.

Statewide, 53,721 baccalaureate graduates were found who met the above criteria, compared with 79,420 individual baccalaureate graduates (67.6 percent). They had averages of 142.66 college-level credits attempted (excluding developmental education) and 10.08 fall and spring semesters attended.

Mean semester credit hours have decreased modestly from 144.76 for FY 2008 graduates to 142.66 for FY 2009 graduates, and similarly the mean number of fall and spring semesters decreased from 10.13 to 10.08..

Attachment 2

H.B. No. 1172, 79th Session

AN ACT

Relating to policies and measures to promote timely graduation of students from public institutions of higher education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter H, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.4032 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.4032. REPORT OF EFFORTS CONCERNING TIMELY GRADUATION. (a) Not later than November 1 of each year, the president of each general academic teaching institution, as defined by Section 61.003, shall provide to the governing board of the institution a report for the preceding academic year that examines the institution's efforts concerning timely graduation of its undergraduate students.

(b) The report must:

(1) state, for each undergraduate degree program, the average number of semester credit hours attempted and the average number of fall and spring semesters attended by a student completing the program;

(2) state the specific efforts implemented by the institution to ensure that undergraduate students graduate in a timely manner and do not attempt an excessive number of semester credit hours beyond the minimum number required to complete the students' degree programs, including the institution's efforts to provide academic counseling concerning timely graduation, including the development of 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, and to implement tuition policies that encourage timely graduation; and

(3) include any other information required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(c) An institution's report must be in the form prescribed by coordinating board rule adopted in consultation with general academic teaching institutions.