

Retrospective Analysis of Total Time to Completion: 2007-2008 Associate Degree Recipients

Midlands Technical College

Executive Summary

- The population of 867 associate degree recipients was studied for the 2007-2008 class. All data was collected from MTC's existing databases and combined with indicators that identify and describe factors common to students who persist to finish the associate degree. Where appropriate, comparisons to the previous findings from the 1997-98 and 2002-03 studies are made.
- As shown in Chart 1, 38.52 percent of the associate degrees awarded were to white females, 26.76 percent were nonwhite females, 23.76 percent were white males, and 10.96 percent were nonwhite males.

Distribution of Gender-Ethnics for 2007-08 Graduates

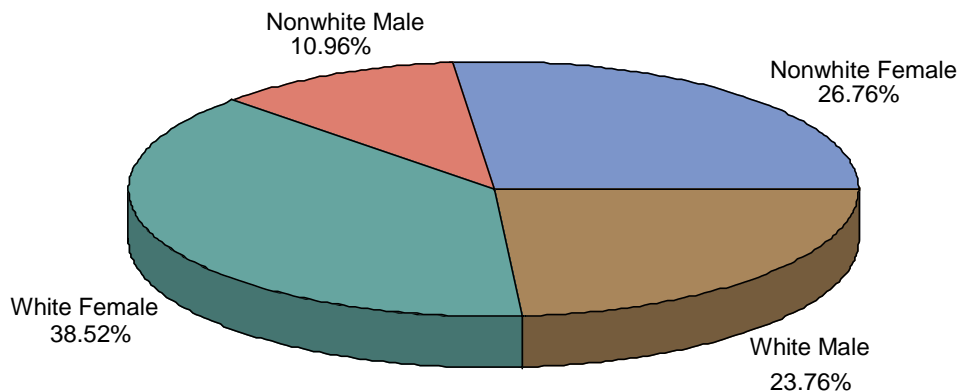


Chart 1

- As shown in Chart 2, the division breakdown for the graduates is 40.02 percent for Arts & Sciences, 24.45 percent for Business and Information Systems, 21.80 percent for Nursing and Health Sciences, and 13.73 percent for Industrial and Engineering Technologies.

Distribution of Divisions for 2007-08 Graduates

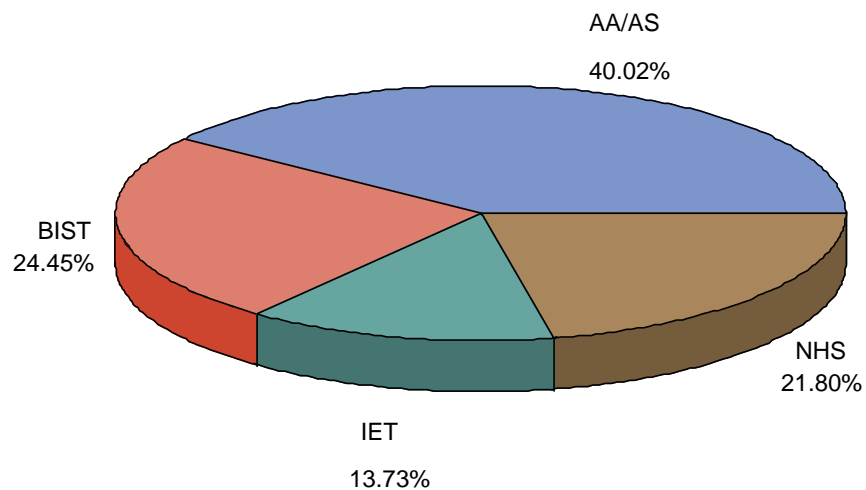


Chart 2

- The first semester of coursework was analyzed to classify students as being in all-curriculum-level courses (60.0 percent), all Developmental Studies (DVS) courses (11.67 percent), or in a mixed schedule (28.33 percent) their first semester at MTC.

Distribution of First-Semester Status for 2007-08 Graduates

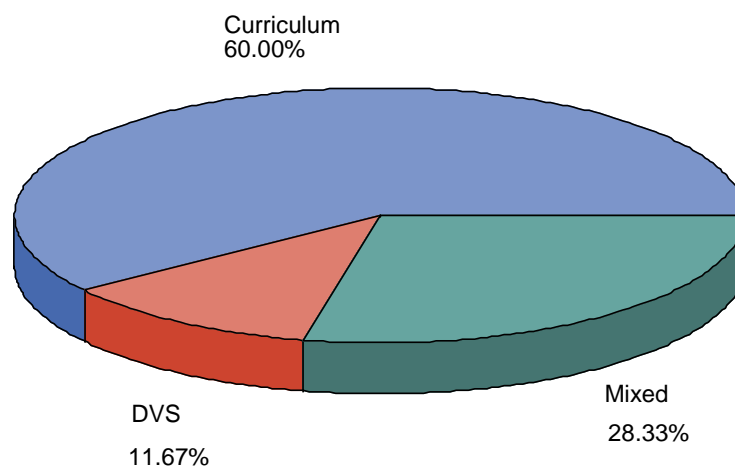


Chart 3

- A histogram of MTC's graduation time variable, as seen in Chart 4, shows the different lengths of time the 2007-2008 class took to obtain their associate degrees. The majority (583 students) are in the 1.64 to 6.54 year category. There are (26 students) in the 0.67 to 1.64 year category; this group brought in a large number of transfer hours. Some of the graduates (227 students) took from 6.54 to 16 years to graduate; undoubtedly this group would be heavily populated with students who took long stopout periods while pursuing their degrees. This chart points to the diverse paths and persistence of students who obtain the associates degrees.

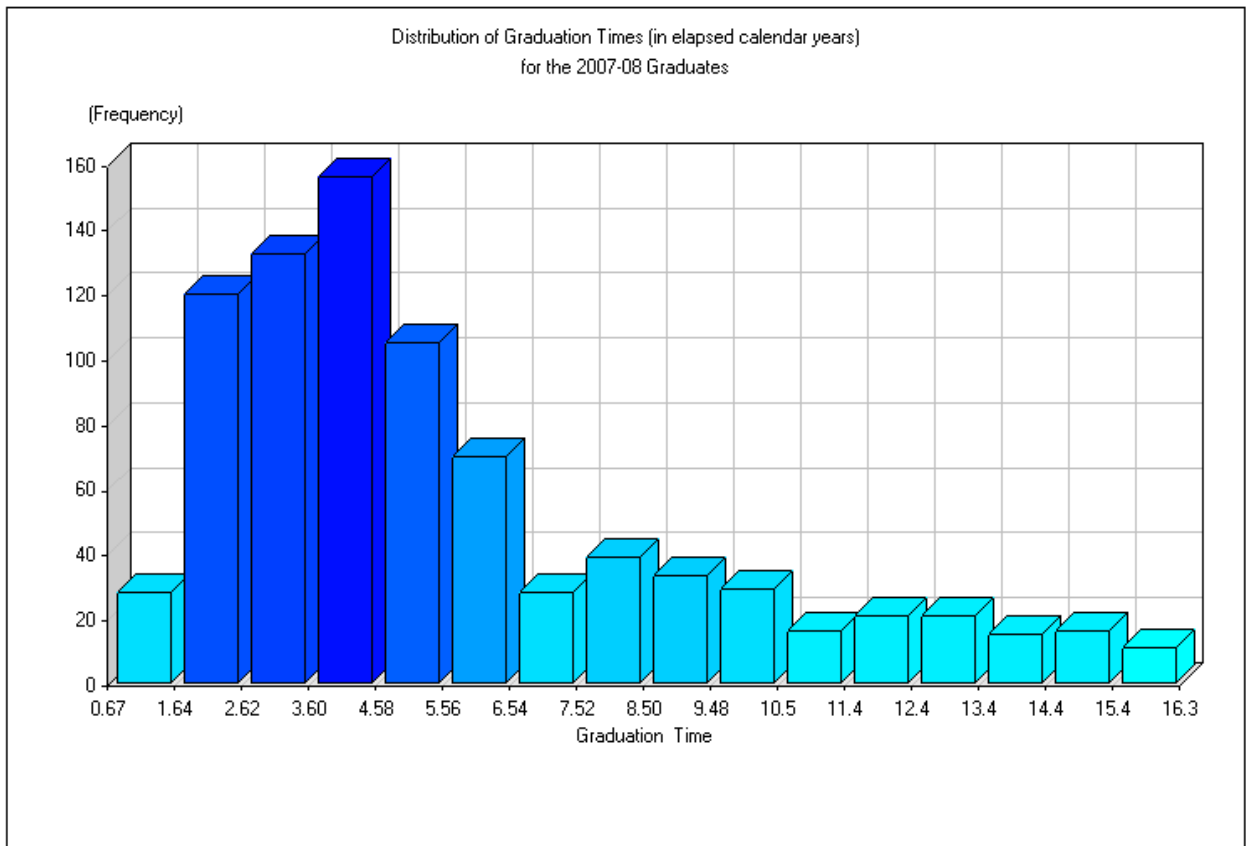


Chart 4

The average graduate took 5.5 calendar years and 10.3 semesters of coursework at MTC to complete an associate degree. This figure was lowest for graduates who started in an all-curriculum-level schedule (4.9 years, 9.3 semesters), followed by those with mixed schedules (6.2 years, 11.5 semesters), and those with all-DVS schedules (6.7 years, 12.3 semesters). Table 1, below, shows a comparison of this result to the college's previous studies of the 2002-2003 and 1997-1998 graduates. These data show that over the ten-year period the three studies were conducted, the time to completion of the associate degree has lengthened.

Table 1: Years and Semesters to Completion Comparison for the
1997-98, 2002-03 and 2007-08 Graduates

MTC Studies	First-Term Status			
	Curriculum	DVS	Mixed	Average
2007-2008 Study Years Semesters	4.9	6.7	6.2	5.5
	9.3	12.3	11.5	10.3
2002-2003 Study Years Semesters	4.4	6.5	5.1	4.8
	9.1	13.9	11.0	10.2
1997-1998 Study Years Semesters	3.7	5.7	4.3	4.2
	8.2	13.6	10.3	9.6

- When transfer work is examined, 58.95 percent of the graduates were classified “native,” meaning they had no transfer work on their transcripts; the other 41.05 percent brought in hours from at least one other institution.
- The average graduate in the population who reported transfer hours had been to 1.25 other institutions and brought in 38.35 hours.
- For comparison purposes: Charts 5, 6 and 7 show the distribution of completion time for the 1997-98, 2002-03 and 2007-08 graduates against the three-year standard. This standard is not defined in the same manner as the National GRS 150 percent rule; it merely measures raw calendar time between first semester of enrollment and graduation, regardless of “first-time/full-time” status at admission. As shown in Chart 7 for the 2007-08 cohort, 73.69 percent of the graduates took longer than three calendar years to complete their associate degrees; 26.31 percent completed their degrees in three years or less.

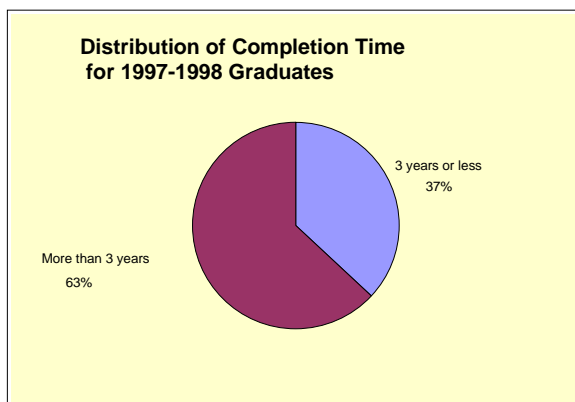


Chart 5

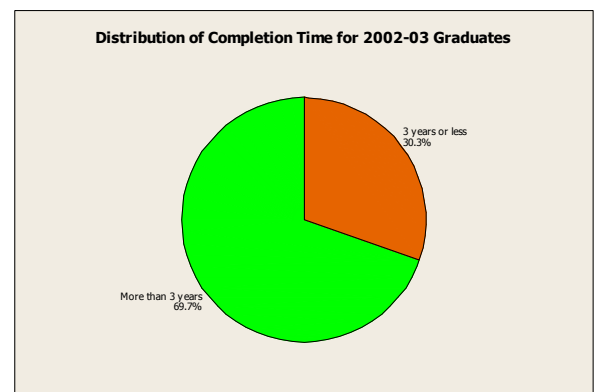


Chart 6

Distribution of Completion Time for 2007-08 Graduates

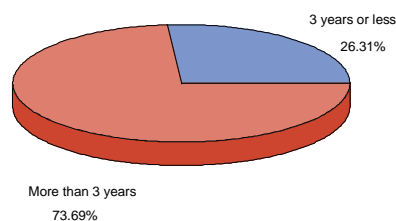


Chart 7

- Charts 8, 9 and 10 show a comparison of the completion time between native and transfer graduates for the 1997-98, 2002-03 and 2007-08 cohorts against the three-year standard. When “time to completion” and the “native/transfer” classification are cross-tabulated for the 2007-08 cohort shown in Chart 10, results indicate 54.76 percent of the population were native to MTC and took more than three years to graduate; 10.83 percent were native to MTC and finished within three years. Nineteen (18.93) percent had transfer hours and took more than three years to graduate; 15.48 percent had transfer hours and finished in three years or less.

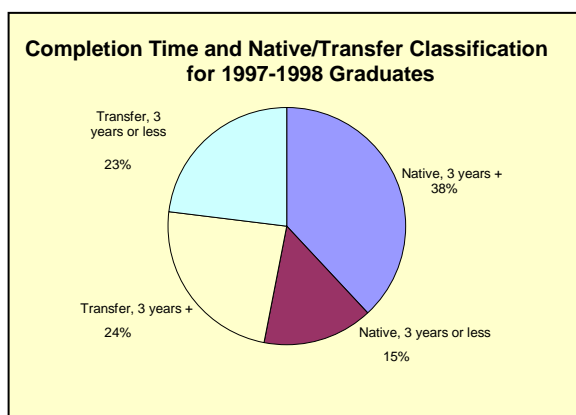


Chart 8

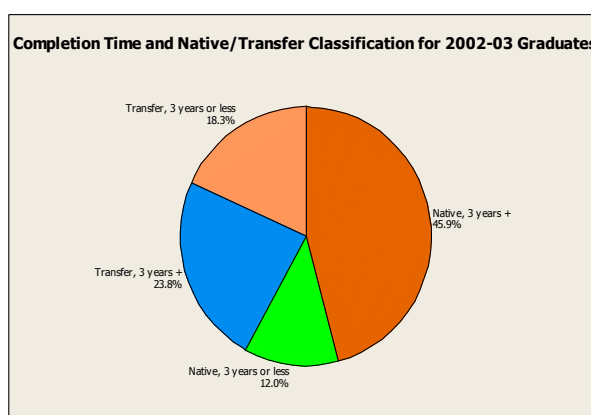


Chart 9

Completion Time and Native/Transfer Classification for 2007-08 Graduates

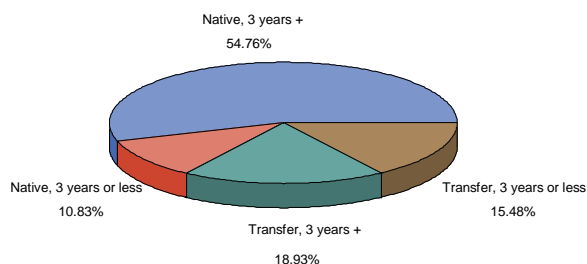


Chart 10

- When “time to completion” and “first-semester schedule” is cross-tabulated as shown in Chart 11, results indicate 21.31 percent of the population started with an all-curriculum-level schedule and finished within three years; another 38.69 percent started all-curriculum-level and took more than three years to graduate. Twenty-four (24.05) percent started in a mixed schedule and took longer than three years to graduate; 4.29 percent started in a mixed schedule and took three years or less. Eleven (10.95) percent started in an all-DVS schedule and took longer than three years to completion; 0.71 percent started all-DVS and graduated within three years.

Completion Time by First Semester Status for 2007-08 Graduates

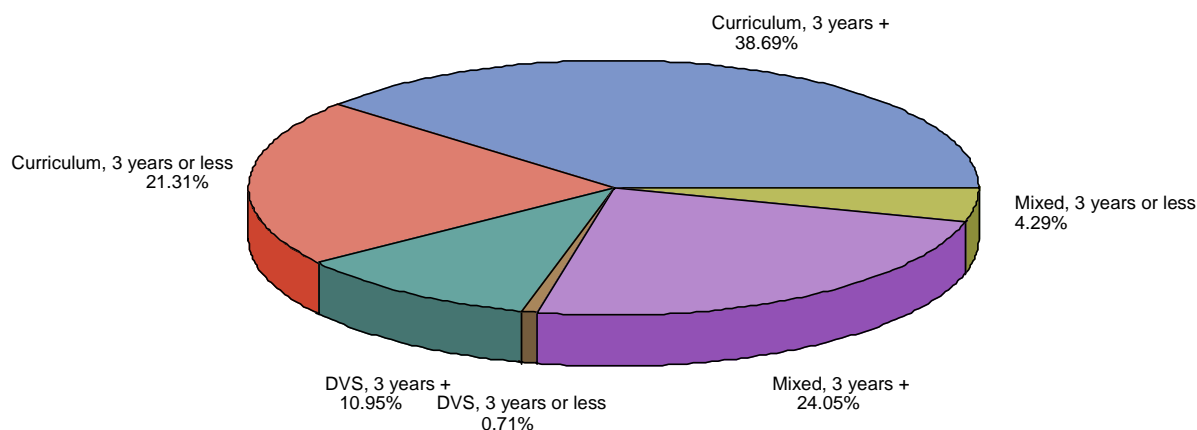


Chart 11

- When examined for race-gender differences (like the 2002-03 study) nonwhite females tended to be overrepresented among the groups of students starting in an all-DVS schedule, nonwhite males were underrepresented among students transferring hours, and females of any race tended to be overrepresented among students who took longer than three years to complete their degrees.

- Unlike the 2002-03 study, the 2007-08 study shows students who took more than three years to complete their degrees have race-gender combinations that affect their graduation time, either among graduates native to MTC or those with transfer hours. But like the 2002-03 study, graduates who finished within three years and were native to MTC show race-gender combinations that do not appear to have any effect on graduation time. Among those with transfer hours who finished within three years, there was practically no difference when looking at race-gender combinations.
- When graduation time is looked at for graduates who took support courses or were on academic probation at the end of the first term or at any time after the first term, we see in Chart 12 that students who took support courses graduated nearly a year earlier than students who were on probation. Students who enrolled in support courses graduated in 6.02 calendar years, while students who were on academic probation after the first term graduated in 6.79 years, and students who were on academic probation at the end of the first term graduated in 7.56 years.

Graduation Time vs. Support Courses and Academic Probation

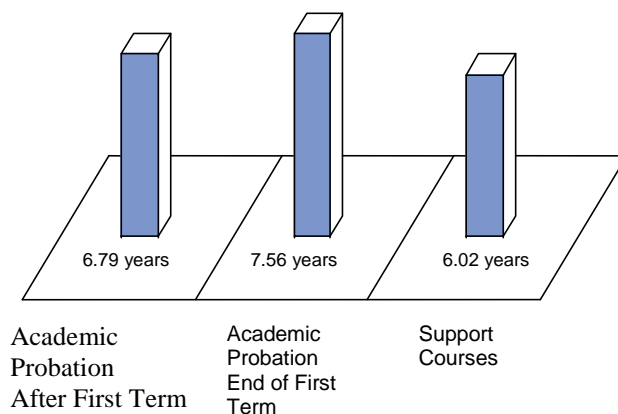


Chart 12

- Support courses for this study included COL 103 (College Skills), COL 105 (Freshman Seminar) and IDS 102 (Personal/Career Assessment). When comparing students who enrolled in support courses to those who did not, their graduation time does not support the benefit of taking support courses. The average time it took the 254 students who enrolled in support courses to graduate was 6.02 calendar years, compared to 5.28 years for the 586 students not taking support courses. Although these results seem surprising, the fact that the non-support course group brought in more transfer hours explains this result. The non-support course group brought in an average of 39.62 transfer hours, compared to just 18.01 transfer hours for students taking support courses.
- Results for an examination of the effect of financial aid on graduation time show students receiving aid took longer. Of the 750 students receiving financial aid (grants, student loans or college work-study), their average graduating time was 5.60 years, compared to 4.64 years for the 89 students not receiving any form of aid.
- This study found a statistically significant relationship between several variables including: compliance with the three-year standard related to first-term status at admission; and the support courses and academic probation variables related to race/gender and first-term status. These variables was not significant however when examined by divisions.