

**Retrospective Analysis
Of Total Time to Completion:
2002-2003 Associate Degree Recipients**

Midlands Technical College

Executive Summary

- The population of 789 Associate degree recipients was studied for the 2002-2003 class. All data was collected from existing databases and combined with indicators that identify and describe factors common to students who persist to finish the Associate degree. Where appropriate, comparison to the findings of a study of 1997-98 MTC Associate degree graduates is made. The previous study consisted of a sample of 313 students from the 731 students population while the current study of 2002-2003 graduates examines the entire population (789) of associate degree graduates.
- As shown in Chart 1, of the 789 Associate degrees awarded, 39.9% were white females, 22.4% were white males, 26.2% were nonwhite females, and 11.4% were nonwhite males.

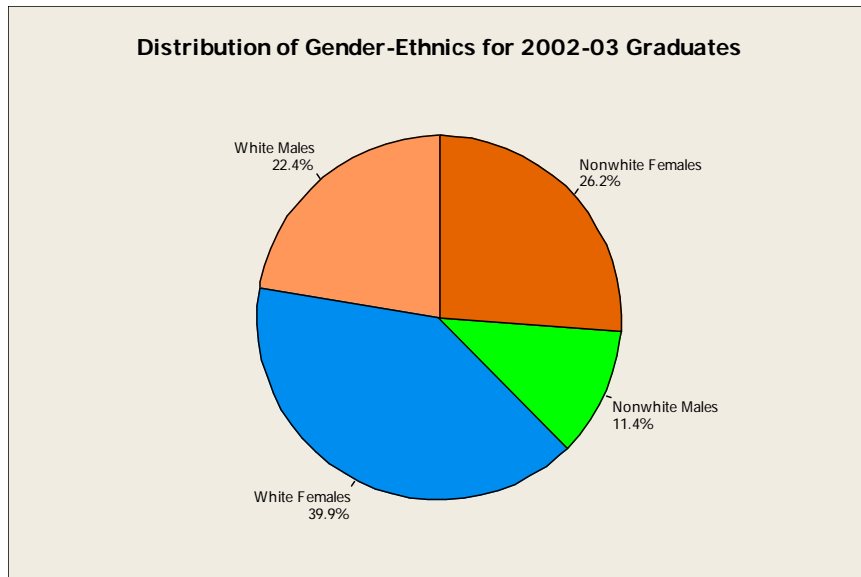


Chart 1

- As shown in Chart 2, the division breakdown for the graduates is 36.4 % for Business and Information Systems, 28.4% for Arts & Sciences, 20.0% for Nursing and Health Sciences, and 15.2% for Industrial and Engineering Technologies.

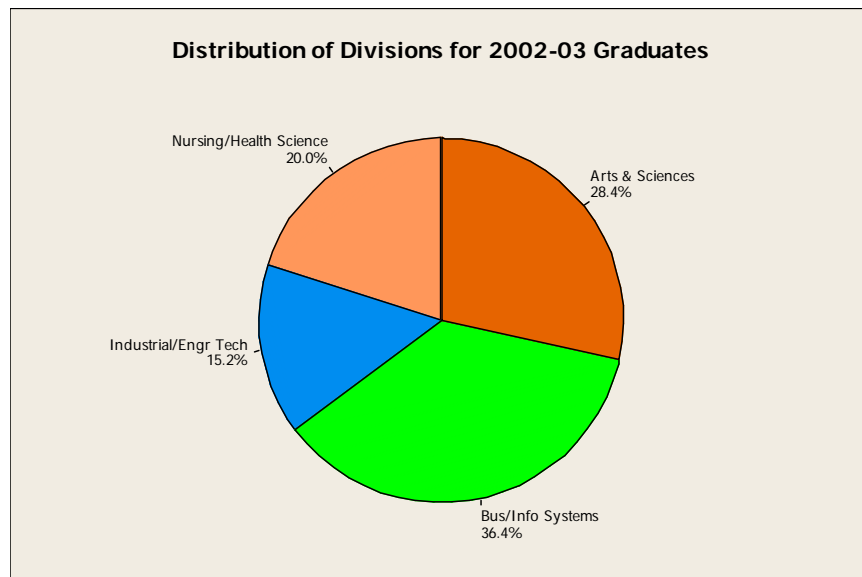


Chart 2

- The first semester of coursework was analyzed to classify students as being in all curriculum-level courses (57.7 percent), all DVS courses (9 percent), or in a mixed schedule their first semester (33.3 percent).

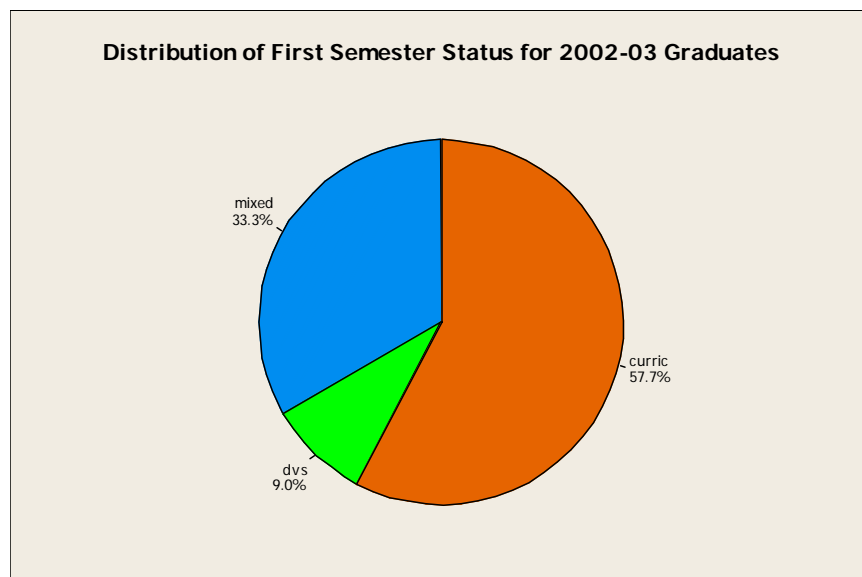


Chart 3

- A histogram of our graduation time variable, as seen in Chart 4, shows the different lengths of time the 2002-2003 class took to obtain their Associate degrees. The majority (517 students) are in the 1.5 to 5 year categories, there are (31 students) in the 0.58 to 1.5 year category. This group brought in a large number of transfer hours. Some of the graduates (131 students) took from 7.7 to 15 years to graduate; I suspect this group would be heavily populated with students that took long stopout periods while pursuing their degree. This chart points to the diverse paths and persistence of students who obtain the Associates degrees.

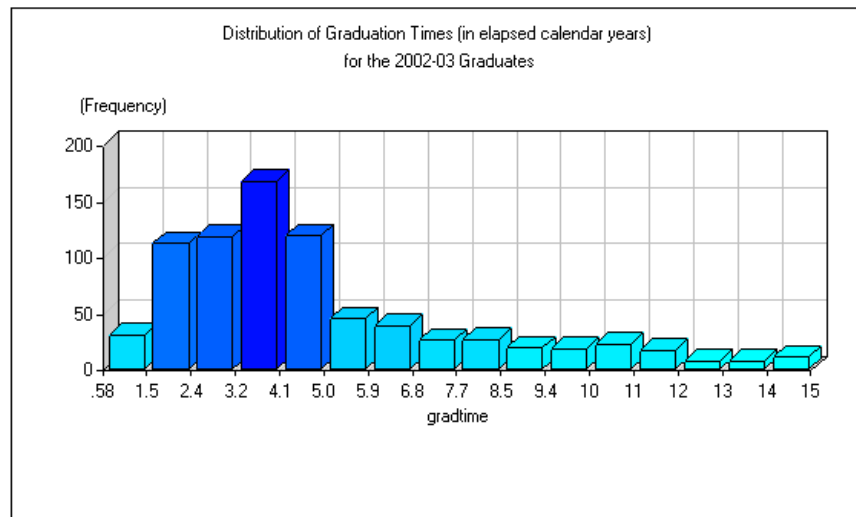


Chart 4

- The average graduate took 4.8 calendar years and 10.2 semesters of coursework at MTC to complete their Associate degrees. This figure was lowest for graduates who started in an all curriculum-level schedule (4.4 years, 9.1 semesters), followed by those with mixed schedules (5.1 years, 11.0 semesters), and those with all-DVS schedules (6.5 years, 13.9 semesters). Table 1 below, shows a comparison of this result to the college’s previous study of the 1997-1998 graduates. Please note, when looking at data comparisons to the previous study, that the 1997-98 data consists of a sample of 313 graduates from the 731 graduate population while the current study of 2002-2003 graduates examines the entire population (789) of associate degree graduates.

Table 1: Years and Semesters to Completion Comparison
2002-03 to 1997-98 Graduates

MTC Studies	First Term Status			
	Curric	DVS	Mixed	Average
2002-2003 Study	4.4	6.5	5.1	4.8
	9.1	13.9	11.0	10.2
1997-1998 Study	3.7	5.7	4.3	4.2
	8.2	13.6	10.3	9.6

- When transfer work is examined, 57.92 percent of the graduates were classified “native”, meaning they had no transfer work on their transcripts; the other 42.08 percent brought in hours from at least one other institution.
- The average graduate in the population who reported transfer hours had been to 1.54 other institutions and brought in 13.92 hours.

- For comparison purposes, Charts 5 and 6 shows the distribution of completion time for the 1997-98 and 2002-03 graduates against the 3 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 6, sixty-nine (69.7) percent of the graduates took longer than three calendar years to complete their Associate degrees; 30.3 percent completed their degrees in three years or less.

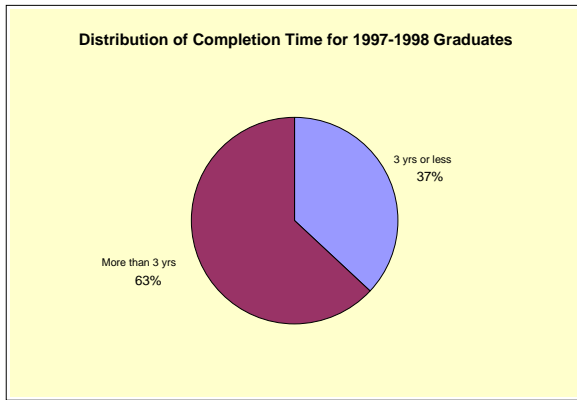


Chart 5

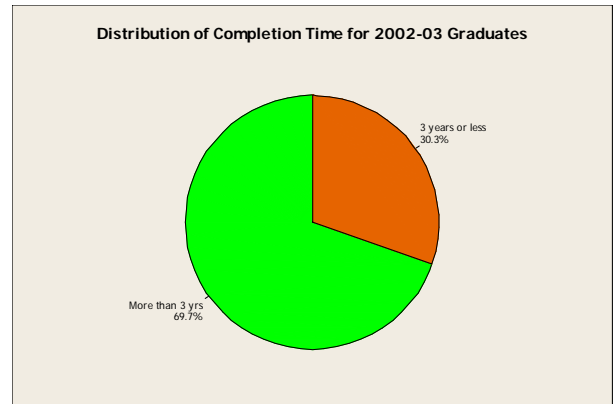


Chart 6

- Charts 7 and 8 show a comparison of the completion time between native and transfer graduates for the 1997-98 and 2002-03 cohorts against the 3 year standard. When “time to completion” and the “native/transfer” classification are cross tabulated, results indicate 45.9 percent of the population were native to MTC and took more than three years to graduate; 12.0 percent were native to MTC and finished within three years. Twenty-three (23.8) percent had transfer hours and took more than three years to graduate; 18.3 percent had transfer hours and finished in three years or less.

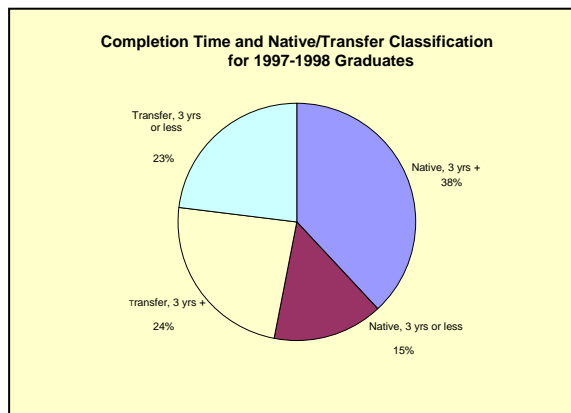


Chart 7

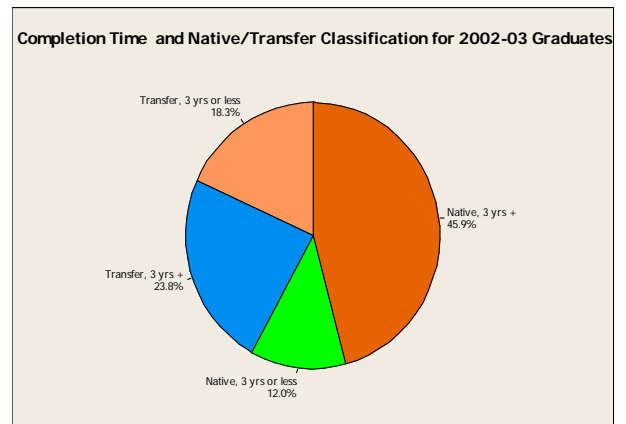


Chart 8

- When “time to completion” and “first-semester schedule” are cross tabulated, results indicate 22.9 percent of the population started with an all curriculum-level schedule and finished within three years; another 34.7 percent started all curriculum-level and took more than three years to graduate. Approximately twenty-six (26.5) percent started in a mixed schedule and took longer than three years to graduate; 6.8 percent started in a mixed schedule and took three years or less. Eight (8.5) percent started in an all-DVS schedule and took longer than three years to completion; 0.5 percent started all-DVS and graduated within three years.

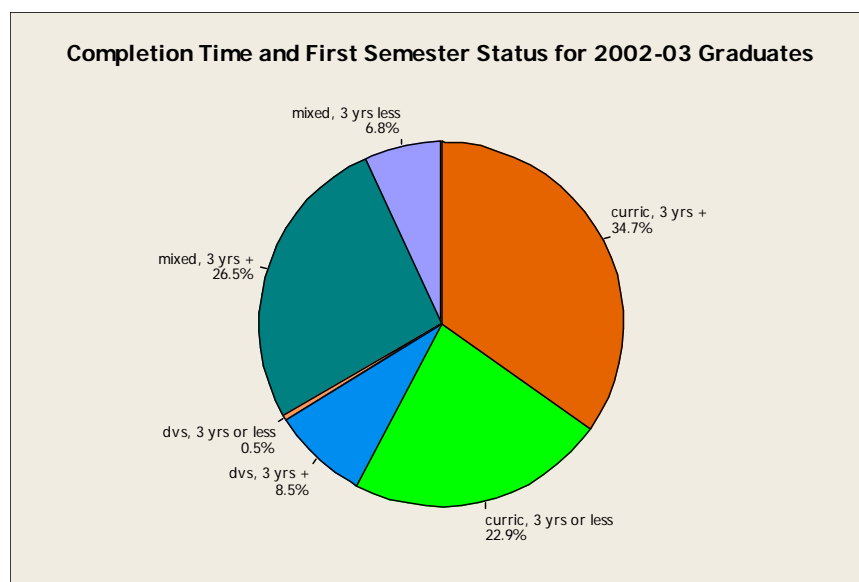


Chart 9

- When examined for race-gender differences, 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.
- Among students who took more than three years to complete their degrees, surprisingly race-gender combinations did not have any effect on graduation time, either among graduates native to MTC and those with transfer hours. Among those graduates who finished within three years and were native to MTC, again race-gender combinations did not appear to have any effect on graduation time. Among those with transfer hours who finished within three years, again there were practically no different when looking a race-gender combinations.
- When graduation time is looked at for graduates who had 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 10 that graduates who had support courses graduated approximately two years earlier than graduates who were on probation. Students who enrolled in support courses graduated in 4.7 calendar years, while students who were on academic probation at the end of the first term graduated in 7.1 years and students who were on academic probation after the first term graduated in 7.2 years.

Graduation Time vs. Support Courses and Academic Probation

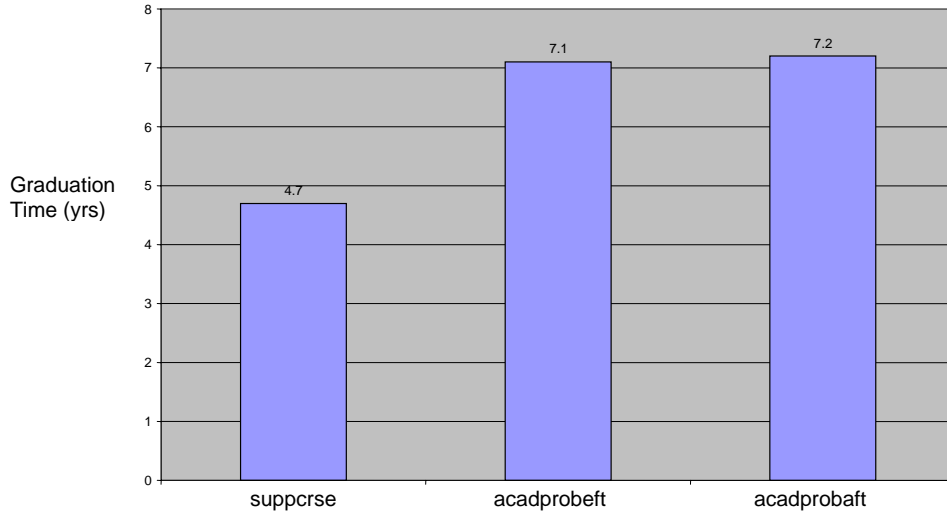


Chart 10

Support courses for this study included COL 103 (College Skills), COL 105 (Freshman Seminar) and IDS 102 (Personal/Career Assessment). When examining students who enrolled in support courses versus those who did not, results does not show much difference between these two groups. The average time it took students who enrolled in support courses to graduate was 4.7 calendar years, compared to 4.85 years for students not taking support courses. It should be noted that the average time to graduation is significantly decreased for the group who did not enrolled in support courses because this sector is heavily populated with students that brought in a lot of transfer hours.

- Results for an examination of the affect of Financial Aid on graduating time were not conclusive. Of the 535 students receiving financial aid (grants, student loans or college work-study) their average graduating time was 4.7 years, compared to 5.0 years for the 254 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 first term status. This variable was not significant however when examined by divisions and race/gender combinations.