



UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, MONA CAMPUS



How One University Examined Graduation Rates of Its Undergraduate Student Population

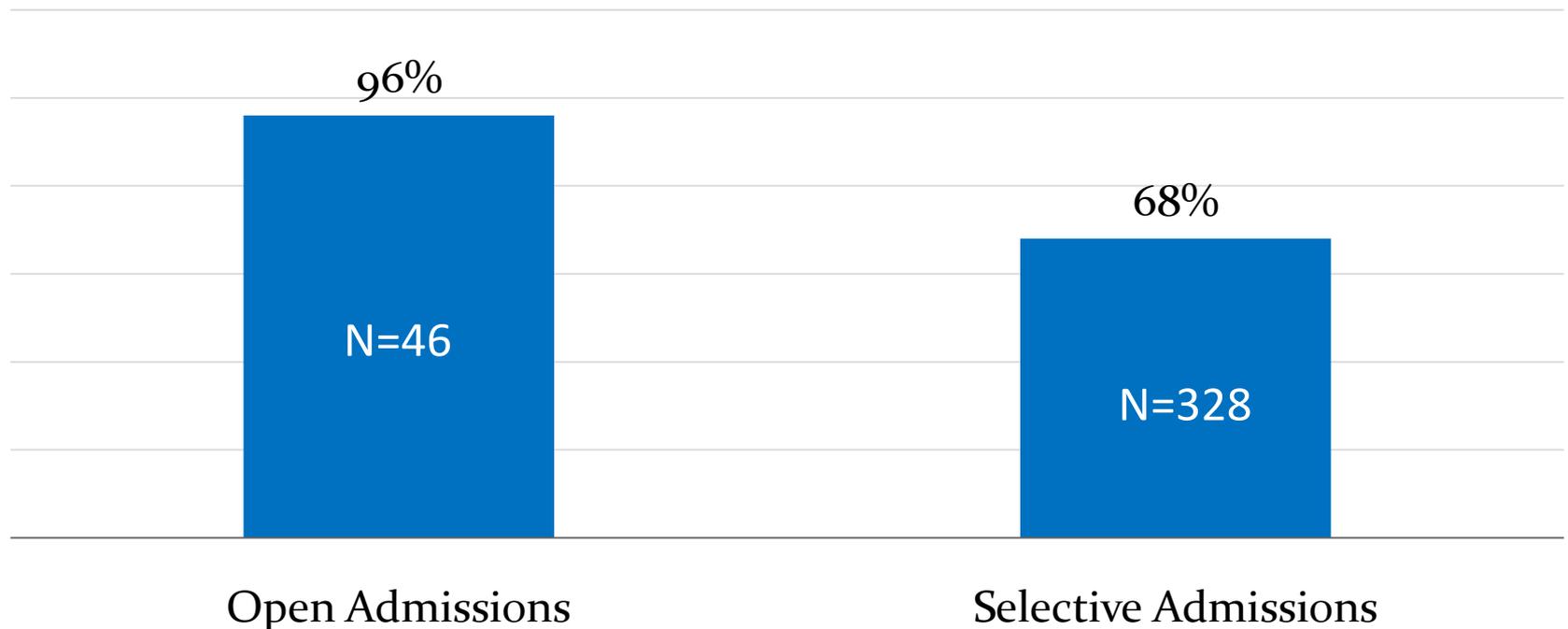
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The Importance of Graduation Rates:

- Used in accountability reports or as performance indicators.
- Linked to performance funding.

Six Year Graduation Rates (2007) Below 50%:

Among Public, Bachelors and Masters Level
Institutions



The Problem with Graduation Rates

- Excludes part-time students.
- “Misrepresents the experience of transfer students” (Capaldi, Lombardi, and Yellen, 2006).

Alternative Measures

- Graduation Efficiency Index (GEI)
(Gillmore and Hoffman, 1997)
- Expected Completion Rates (Astin and Oseguera, 2005)

Purpose

- The IR Office at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus was asked to undertake an analysis of student graduation rates as part of a University-wide initiative.
- The exercise was intended to assist administrators in monitoring the academic progression of students on a continuous basis.

Profile of UWI, Mona

- The UWI, Mona is a public university serving approx. 15,000 students, 80% of whom are undergraduate.
- Mona offers higher degree programmes leading to a doctorate; however most graduate students are enrolled in taught programmes than research ones.

Methodology

- Time to degree
- All First degree entrants in academic years 2000/01 to 2004/05
- Students tracked up to 2007-08 allowing for a 7-year graduation rate for the first cohort.

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- On-time and final completion rates calculated.
 - Full-time and part-time graduation rates calculated.
 - Graduation rates presented in active and total semesters.

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- % of students ongoing calculated.
 - Attrition rate identified students required to withdraw, students who voluntarily withdrew, and students who transferred.

Presentation of Graduation Rates

Table 1:

Year of Entry	Status	Faculty	Degree	Group/Major	Duration (Years)	Size of Cohort	GRADUATION RATES BY SEMESTER								ATTRITION RATES			
							Completion in 2 Semesters (%)	To	Completion in 14 Semesters (%)	% Completing On-Time Full-Time Only	Final Completion Rate (%)	Average Time to Complete (Active Sem.)	Average Time to Complete (Total Sem.)	% Ongoing 2+ Years After Expected Completion Time	% Required to Withdraw	% Voluntary Withdrawals	% Transfer	Attrition Rate
2000	FT	Hum.	B.A.	All	3	386				64.0	86.0	6.5	6.6	6.2	1.6	6.2		7.8
2000	FT	Hum.	B.A.	All-Females	3	303				66.7	88.1	6.4	6.5	5.6	1.0	5.3		6.3
2000	FT	Hum.	B.A.	All-Males	3	83				54.2	78.3	6.7	6.9	8.4	3.6	9.6		13.3

Findings

Table 2.

Faculty/Degree	Program Duration	Full-Time First Degree Entrants			
		% Completing On-Time			
		Year of Entry			
		2000		2001	
		Cohort	Rate	Cohort	Rate
Humanities -B.A.	3 years	386	64	331	60.1
Education - B.Ed.	2-3 years	175	82.3	164	84.1
Medical Sciences-MBBS	5 years	100	74	107	62.6
Pure & Applied Sciences-B.Sc.	3 years	201	32.8	254	37.4
Social Sciences - B.Sc.	3 years	530	59.2	540	59.8

Table 3.

Faculty/Degree	Program Duration	Full-Time First Degree Entrants			
		Final Completion Rate (as at 2007)			
		Year of Entry			
		2000		2001	
		Cohort	Rate	Cohort	Rate
Humanities -B.A.	3 years	386	86	331	85.2
Education - B.Ed.	2-3 years	175	92	164	94.5
Medical Sciences-MBBS	5 years	100	84	107	73.8
Pure & Applied Sciences-B.Sc.	3 years	201	59.7	254	68.5
Social Sciences - B.Sc.	3 years	530	87.5	540	88

Table 4.

Faculty/Degree	Program Duration	Full-Time First Degree Entrants					
		Average Time to Complete in Active & Total Semesters (as at 2007)					
		Year of Entry					
		2000			2001		
		Cohort	Active Semesters	Total Semesters	Cohort	Active Semesters	Total Semesters
Humanities - B.A.	3 years	386	6.5	6.6	331	6.5	6.6
Education - B.Ed.	2-3 years	175	4.2	4.3	164	4.2	4.2
Medical Sciences-MBBS	5 years	100	10.2	10.2	107	10.2	10.2
Pure & Applied Sciences-B.Sc.	3 years	201	7.0	7.1	254	6.9	7.0
Social Sciences - B.Sc.	3 years	530	6.6	6.7	540	6.5	6.7

Table 5.

Faculty/Degree	Program Duration	Full-Time First Degree Entrants					
		% Required and Voluntary Withdrawals (as at 2007)					
		Year of Entry					
		2000			2001		
		Cohort	Req'd to Withdraw	Volun. Withdrawal	Cohort	Req'd to Withdraw	Volun. Withdrawal
Humanities - B.A.	3 years	386	1.6	6.2	331	0.6	8.5
Education - B.Ed.	2-3 years	175	0.0	4.0	164	1.2	2.4
Medical Sciences-MBBS	5 years	100	2.0	2.0	107	0.9	14.0
Pure & Applied Sciences-B.Sc.	3 years	201	4.5	28.4	254	6.3	17.3
Social Sciences - B.Sc.	3 years	530	0.8	6.2	540	0.7	5.4

Table 6.

Faculty/Degree	Part-Time First Degree Entrants			
	Final Completion Rate (as at 2007)			
	Year of Entry			
	2000		2001	
	Cohort	Rate	Cohort	Rate
Humanities -B.A.	160	65.6	133	60.2
Education - B.Ed.	52	92.3	27	100.0
Pure & Applied Sciences-B.Sc.	10	20.0	12	50.0
Social Sciences - B.Sc.	402	73.9	488	71.7

Table 7.

Faculty/Degree	Part-Time First Degree Entrants					
	Average Time to Complete in Active & Total Semesters (as at 2007)					
	Year of Entry					
	2000			2001		
	Cohort	Active Semesters	Total Semesters	Cohort	Active Semesters	Total Semesters
	Humanities -B.A.	160	8.0	8.5	133	7.5
Education - B.Ed.	52	4.3	4.4	27	4.4	4.7
Pure & Applied Sciences-B.Sc.	10	10.0	11.5	12	9.3	9.5
Social Sciences - B.Sc.	402	8.9	9.5	488	9.0	9.3

Table 8.

Faculty/Degree	Part-Time First Degree Entrants					
	% Required and Voluntary Withdrawals (as at 2007)					
	Year of Entry					
	2000			2001		
	Cohort	Req'd to Withdraw	Volun. Withdrawal	Cohort	Req'd to Withdraw	Volun. Withdrawal
	Humanities -B.A.	160	1.9	27.5	133	1.5
Education - B.Ed.	52	0.0	3.8	27	0.0	0.0
Pure & Applied Sciences-B.Sc.	10	0.0	50.0	12	0.0	25.0
Social Sciences - B.Sc.	402	2.5	13.9	488	4.3	12.3

Benefits of the IR Exercise

- Better appreciation of trajectory of students.
- Graduation rate template is detailed enough to assist administrators in making informed decisions.

Benefits of the Time to Degree

- Can incorporate additional indicators which reflect the complex trajectory of students.
- Additional indicators provide a wealth of information useful to administrators.
- On-time completion rate adds a level of efficiency.

Drawbacks of the Time to Degree

- Less reliable measure of efficiency by relying on the enrolment status of students rather than the number of credits gained.
- Does not provide information on predictor variables or the kinds of students who are more likely to graduate.

Summary

- The University of the West Indies, Mona examined its graduation rates using a time-to-degree measure.
- The presentation of graduation rates was sufficiently detailed, but may not be practical for busy administrators.
- Explaining student attrition was largely a qualitative exercise.

Future Work

- Calculate a Graduation Efficiency Index.
- Calculate expected completion rates of First degree graduates.

Implications of Study

- Use various measures to calculate graduation rates and understand their limitations.
- Consider the selectivity of the institutions and the percentage of transfers when comparing graduation rates.
- The National Student Clearinghouse is a good resource for tracking transfer students in the United States.