

DEGREE COMPLETION
BOARD RULE 400.0200.00
GRADUATION RATE COMPARISONS WITH COMPARABLE INSTITUTIONS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING: SEPTEMBER 24, 2009

Belmont Technical College reports graduation rate data to the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR). These data are published by OBR for the University System of Ohio (USO) in reports accessible through the Higher Education Information (HEI) system. Institutions of higher education and members of the public may then compare graduation completion rate data between and among Ohio public institutions of higher education. This report compares graduation rate data for Ohio's technical colleges by institutions and for all community colleges by institutional categories. Comparing graduation rates at BTC with rates at comparable institutions is one way the Board of Trustees and the administrators monitor the college's progress toward helping students achieve their educational goals (Board of Trustees, *Ends Policies*, Section IV, 400.0200.00 *Degree Completion*).

The rationale for using HEI data from an OBR report to make graduation rate comparisons between Belmont and other colleges in this report is based on three factors. 1) These data are readily available to anyone who has computer access and interest in knowing about graduation rates in Ohio's public institutions. The college community can benefit from being knowledgeable about the information that is accessible to the public. 2) The data have been standardized across all institutions. As an example of how the data have been standardized, "time-to-degree credit hours" for all institutions are expressed in semester hours. HEI has converted the quarter-based credit hours from Belmont and other quarter-based systems to semester hours. 3) Comparisons are legitimate and valid when systematic processes are used to standardize measurements and to make comparisons.

Data:

The table below, Table 1, *Graduation rate comparisons with comparable institutions*, displays graduation rate data¹ for eight technical colleges in Ohio. In addition, the table includes aggregated data for Ohio technical colleges, Ohio community colleges, and Ohio *state* community colleges. The data in the table were updated by OBR in January 2009 and represent associate degrees awarded to non-transferring students who completed those degrees in the 2006-2007 year.

Comparisons are made across four dimensions: number of associate degrees awarded by institution, average number of credits to degree, median number of years for students to earn associate degrees, and the time it took those students to complete the associate degrees they were awarded. Time to degree is categorized according to percentage of students graduating in 2 years or less, 2 to 3 years, 3 to 4 years, and more than 4 years.

These data representing the time it has taken non-transferring students to complete their associate degrees show cumulative percentages. Thus, for the 178 degrees that are shown as awarded at BTC during the 2006-2007, 17 percent of the degrees were completed in two years or less; 48 percent were completed in three years or less; 65 percent were completed in four years or less; and 100 percent were completed in four years or longer.

¹ Data for this report are from the OBR report, *Time and Credits to Degree for Associate and Bachelor's Degree Graduates at University System of Ohio Institutions FY 2006-07 Graduates*, retrieved August 28 from:
http://regents.ohio.gov/perfrpt/statProfiles/Time_and_Credits_to_Degree_FY_06-07_Report.pdf

Table 1 *Graduation rate comparisons with comparable institutions*

Institution	Degrees awarded	Average credits to degree	Median years to degree	Percent graduating in			
				2 years or less	>2 years <= 3 years	>3 years <= 4 years	>4 years
Belmont Technical College	178	85	3.3	17%	31%	17%	34%
Central Ohio Technical College	288	82	3.3	8%	39%	22%	31%
Hocking Technical College	576	81	3.3	18%	31%	18%	34%
James A. Rhodes State College	386	82	3.5	11%	30%	21%	38%
Marion Technical College	199	81	4	4%	23%	26%	48%
North Central State College	345	83	4.3	11%	17%	21%	51%
Stark State College of Technology	760	88	3.7	13%	25%	21%	41%
Zane State College	298	82	3.3	17%	30%	17%	36%
Technical Colleges	3,030	83	3.5	13%	28%	20%	39%
Community Colleges	4,267	87	4.8	7%	15%	17%	60%
State Community Colleges	4,499	82	4	9%	23%	20%	48%

Analysis:

Data in the comparison table indicate that BTC awarded 178 associate degrees in the 2006-2007 year. On average, BTC students completed the equivalent of 85 semester credit hours toward their degrees; and the median number of years taken to complete the work required for an associate degree was 3.3 years. These data represent associate degrees only and do not include certificates earned. In comparison with other technical colleges, BTC students are reported as earning the second highest number of credits (85) while the average for technical colleges was 83.

When *median years to degree completion* are compared for all technical colleges in Ohio, the average is 3.5 years. The average for BTC graduates is 3.3 years. The average of 3.3 years is reported for three other technical colleges: Central Ohio Technical College; Hocking Technical College; and Zane State College (Zane). BTC and Zane show the second highest percentage of students completing their degrees within two or fewer years with an average of 17 percent. Overall, BTC reported that 48 percent of its students completed degrees in three years or fewer, while the cumulative average for all Ohio technical colleges was 41 percent.

Conclusions/Recommendations

OBR created the matrix referenced in this report with data submitted to the HEI system for associate degrees awarded during the 2006-2007 year. During the 2006-2007 year, there were 3,030 associate degrees awarded to non-transfer students by technical colleges in Ohio. Of those degrees, 178 were awarded at Belmont. This represents 5.9 percent of degrees overall. During the 2005-2006 year, there were 2,982 associate degrees awarded by Ohio technical colleges, and of those, 168 (5.6 percent) were awarded at Belmont. Thus, BTC’s contribution to the overall production of associate degrees shows a slight increase from one year to the next.

The targeted-goal for associate degrees to be awarded by *all* Ohio institutions in 2013-2014 was published in the USO metrics. The targeted goal is 24,062 associate degrees. This is an increase from the 2006-2007 year of 5,906 degrees. This increase of 32.5 percent in associate degree production for all institutions in the University System of Ohio means all Ohio institutions must focus on helping more students complete degrees.

Belmont's new strategic plan includes enrollment management action plans that are aimed at increasing the number of students entering college, helping students identify programs of interest, and encouraging students' timely progress through educational and career pathways. As goals for achievement are stated, metrics are determined, and methods of tracking students' success are identified and established, the college will report the number of degrees awarded and BTC's contribution to helping more students in Belmont, Harrison, and Monroe counties realize their educational goals.