

Executive Summary

This report examines the time students require between first enrolling and finally completing their intended educational goals to receive program awards (Associate degrees and certificates) at El Camino College (ECC) Compton Center. This report specifically focuses on the 565 program awards received by Compton Center students during the 2015-2016 academic year. Relatively few students appear to complete the requirements for a degree within their first two years (19%), and the median¹ time for degree completion is 3.9 years. Compared to degree-earners, proportionally fewer students completed the requirements for a certificate within the expected time (11%), though the median time for certificate completion is lower than that of degree earners (2.7 years). When considering the total number of awards, almost a third of the students (32%) require more than twice the normal time to complete their programs. Overall, the time to completion has decreased compared to the previous academic year. This report examines various completion outcomes disaggregated according to gender, ethnicity, age, and units completed.

Introduction

Normal time to completion is defined by the amount of time necessary for a student to complete all the requirements for a given program award, assuming the student enrolled at a college-prepared level of coursework and maintains full-time enrollment. It is not necessarily based on the “average” or “typical” time to complete requirements; rather, it is a calculated based on expected coursework required of the program.

Time to completion in this report (when not presented as a number of years or academic terms) is represented as a percentage of the time a student required to achieve the award divided by the time expected to achieve such an award. For example, degrees typically require two years to complete. Students who complete their degree requirements in 2 years would be considered at 100% time to completion; students who required 3 years would be considered at 150%; students who required 4 years would be considered at 200%, and so on.

Because certificates vary in the normal time to completion required, certificate time to completion in this report is similarly presented as a percentage, rather than various amounts of years or academic terms. Students who completed their certificate requirements within normal time for that certificate are considered at 100%; students who required 1.5 times the normal time are considered at 150%; students who required 2 times the amount of normal time are

¹ The **median** is the middle value in the full range of times to completion, where approximately 50% take longer than the median and approximately 50% take less time than the median.

considered at 200%, and so on. Time to completion is positively skewed (i.e., a small group of students take much longer to complete than the average), possibly due to students who enroll intermittently or otherwise take several years or academic terms to complete their program awards. Because of this, the median (rather than the average) is presently reported as a considerably more accurate measure for students' time to completion.

In the 2015-16 academic year, 565 degrees and certificates were awarded to students at ECC Compton Center. For an overview of the time students required to earn their program awards, see Table 1.

Table 1. Time to Completion by Location and Award Type (2015-2016)

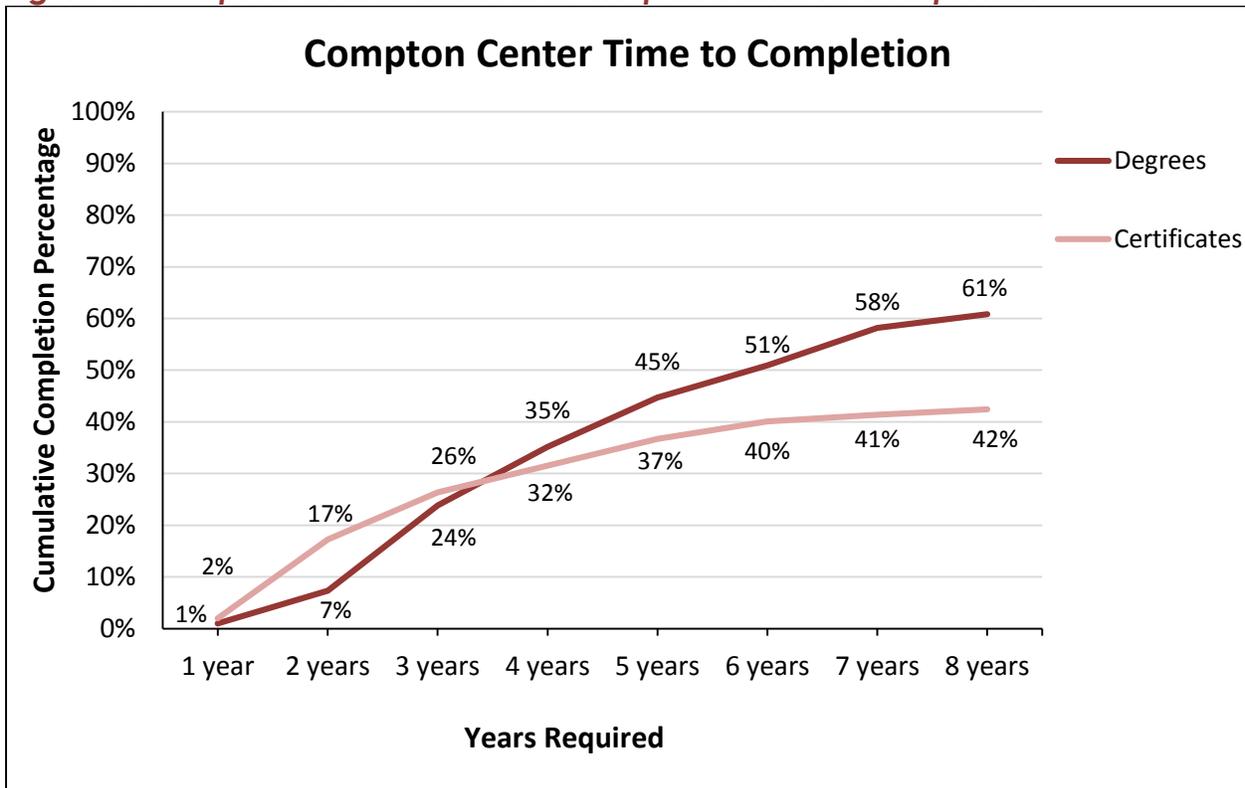
Award Type	Total Awards	Cumulative Percent			Median Years	Average Years (SD)
		100%	150%	200%		
Degrees	386	19%	42%	57%	3.9	4.7 (2.9)
Certificates	179	11%	35%	52%	2.7	3.5 (2.6)
Total	565	37%	56%	68%	3.7	4.4 (2.9)

Source: MIS. Because degree and certificate programs vary in length, time to completion is reported as a cumulative percentage of the "normal time" required for the degree or certificate. "100%" refers to students completing within the normal time; "150%" refers to all students requiring up to 1.5 times the length of normal time; "200%" refers to all students requiring up to 2 times the length of normal time. Standard deviations (SD) for average years required are listed in parentheses.

El Camino College Compton Center

The time required to complete a degree at El Camino College Compton Center is generally a longer amount of time than the two years expected of most community college degree and certificate programs. Among Compton Center students who completed their degree or certificate programs in the 2015-2016 academic year, the time required ranged from approximately one semester up to 19 years. The median time to completion was 3.9 years for degrees and 2.7 years for certificates (see Table 1). Among students who earned degrees, 19% completed their programs within 2 years, 42% completed their programs within 3 years, and 57% completed their programs within 4 years. Less than half of students (43%) require more than 4 years to complete their programs. This is also true for certificate programs, where 48% of students require more than four years to complete. Also, students tend to earn degrees at a rate similar to certificates, and remain a few percentage points above or below the total award rate. For a visual representation of the time required for ECC Compton Center students to complete their degree and certificate programs, see Figure 1.

Figure 1. Compton Center Graduates' Required Time to Completion



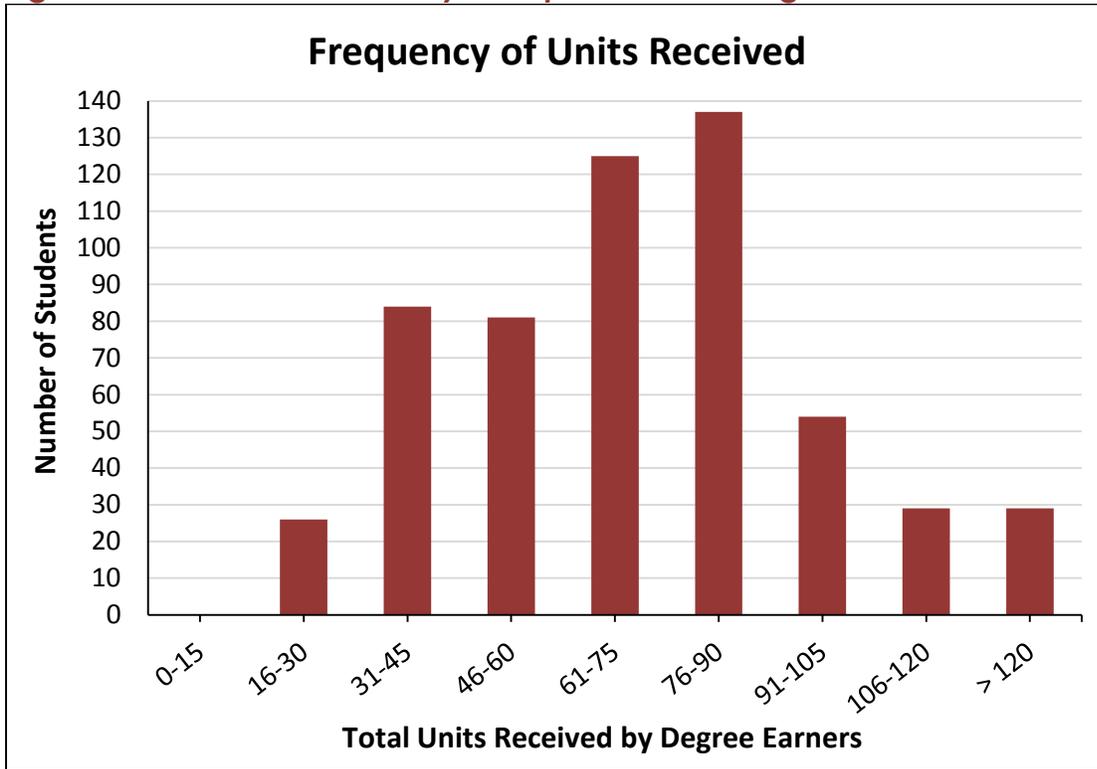
Source: MIS

Units Earned by Time to Degree

Degree programs at Compton Center generally award Associate degrees (i.e., Associate of Arts and Associate of Science) requiring students to complete at least 60 degree-applicable units. Students are allowed to transfer units from other institutions, but at least 12 units must be completed at ECC or the Compton Center. Therefore, some of the students in the following data will have earned far fewer than 60 units (at ECC or Compton Center) prior to receiving their degrees. This section examines the intersection of the time required to earn a degree and the number of units students complete prior to receiving a degree.

Data is presented according to 15-unit groupings that allow for the degrees earned to be measured on a standard of approximately one semester of full-time enrollment (i.e., 15 units). In other words, the data show how many semesters' difference from the 60-unit requirement a given student was at the time of receiving their degree. Figure 2 presents a histogram showing the distribution of total units received by Compton Center degree-earners at the time of their program award. Table 2 also presents this information, but is truncated to include the range of students within one semester of the 60-unit requirement (i.e., 45-60 units earned) and students earning more than 90 units (i.e., students at risk of facing financial aid consequences due to taking too many units).

Figure 2. Total Units Earned by Compton Center Degree-Earners



Source: MIS

Table 2. Units Earned for Associate Degrees at Compton Center (2015-2016)

Units Earned	Number of Students	% of Degree Earners	Median Units	Average Units (SD)
Total	386	100%	77	76.6 (24.6)
45 or fewer	41	11%		
46-60	43	11%		
61-75	103	27%		
76-90	114	30%		
More than 90	85	22%		

Source: MIS. Standard deviations for average number of units are listed in parentheses.

The majority of students (57%) do earn somewhere between the 60 units required for the degree and the 90 units that put them at risk of losing financial aid. Although only 60 units are required to receive a degree, many students (79%) are earning more units than necessary. Students at Compton Center typically earn 77 units before receiving their degree, implying these students are taking at least one additional semester of coursework. The standard deviation is large (25 units), meaning that over 80% of degree-earners complete more than 52 units and over 95% of them complete at least 27 units at ECC or Compton.

Table 3. Time to Completion for Associate Degrees by Units Received

Units Earned	Number of Students (%)		Cumulative Percent			Median Years	Average Years (SD)
			100%	150%	200%		
45 or fewer	41	(11%)	49%	66%	73%	2.3	3.8 (3.7)
46-60	43	(11%)	28%	42%	65%	3.7	4.3 (3.2)
61-75	103	(27%)	7%	41%	55%	3.7	4.6 (2.5)
76-90	114	(30%)	1%	38%	59%	3.7	4.7 (2.8)
More than 90	85	(22%)	5%	8%	22%	5.1	5.6 (2.7)
Total	386	(100%)	19%	42%	57%	3.9	4.7 (2.9)

Source: MIS. Student counts as a percent of degree-earners are listed in parentheses. Standard deviations for average numbers of years are listed in parentheses.

Table 3 presents an examination of degree-earners according to how many units they earn and how much time was required to complete the degree. Not surprisingly, students who receive 45 or fewer units while earning their degree tend to take less time to complete their programs. Generally speaking, the closer students are to the 60-unit range, the more likely they are to complete within shorter amounts of time. As the standard deviation of 3.2 years indicates, approximately 68% of 46-60 unit completers take between 1.1 and 7.5 years to complete. Similar results can be seen among the other groups. In general, the similarity in the amount of time it takes for students to receive between 46 and 90 units indicate that some students plan to receive more than 45 units without spending excessive number of years. On the other hand, students who earned a significantly large number of units (e.g., more than 90 units) may have taken more time or coursework to align with their educational plans.

Demographic Characteristics by Time to Completion

The following section examines time to completion in relation to the students' demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, ethnicity, and age).

Table 4. Time to Completion by Gender

Gender	Number of Students (%)		Cumulative Percent			Median Years	Average Years (SD)
			100%	150%	200%		
Male	245	(43%)	27%	52%	64%	3.0	3.9 (2.8)
Female	320	(57%)	14%	34%	52%	3.9	4.7 (2.9)
Total	565	(100%)	37%	56%	68%	3.7	4.4 (2.9)

Source: MIS. Student counts as a percent of award-earners are listed in parentheses.

At Compton Center, women require more time to complete their programs, and a smaller proportion of them complete their degrees in the given timeframes. According to the "80% rule" (i.e., a group is considered disproportionately impacted if performing at less than 80% of a reference group's performance rate), women appear to be disproportionately impacted in their completion rates when compared to men. Although it is difficult to apply the 80% rule to the

number of years required to complete programs, the average time required for men is approximately 83% of the average time required for women.

Table 5. Time to Completion by Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Number of Students (%)		Cumulative Percent			Median Years	Average Years (SD)
			100%	150%	200%		
Black or African American	185	(33%)	18%	36%	54%	3.7	4.7 (3.4)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	*	(<1%)	0%	0%	100%	3.7	3.7 (0.0)
Asian	23	(4%)	22%	39%	48%	4.3	4.4 (3.0)
Latino or Hispanic	332	(59%)	19%	45%	59%	3.7	4.2 (2.6)
Pacific Islander	0	(0%)	-	-	-	-	- -
White (Non-Hispanic)	*	(2%)	50%	60%	70%	2.1	3.0 (2.0)
Two or More Ethnicities	*	(1%)	63%	63%	63%	1.6	3.4 (2.8)
Unknown or Declined	*	(1%)	0%	67%	67%	2.3	3.7 (2.2)
Total	565	(100%)	37%	56%	68%	3.7	4.4 (2.9)

Source: MIS. Student counts as a percent of award-earners are listed in parentheses.

At Compton Center, different ethnic groups appear to complete their programs at various rates; the median time required ranges from 1 and 4 years. Incidentally, the vast majority of degree-earners (92%) were Black or Latino students, making comparative analyses of ethnic groups and examinations of disproportionate impact difficult. But among these two groups, Black students and Latino students appear to be completing at the same rate as the combined total median years.

Table 6. Time to Completion by Age Group

Age Group	Number of Students (%)		Cumulative Percent			Median Years	Average Years (SD)
			100%	150%	200%		
17 to 19	9	(2%)	100%	100%	100%	1.7	1.6 (0.4)
20 to 24	229	(41%)	16%	49%	66%	3.3	3.7 (1.7)
25 to 29	117	(21%)	21%	38%	50%	4.3	4.8 (2.7)
30 to 39	105	(19%)	21%	36%	49%	4.3	5.6 (4.5)
40 to 49	56	(10%)	13%	29%	45%	4.7	5.0 (3.1)
50+	49	(9%)	22%	37%	59%	3.7	3.6 (1.6)
Total	565	(100%)	37%	56%	68%	3.7	4.4 (2.9)

Source: MIS. Student counts as a percent of award-earners are listed in parentheses.

At Compton Center, younger age groups tend to complete their programs at quicker rates. These faster completion times among younger students may be explained by their likelihood of being “traditional” students. The largest group of degree-earners is the 20-to-24 year age range, and this group also completes quickly and with a high proportion of students completing within 200% of normal time. They only perform second best in terms of median years to complete when compared to the much smaller 17-to-19 age group. One characteristic of traditional students is the tendency to enroll in college immediately after completing high school, and if program completion at the Compton Center requires approximately four years, this would place most high school graduates in the 20-to-24 year age range at the time of their postsecondary education award.

STEM and CTE Initiatives by Time to Completion

The following section examines time to completion according to specific program initiatives at the Compton Center. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiative focuses on programs related to the more scientific and technical fields, as classified by the STEM list provided by the Department of Homeland Security. For the Compton Center, this typically means that programs in the divisions of Industry and Technology, Mathematical Sciences, and Natural Sciences are considered part of the STEM initiative. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) initiative concerns technical or industrial programs that are more career-oriented in nature. CTE programs focus more on building knowledge and skills related to particular technical professions, although there is some overlap between programs that are considered a part of the STEM and CTE initiatives.

Table 7. Time to Completion by STEM and CTE Initiatives

Initiative	Number of Students (%)		Cumulative Percent			Median Years	Average Years (SD)
			100%	150%	200%		
STEM	52	(9%)	12%	23%	42%	4.3	5.2 (3.2)
CTE	305	(54%)	25%	44%	59%	3.7	4.2 (2.9)
All Programs	565	(100%)	37%	56%	68%	3.7	4.4 (2.9)

Source: MIS. Student counts as a percent of award-earners are listed in parentheses.

On average, students in STEM programs tend to complete in a longer amount of time than students in all programs combined. Conversely, students in CTE programs tend to require slightly less time than students in all programs. Generally speaking, STEM programs include more traditional courses (e.g., chemistry), while CTE programs include vocational courses that may be taken at a slower pace, especially if students enroll in these programs to build job-related skills rather than working toward a specific degree or certificate. Incidentally, the average age of students completing CTE programs at Compton Center is approximately 33 years, implying these are more likely to be nontraditional students. As opposed to enrolling in class full-time and working part-time, nontraditional students tend to work full-time and enroll in classes part-time, increasing the number of semesters required to complete their program.

Conclusion

Students at the Compton Center tend to require more than the two years that are expected to be necessary to complete degree and certificate programs. Typically, students require four years or more (i.e., several students complete at approximately 200% of the expected time required). However, there appear to be student characteristics that influence (or are related to) variation in the time required to complete their programs. Most substantially, the age of the student and the number of units a student earns at the time of receiving their award seem to inform whether they complete in a shorter or longer amount of time. Overall, the time to completion for the 2015-2016 academic year has increased slightly when compared to rates from the 2014-2015 academic year (i.e., overall median completion time has increased from 2.9 to 3.7 years). Compared to the previous year, Compton Center's average years required for degrees has slightly increased by less than half a year, while the average years required for certificates have decreased by 0.9 years.