GRADUATE STUDENT COHORT DATA FOR INDIVIDUAL ADVISING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION*

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Data of use to students in making plans concerning entry into graduate programs are also likely to be of use to administrators faced with resource allocation decisions. Included are such relatively available data as the percent of students entering a degree program who emerge with degrees, average length of time between entrance to the University and receipt of a graduate degree, and the extent to which sex differences exist in terms of degree completion rate or time required to complete a graduate degree. Average length of time to a degree can be useful in making individual plans and in comparing departments in the efficiency with which they produce degree holders. If these data are available for all degree holders, they allow the individual to make plans for his education and could allow him to compare departments in different universities. If such data are augmented to include all semesters of registration, by those who do not earn degrees as well as those who do, they can be used to yield efficiency indices. Combined with cost data, they can yield figures on the relative costs of the degrees awarded by departments within an institution. The present report summarizes a set of data designed to cast light on the comparative performance of the academic departments at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the production of graduate degrees and focuses on the methodology involved in developing statistical reports useful for such purposes.

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Somewhat different data analyses are suggested depending on whether the primary consumer of performance data is the individual applicant or the administrator faced with resource allocation decisions. In the former case, interest might well focus on likelihood of emerging with a degree given that one enters a particular program, and length of time required to get a degree given that the student earns one. In the latter case, efficiency and cost are the probable focuses of attention. Breneman (1970) has presented data on efficiency, defined in terms of the ratio of degrees granted to years of registration by all majors in a field. This efficiency criterion combines the two pieces of information of use to the individual student into a single index of efficiency. Both a high rate of degrees earned and short length of stay by students before earning the degree will yield high efficiency. Similarly, both low degree rate (or high attrition) and extended length of time to a degree will yield low efficiency. Furthermore, late attrition yields lower efficiency than does equally prevalent early attrition. Thus this measure, while it will not allow the student to make concrete plans, does evaluate the graduate major fields in a manner consistent with his interests. A highly efficient department is one in which a student has a high probability of earning a relatively quick degree, and of being told to give up early if at all. The present paper describes degree, length of time, and efficiency data. Finally, instructional unit cost data are merged with efficiency data, allowing investigation of the variance in costs among graduate major fields.

**METHOD**

The sample used for the present analyses included the 3151 students (972 females and 2179 males) first enrolling in graduate programs at the Urbana-Champaign campus of the University in either the fall term of 1963 or the spring or summer terms of 1964. The progress of these 3151 students was followed from their entrance until February 1970 for the purpose of determining what degrees they had obtained and what length of time they required to obtain them. The data used in the analyses were collected from the files of the Graduate