Measuring Student Success Without Blind Spots: Beyond IPEDS and Freshmen

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Presenters & Institution Introductions


UNT Health
FORT WORTH
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine

UNT Health FORT WORTH

1

Ranked by U.S. News & World Report as a 2024 Tier 1 medical school for primary care

99.1%

Match rate
(Class of 2025)

54%

Matched into residencies in Texas
(Class of 2025)

17

Number of specialties matched
(Class of 2025)

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas Texas

Mission

UT Southwestern's mission is promoting health and a healthy society that enables achievement of full human potential.

EDUCATE, DISCOVER, HEAL

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas Texas

- Enrollment(Fall 2025)
  - 931 medical students
  - 653 biomedical graduate students
  - 373 health profession students
  - 197 graduate public health students
- Cumulative Degrees ~25,000
- Research
  - Total research dollars (Aug 31, 2025) $816.6 million
  - Total research projects (Aug 31, 2025) 6,215

UTSouthwestern
Medical Center

Fast Facts: One School, Two Campuses

Baylor College of Medicine

HOUSTON CAMPUS

Located in the heart of Texas Medical Center, Houston campus houses the majority of BCM's academic, research and clinical facilities. It provides students and faculty with access to laboratories, hospitals and collaborative research opportunities within the extensive Texas Medical Center network.

TEMPLE CAMPUS

Situated in Temple, Texas, the Baylor College of Medicine School of Medicine Temple campus was inaugurated in July 2023. It is equipped with facilities designed to support advanced medical education and research. The Temple campus fosters a collaborative environment, reinforcing BCM's commitment to improving health through science, scholarship and innovation.

Fast Facts: Numbers in 2025

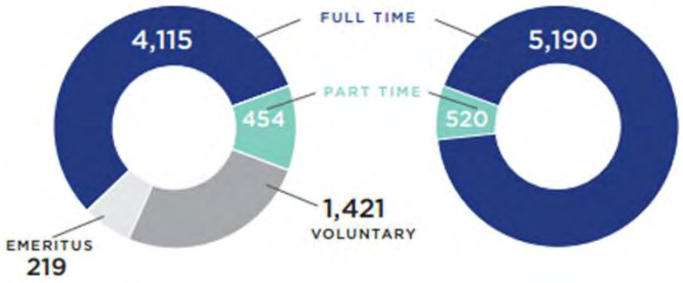
Baylor College of Medicine

TRAINEES

831 MEDICAL SCHOOL STUDENTS	525 CLINICAL FELLOWS*
618 GRADUATE SCHOOL STUDENTS	554 POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS
273 HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS	18 TROPICAL MEDICINE COURSE PARTICIPANTS*
1,083 CLINICAL RESIDENTS*	

*These numbers are from 2023.

FACULTY



STAFF

ALUMNI*

MEDICAL
9,141

MEDICAL LIVING IN TEXAS
4,672

GRADUATE SCHOOL
2,659

RESIDENT PHYSICIANS
17,591

RESIDENT PHYSICIANS LIVING IN TEXAS
8,834

HEALTH PROFESSIONS
2,095

UT San Antonio Health Science Center

On September 1, 2025, UT Health San Antonio and UTSA formally integrated to become The University of Texas at San Antonio (UT San Antonio).

UT Health San Antonio

- Established 1959
- Fall 2025 enrollment: 3,817, plus 1,089 medical residents and post-graduate trainees
- All-time graduates: 45,000+
- Academic Programs: 60+ programs across six schools
- Total workforce: 9,253
- FY26 Budget: $1.8 billion
- Ranked in the top 2.5% of all organizations worldwide that receive NIH funding.

Gloria Salinas, MBA
Director, Office of Institutional Research
Health Science Center

Gaps of IPEDS-defined metrics

What IPEDS Does Well

Clear, standardized definitions

National comparability

Longitudinal trend tracking

Widely trusted by policymakers and leaders

What IPEDS Is Designed to Measure

FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATES

FALL-ENTRY COHORTS

TRADITIONAL TIME-TO-DEGREE PATHWAYS

Who Gets left Out of IPEDS Metrics? - This Is Not an IPEDS Problem

Graduate students

Professional programs

Certificates

Part-time and nontraditional pathways

The challenge is scope, not quality.

Why Gaps Matter

Why IR Should Care

- Accreditation
- Decision-making
- Public accountability
- Marketing pressure

What Breaks

Graduate students

Certificates

Part-time

Rolling entry

Health & Graduate Education as the Case Study

Enrollment Patterns That Break Assumptions

FT/PT

ROLLING ENTRY

LOA

DUAL ENROLLMENT

Time & Cohort Problems

Program length

Cohort definition

Time-to-degree

Outcome Definition Problems

LICENSURE

PLACEMENT

ACCREDITATION LAYERS

Institutional Approaches

Why Definitions Matter ?

Same label ≠ same metric

Small definition choices can change results

Leaders assume numbers are directly comparable

Without definitions, metrics get misread and misused

Clear definitions make metrics explainable and transferable

Goal today: make definitions visible, then show how dashboards help leaders interpret them.

A Simple Framework for Defining Student Success

HOW DO WE DEFINE STUDENT SUCCESS?

WHO IS INCLUDED?

OVER WHAT TIME?

HOW IS IT MEASURED?

USED FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

Applying the Framework: Graduation & Retention

Same metric, different meanings

Who is included?
LOA students? Part-time? Program switchers?

Over what time?
100% vs. 150% of program length

How is it measured?
Fall-to-fall, year-to-year, term-based

Used for what Purpose?
Accreditation vs. internal review

→ Same label ≠ same metric

Example:

Retention Rate

Peer Institution Definition: The Retention Rate is the percentage of students enrolled in fall, minus those who graduated in the Academic Year, who returned the next fall.

BCM Definition: The retention rate, as determined by matriculation cohort, is calculated by measuring the percentage of students who are admitted to and enrolled in a particular cohort during an academic year and continue their original program studies in the following academic year.

$$\text{Retention Rate} = \left(\frac{\text{Number of students from the cohort enrolled in the subsquent academic year}}{\text{Total number of students in the matriculation cohort}}\right) \text{X } 100$$

Applying the Framework: Time to Completion/ Degree

Small choices change the story

Who is included?
Advanced standing? Transfers?

Over what time?
Enrolled time vs. elapsed time

How is it measured?
Average, median, or time bands

Used for what purpose?
Planning vs. public reporting

→ Context matters more than the number

Example:

Time to Completion

Student Achievement and Success

Time to completion data is calculated by averaging the data from every graduating cohort from the past five years. The average time to completion is calculated for each academic year. Our current average time to completion rate is 5.5 years (5.1 registered).

Elapsed time to degree is the time between a student's entrance date and the student's exit date.

Registered time to degree excludes periods of time in which the student took a leave of absence. Because it is not possible to calculate the actual time that the student spent working toward their degree while officially on a leave of absence, if the student took a leave of absence and never re-enrolled for a full quarter, it is assumed that they spent one quarter's worth of time working toward their degree.

Graduating Year	Elapsed Time to Degree (Years)	Registered Time to Degree (Years)
2018-2019	5.1	4.8
2019-2020	5.6	5.4
2020-2021	7.0*	5.9
2021-2022	5.5	5.2
2022-2023	5.1	4.5

Applying the Framework: Licensure Exam Pass Rate

Definition drive the pass rate

Who is included?
All test takers or only graduates?

Over what time?
Academic year vs. calendar year

How is it measured?
First attempt, second attempt, or best attempt?

Used for what purpose?
Accreditation vs. quality improvement

→ Same exam, different definitions → different pass rates

Applying the Framework: Job Placement Rate

Program-dependent outcomes

Who is included?
All graduates or only job-seeking graduates?

Over what time?
At graduation or 6 months after graduation?

How is it measured?
Employment, residency match, or fellowship placement?

Used for what purpose?
Accreditation vs. quality improvement

→ Same outcome label, different definitions, different placement rates

What Clear Definitions Enable

- Clear interpretation for leaders
- Honest benchmarking with peers
- Dashboards that explain, not confuse
- Metrics that support student-centered action

Transparency builds trust.

Peer Benchmarking Without Definitions

- Student achievement data is widely shared
- Definitions are often missing
- Numbers look comparable — but aren’t

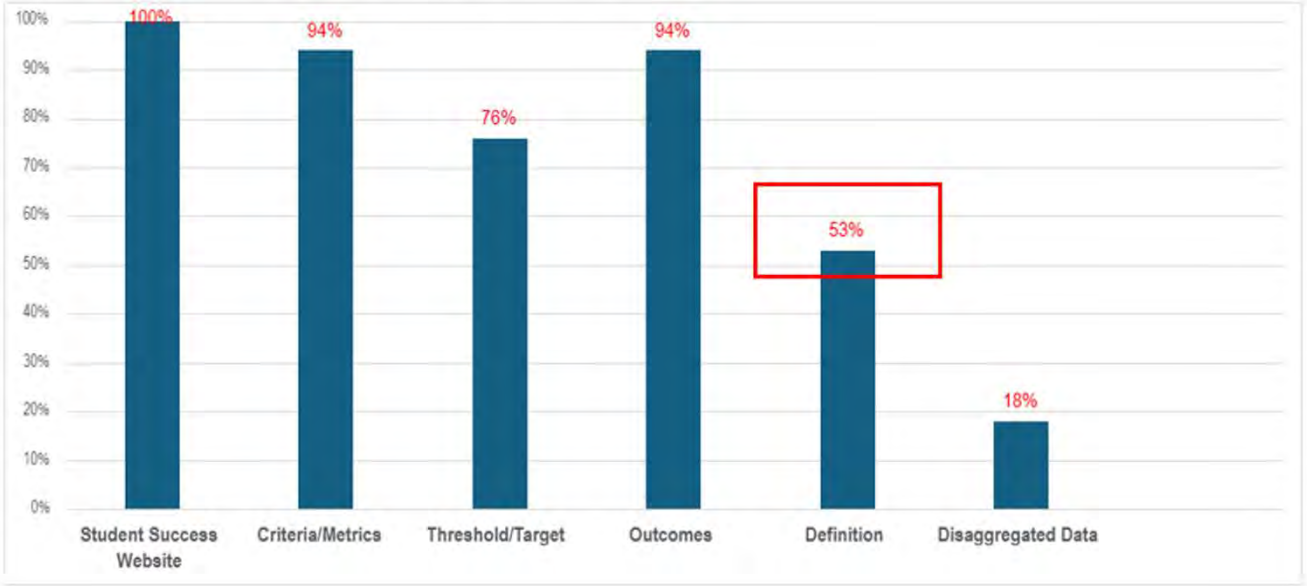
→ **Visibility ≠ comparability**

What Peer Institutions Share Externally

Peer Institution	Student Success website	Criteria/ Metrics	Threshold/ Minimum Goal	Outcomes	Definition	Disaggregated Data
National Peer #1	✓	✓	✓	✓	⊗	⊗
National Peer #2	✓	✓	⊗	✓	⊗	⊗
National Peer #3	✓	✓	⊗	✓	⊗	⊗
National Peer #4	✓	✓	⊗	✓	✓	⊗
National Peer #5	✓	✓	⊗	✓	✓	⊗
National Peer #6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	⊗

What Peer Institutions Share Externally

Out of 17 peer institutions:



Why Definitions Matter for Peer Comparison

- Prevents misinterpretation
- Enables fair comparison
- Builds trust across institutions

→ Apples-to-apples requires shared definitions

Call to Action

Post definitions on Student Success websites

Visualization in Practice: Making Definitions Visible

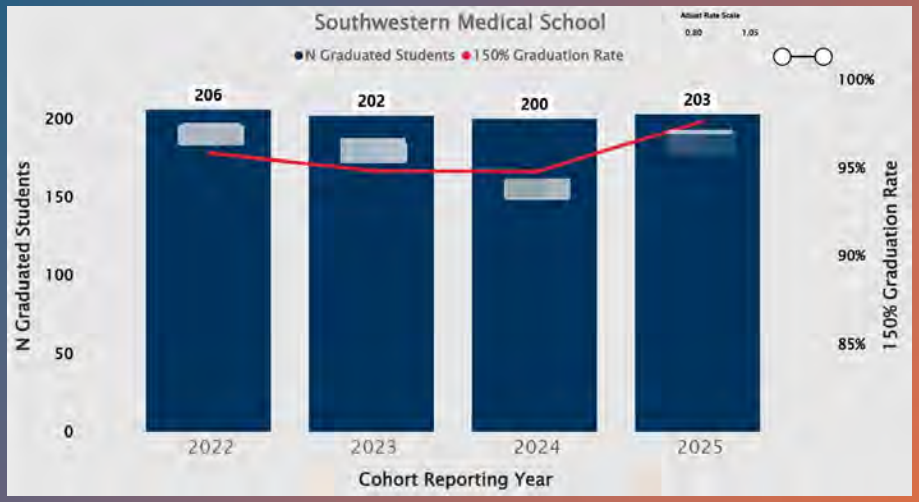
Why Definitions Must Be Visible

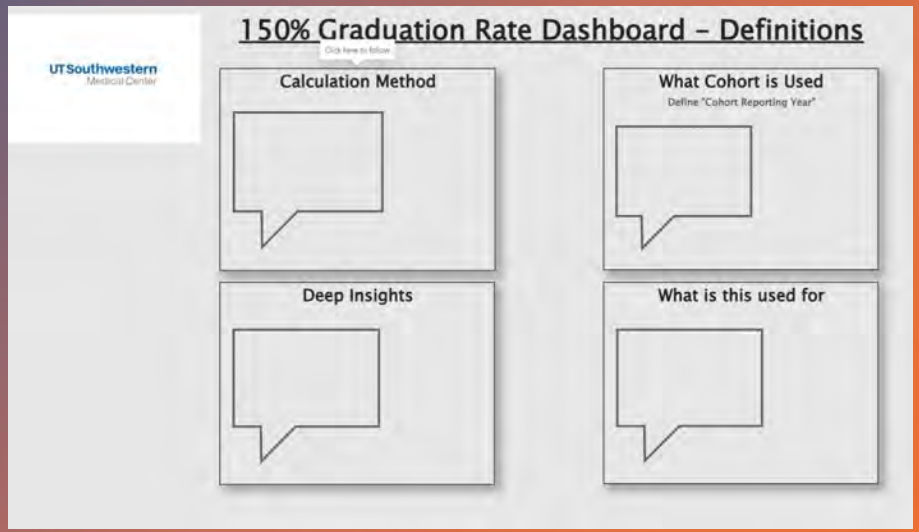
Definitions influence interpretation

Leaders rarely read footnotes

Dashboards surface assumptions in context

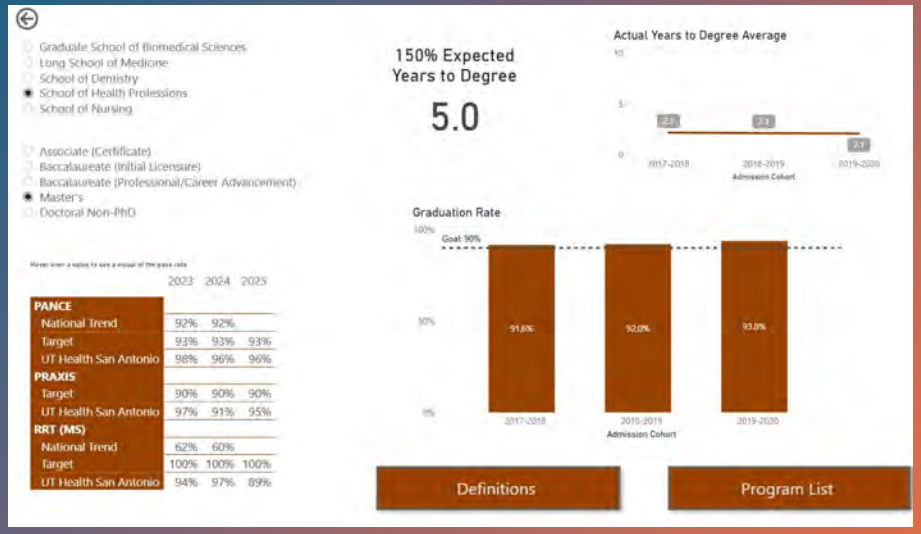
→ Visibility enables understanding

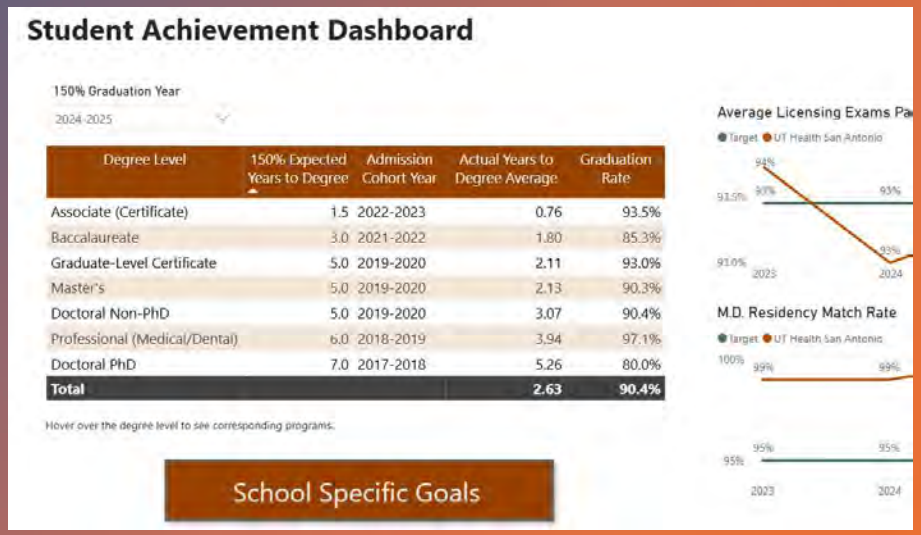




UT Southwestern: Program-Specific Metrics

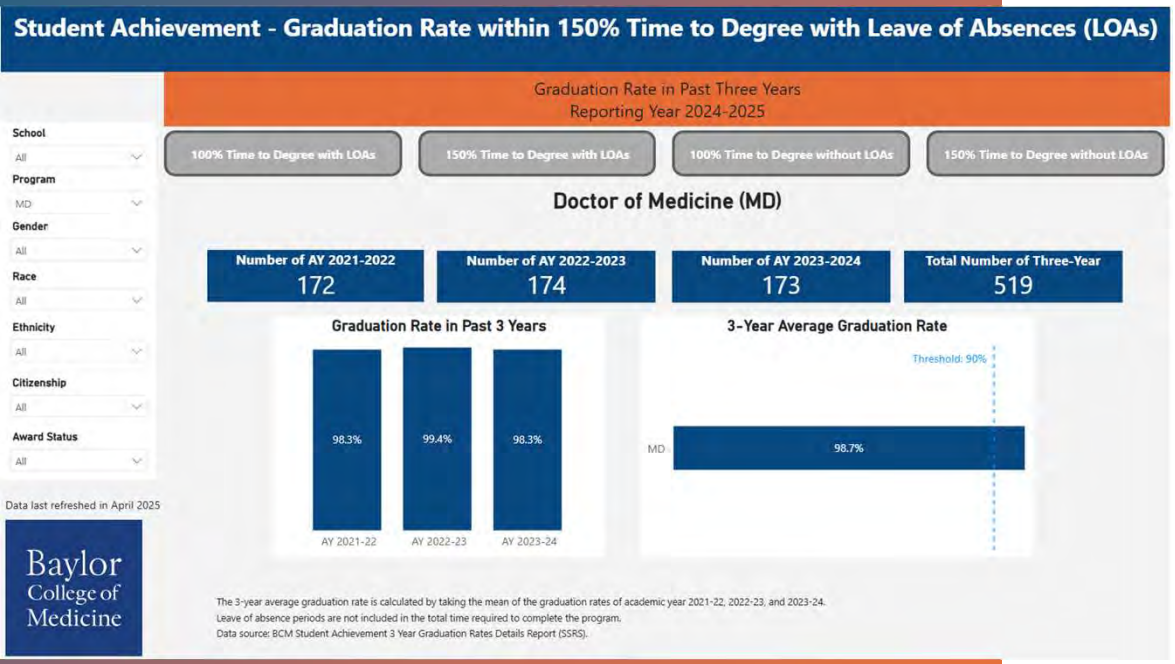
- “From the ground up…”
- Program-specific metrics for internal assessment
- Overall graduation rate to share
- Getting others involved in definitions





UT San Antonio HSC: Public vs. Internal Views

- Single public-facing Student Achievement Dashboard
- Program-specific metrics generated ad-hoc for internal assessment



Baylor: Trends Over Time with Clear Definitions

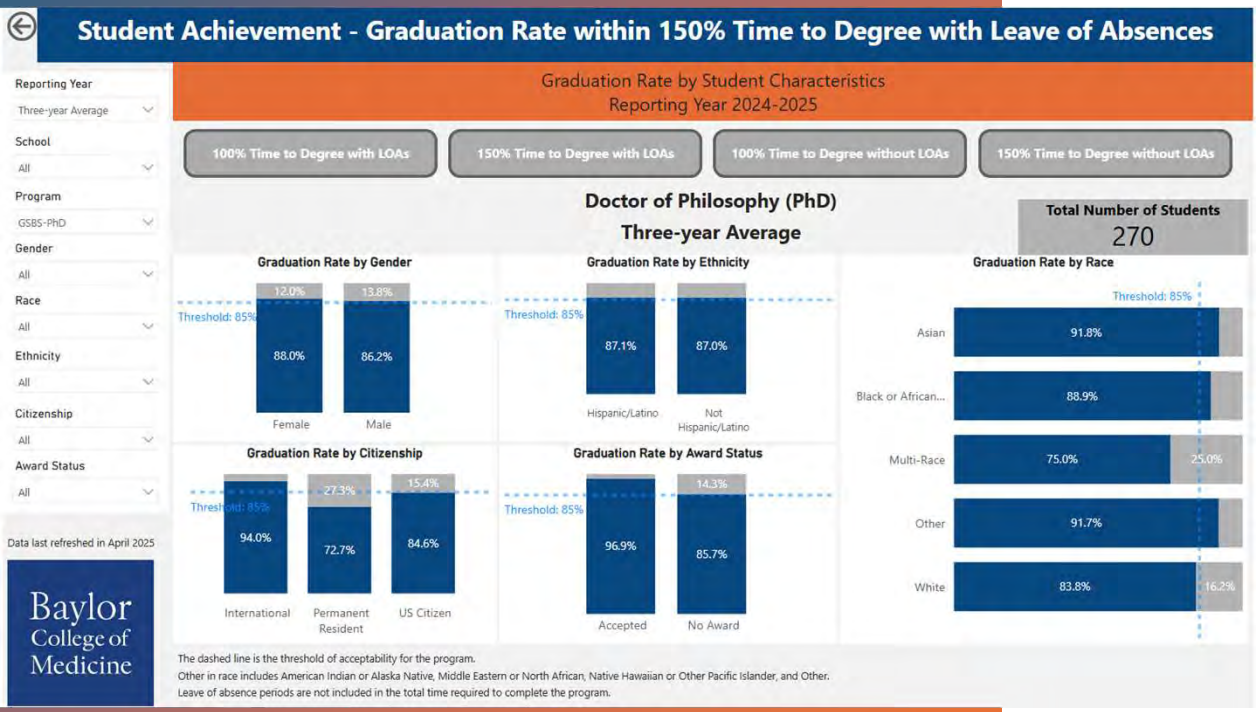
- Dashboards created
- Able to review trends over time

Baylor: When Outcomes Meet the Threshold

- What to do for **Continuous Quality Improvement** when outcomes meet or exceed thresholds

Ph.D. Programs

Student Achievement Metric	Threshold of Acceptability	3-Year Average (2022-2024) Ph.D.
Graduation rate[1]	85%	• 77.8% (7-year) • 87.0% (9-year)
Retention[2]	90%	98.5%
Time to degree[3]	7 yrs.	5.98 yrs.
Job placement / advanced training at graduation[3]	85%	97.6%



Baylor: Disaggregation as Insight and Action

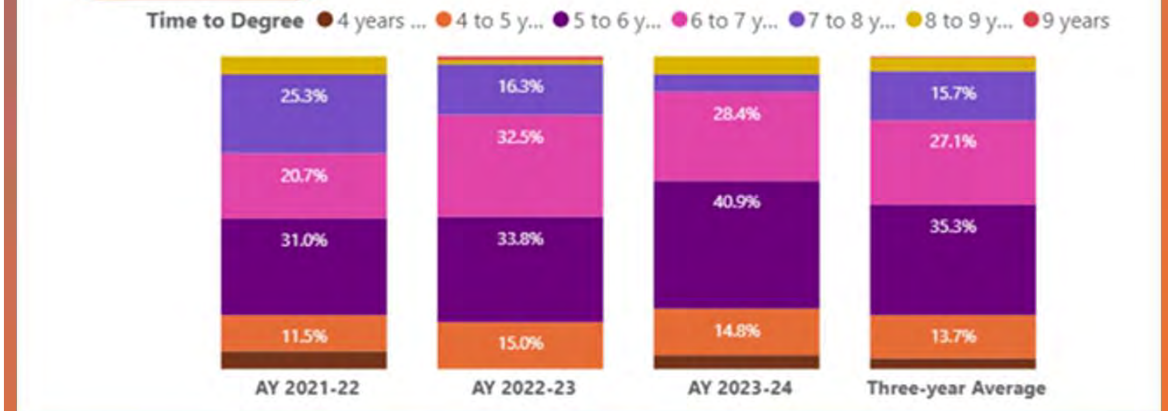
- Used Power BI Dashboard to tell the data story
- Disaggregation allowed for visibility of distinct student populations presented in a way to inspire ACTION

Baylor: Time to Degree - From Averages to Distributions

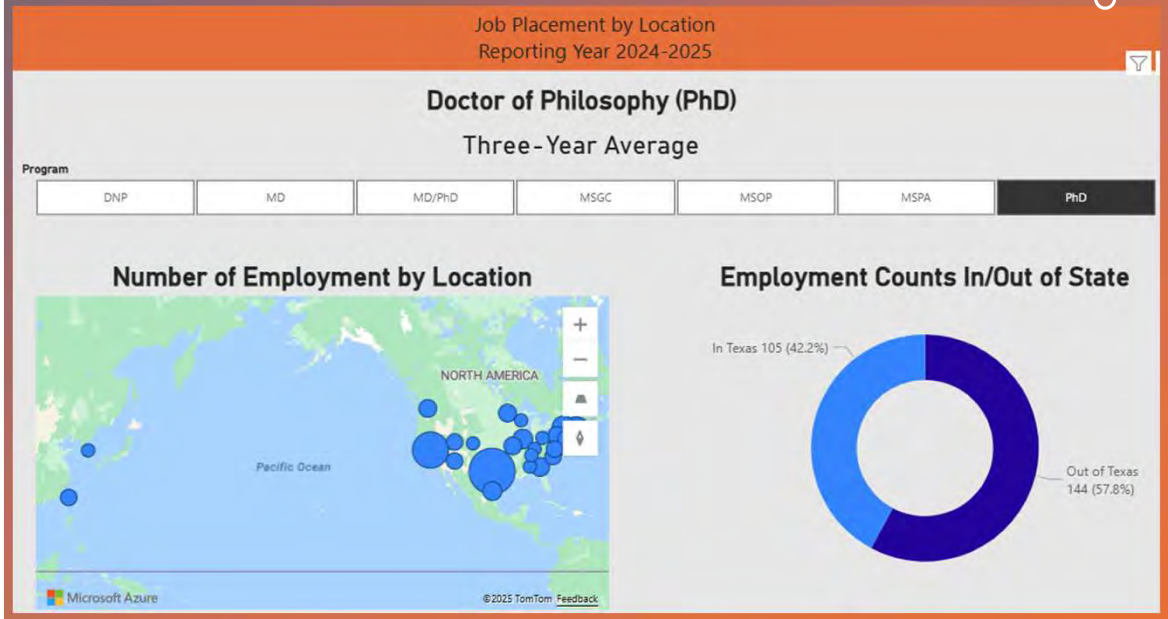
Time to Degree Report

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

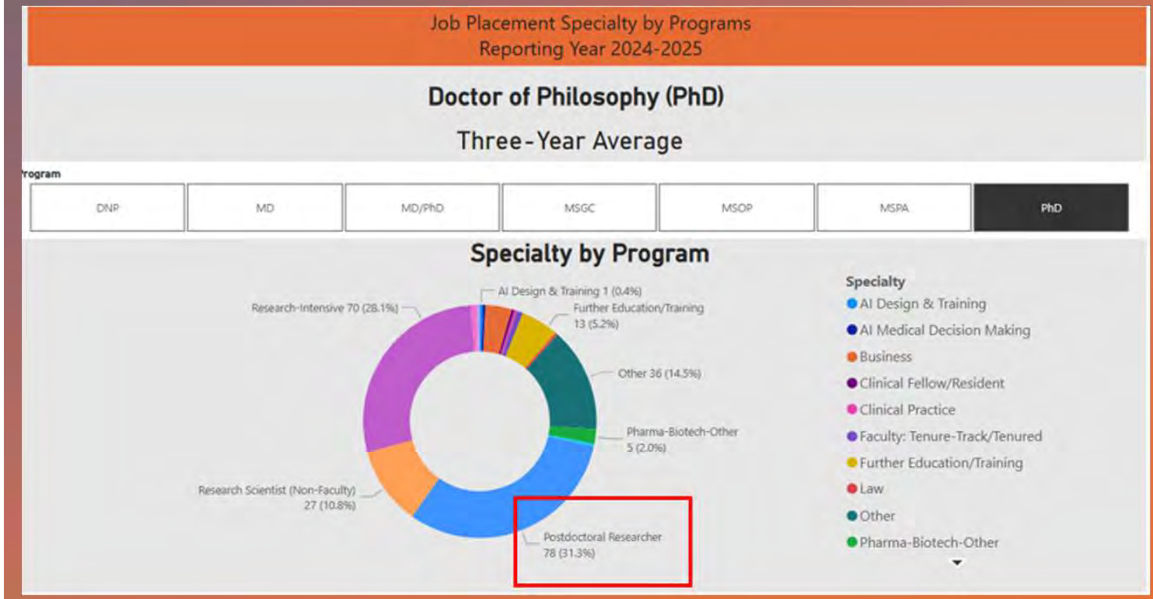
Graduation Year / Time to Degree	AY 2021-22 Count	AY 2021-22 Percent	AY 2022-23 Count	AY 2022-23 Percent	AY 2023-24 Count	AY 2023-24 Percent	Three-year Average Count	Three-year Average Percent
4 years or less	5	5.7%			4	4.5%	9	3.5%
4 to 5 years	10	11.5%	12	15.0%	13	14.8%	35	13.7%
5 to 6 years	27	31.0%	27	33.8%	36	40.9%	90	35.3%
6 to 7 years	18	20.7%	26	32.5%	25	28.4%	69	27.1%
7 to 8 years	22	25.3%	13	16.3%	5	5.7%	40	15.7%
8 to 9 years	5	5.7%	1	1.3%	5	5.7%	11	4.3%
9 years			1	1.3%			1	0.4%
Total	**87**	**100.0%**	**80**	**100.0%**	**88**	**100.0%**	**255**	**100.0%**



Baylor: Job Placement Location - Geography as a Strategy Question



Baylor: Postdoctoral Pathways - What the Data Reveals



From Dashboards to Actionable Insight

Dashboards enable:

- Analysis beyond demographics
- Identification of *where* outcomes differ
- Better, earlier questions for CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement)

Key takeaway:

Disaggregation is not the endpoint.

It's the starting point for action.

What This Means for Your Institution

- Where do IPEDS metrics *stop* on your campus?
- What student populations remain invisible?
- What questions could your dashboards surface *earlier*?
- Who needs to be in the room when thresholds are defined?

Discussion and Q&A

Scan the QR code to complete the session survey.

2026

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