

Movement in Primary College

Fall Term 2010 Cohort Class

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Many students change majors during the course of their college studies. Of course, “undeclared” students need to select a major at some point and thus will “change” their major. Students at Oregon State University are no exception, and indeed, the university is supportive of students exploring various options to determine the best major for their interests and career path. Even so, it is helpful for the university and colleges to track the rates of these major changes. This report provides statistics on major program changes for an entering fall freshman cohort.

We provide data on students that entered as part of a fall freshmen cohort. While transfer students and graduate students may also change majors, students starting as first-time freshmen are more likely to change majors. We use the same fall freshmen cohort that is the basis for standard retention and graduation rate reporting. This cohort represents students that are attending college for the first time as degree-seeking students and enrolled in the fall quarter (students that started the preceding summer are included) and were enrolled in 12 credits or more (full-time). The label “freshmen” is traditional but the cohort is not restricted to a certain class level. Sometimes we use the term “first-time college student from high school”, which is more accurate, albeit unwieldy.

Universities use retention and graduation rates to track the progress of students. The retention rate is a measure of continued enrollment and is usually from an entering quarter to an ensuing quarter. For example, the one-year retention rate is the percentage of new freshmen that entered in a given fall term and were enrolled the following fall term. The graduation rate is the percentage of a given fall cohort that have received their first bachelor’s degree by a certain point in time. The six year graduation rate measures the proportion that have graduated before the 7th fall quarter after their entering fall term. One should note that graduated students are not counted in retention rates after they have graduated, even if they continue to enroll.

This report provides data on the Fall 2010 freshman cohort, which consisted of 3480 students. The six-year graduation rate for this group was 63.3% and another 3.0% had not graduated but were still enrolled. We report the combination of those who have either

graduated or are still enrolled. Informally, some refer to this as “retention”, although we will not use that here, to avoid confusion with the retention rate.

Ideally, we would analyze individual major changes. But given the many majors available at OSU, students with multiple majors, and changes in program titles, department and college assignments, tables would require thousands of cells to account for all combinations. For convenience, we limit the analysis to changes in the college of the primary major listed in the student information system. Even here, we need to account for programs that move from one college to another.

Another simplification is to use the college where the first degree was earned as the “college graduated from”. This may be misleading when a student begins in one college, receives their first degree in another and later receives a degree in the original college. But accounting for this makes tables difficult to read.

Table 1 provides an overall university snapshot. For example, of the 208 freshmen that began with a major in the College of Agricultural Sciences in Fall 2010, six years later 118 received their first degree or were still enrolled with a primary major in Agricultural Sciences. Another 34 received a first degree or had a primary major under one of the other listed colleges. 55 did not receive an OSU degree and were not enrolled, at this point in time. Thus, 57% of entering Agricultural Sciences students graduated or were retained within the college six years later, while 74% of the same cohort graduated or were retained from OSU as a whole.

Table 1 also shows the percentage of students who were retained within their college. So, while only 58% of Forestry students remained at OSU, every one of those students stayed within the Forestry, yielding the highest rate of students who graduated or continued to enroll within their entry college after six years.

**Table 1: 2010 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking Entering Cohort: Primary College Movement
(Graduated or Still Enrolled at 6 Years)**

College at Entry	2010 Cohort	College Movement								No Graduation or Enrollment	% Grad or Enrolled	
		AG	BUS	EOAS	ENGR	FOR	LA	PHHS	SCI		College	OSU
Agricultural Sciences	208	118	7	0	0	4	10	11	2	55	57%	74%
Business	444	4	223	0	3	0	39	26	4	145	50%	67%
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	44	2	0	16	0	4	7	1	1	13	36%	70%
Engineering	938	11	44	5	461	10	47	26	30	304	49%	68%
Forestry	45	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	19	58%	58%
Liberal Arts	386	4	10	1	4	0	162	39	3	163	42%	58%
Public Health and Human Sciences	338	1	13	1	0	1	30	163	9	120	48%	64%
Science	730	27	25	11	15	4	44	87	286	231	39%	68%
University Exploratory Studies Program	347	8	48	3	11	8	59	68	17	124	n/a	64%
Total	3480	175	370	37	494	57	398	421	352	1174	46%	66%

1. Based on college associated with primary major 1; does not account for multiple majors.
2. Graduation is based on college of primary major for first degree earned.

- About 30% of freshmen who graduated or were enrolled after 6 years had a different major from the one they started with (not counting UESP)

For those students who changed programs, the table reveals the typical patterns of movement from one college to another. For instance, Liberal Arts students frequently move to Public Health and Human Sciences, and vice versa. Science, which graduates or continues to enroll 39% of its students within the college, had students migrate most frequently to Public Health and Human Sciences, followed by Liberal Arts and Agricultural Sciences. Students who entered the university without a declared major (i.e., University Exploratory Studies Program) most frequently ended up in Public Health and Human Sciences, followed Liberal Arts and then Business.

Whereas the preceding table provided an overview of all colleges at the end of six years, the following tables provide year-to-year data for each college. This allows us to see when college major changes typically occur. For instance, most students that move to a different college do so by the end of the first two years.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

2010 Cohort = 208

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Agricultural Sciences	153	131	124	120	116	118
Graduated	0	0	7	77	111	115
Enrolled but not graduated	153	131	117	43	5	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	22	31	35	30	33	35
Business	4	5	8	7	7	7
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	0	1	0	0	0	0
Forestry	1	3	3	3	3	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	8	11	11	8	11	11
Liberal Arts	5	9	11	10	10	10
Science	1	2	2	2	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	2	0	0	0	0	1
Not Enrolled or Graduated	33	46	49	58	59	55
% Changed College	11%	15%	17%	14%	16%	17%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	74%	63%	60%	58%	56%	57%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	84%	78%	76%	72%	72%	74%

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2010 Cohort = 444

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Business	324	263	244	225	222	223
Graduated	0	1	4	136	206	219
Enrolled but not graduated	324	262	240	89	16	4
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	49	75	78	82	80	76
Agricultural Sciences	4	5	5	4	4	4
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	1	1	1	1	0
Engineering	5	4	3	3	3	3
Forestry	1	2	2	0	0	0
Public Health & Human Sciences	11	25	23	26	24	26
Liberal Arts	13	34	38	44	43	39
Science	6	3	3	4	4	4
University Exploratory Studies Program	8	1	3	0	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	71	106	122	137	142	145
% Changed College	11%	17%	18%	18%	18%	17%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	73%	59%	55%	51%	50%	50%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	84%	76%	73%	69%	68%	67%

COLLEGE OF EARTH, OCEAN, AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

2010 Cohort = 44

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Earth, Ocean, and Atmos. Sciences	21	18	17	17	16	16
Graduated	0	0	0	14	16	16
Enrolled but not graduated	21	18	17	3	0	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	15	16	15	14	15	15
Agricultural Sciences	1	1	2	2	2	2
Business	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	2	1	0	0	0	0
Forestry	3	4	4	3	4	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	2	3	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	4	4	7	7	7	7
Science	3	3	1	1	1	1
University Exploratory Studies Program	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	8	10	12	13	13	13
% Changed College	34%	36%	34%	32%	34%	34%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	48%	41%	39%	39%	36%	36%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	77%	73%	70%	70%	70%

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

2010 Cohort = 938

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Engineering	660	559	511	440	475	461
Graduated	0	0	5	158	387	438
Enrolled but not graduated	660	559	506	282	88	23
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	130	161	171	175	173	173
Agricultural Sciences	8	10	11	11	10	11
Business	24	39	43	42	43	44
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	7	7	6	5	5
Forestry	4	6	10	12	9	10
Public Health & Human Sciences	12	22	25	27	26	26
Liberal Arts	27	33	40	45	47	47
Science	24	26	28	25	30	30
University Exploratory Studies Program	29	18	7	7	3	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	148	218	256	323	290	304
% Changed College	14%	17%	18%	19%	18%	18%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	70%	60%	54%	47%	51%	49%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	84%	77%	73%	66%	69%	68%

COLLEGE OF FORESTRY

2010 Cohort = 45

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Forestry	36	32	30	25	26	26
Graduated	0	0	0	11	20	25
Enrolled but not graduated	36	32	30	14	6	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	1	1	0	0	1	0
Agricultural Sciences	1	0	0	0	1	0
Business	0	0	0	0	0	0
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	0	1	0	0	0	0
Public Health & Human Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liberal Arts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Science	0	0	0	0	0	0
University Exploratory Studies Program	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	8	12	15	20	18	19
% Changed College	2%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	80%	71%	67%	56%	58%	58%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	73%	67%	56%	60%	58%

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

2010 Cohort = 386

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Liberal Arts	250	186	179	170	161	162
Graduated	0	1	6	104	147	159
Enrolled but not graduated	250	185	173	66	14	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	43	70	66	66	62	61
Agricultural Sciences	2	6	5	5	4	4
Business	5	11	10	10	10	10
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	3	2	1	1	1	1
Engineering	0	6	6	5	4	4
Forestry	0	0	1	1	1	0
Public Health & Human Sciences	19	37	39	40	39	39
Science	8	5	3	3	3	3
University Exploratory Studies Program	6	3	1	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	93	130	141	150	163	163
% Changed College	11%	18%	17%	17%	16%	16%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	65%	48%	46%	44%	42%	42%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	76%	66%	63%	61%	58%	58%

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

2010 Cohort = 338

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Public Health & Human Sciences	220	189	168	157	158	163
Graduated	0	0	6	92	149	158
Enrolled but not graduated	220	189	162	65	9	5
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	42	53	57	55	54	55
Agricultural Sciences	1	3	3	2	1	1
Business	5	10	12	12	13	13
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	2	1	1	1	1
Engineering	1	2	0	0	0	0
Forestry	0	1	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	13	23	30	29	29	30
Science	10	10	9	9	9	9
University Exploratory Studies Program	10	2	1	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	76	96	113	126	126	120
% Changed College	12%	16%	17%	16%	16%	16%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	65%	56%	50%	46%	47%	48%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	78%	72%	67%	63%	63%	64%

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

2010 Cohort = 730

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Science	450	326	292	288	286	286
Graduated	0	2	10	214	264	280
Enrolled but not graduated	450	324	282	74	22	6
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	145	216	223	213	211	213
Agricultural Sciences	16	30	30	28	27	27
Business	15	20	24	23	24	25
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	4	8	11	10	11	11
Engineering	15	21	19	15	14	15
Forestry	1	3	4	4	4	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	49	80	87	85	86	87
Liberal Arts	25	40	43	46	45	44
University Exploratory Studies Program	20	14	5	2	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	135	188	215	229	233	231
% Changed College	20%	30%	31%	29%	29%	29%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	62%	45%	40%	39%	39%	39%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	74%	71%	69%	68%	68%

University Exploratory Studies Program

2010 Cohort = 347

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
University Exploratory Studies Program	149	20	4	1	0	1
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled but not graduated	149	20	4	1	0	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	124	218	225	216	213	218
Agricultural Sciences	3	5	8	8	8	8
Business	35	50	46	46	48	48
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	5	5	3	2	3
Engineering	9	13	13	12	11	11
Forestry	5	3	4	4	4	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	36	69	72	69	68	68
Liberal Arts	23	61	61	58	56	59
Science	11	12	16	16	16	17
Not Enrolled or Graduated	74	109	118	130	134	128
% Changed College	36%	63%	65%	62%	61%	63%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	43%	6%	1%	0%	0%	0%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	79%	69%	66%	63%	61%	63%