

Movement in Primary College

Fall Term 2015 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 the term “first-time college student from high school” is used, 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 2015 freshman cohort, which consisted of 3338 students. The six-year graduation rate for this group was 68.2% and another 2.8% 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 164 freshmen that began with a major in the College of Agricultural Sciences in Fall 2015, six years later 84 received their first degree or were still enrolled with a primary major in Agricultural Sciences. Another 28 received a first degree or had a primary major under one of the other listed colleges. 52 did not receive an OSU degree and were not enrolled, at this point in time. Thus, 51% of entering Agricultural Sciences students graduated or were retained within the college six years later, while 68% of the same cohort graduated or were retained from OSU as a whole.

**Table 1: 2015 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking Entering Cohort: Primary College Movement
(Graduated or Still Enrolled at 6 Years)**

College at Entry	2015 Cohort	College Movement								No Graduation or Enrollment	% Grad or Enrolled	
		AG	BUS	EOAS	ENGR	FOR	LA	PHHS	SCI		College	OSU
Agricultural Sciences	164	84	5	0	2	1	10	6	4	52	51%	68%
Business	427	0	227	0	4	2	53	19	6	116	53%	73%
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	46	4	0	10	2	3	7	1	11	8	22%	83%
Engineering	1111	10	54	9	590	10	41	16	59	322	53%	71%
Forestry	41	1	2	1	0	21	1	1	1	13	51%	68%
Liberal Arts	286	2	6	0	0	0	150	21	6	101	52%	65%
Public Health and Human Sciences	286	1	17	0	2	2	23	164	5	72	57%	75%
Science	660	17	31	3	14	4	48	75	280	188	42%	72%
University Exploratory Studies Program	317	11	47	2	10	8	70	54	20	95	n/a	70%
Total	3338	130	389	25	624	51	403	357	392	967	51%	71%

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 29% 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 Services, and vice versa. Science, which graduates or continues to enroll 42% of its students within the college had students migrate most frequently to Public Health and Human Services, followed by Liberal Arts and Business. Students who entered the university without a declared major (i.e., University Exploratory Studies Program) most frequently ended up in Liberal Arts, followed by Public Health and then Business.

Whereas the preceding table provided an overview of all colleges at the end of six years, what follows is a series of tables providing year-to-year data for each college. This allows for a look not only at which colleges students are moving to, but when those changes are typically made. For instance, most students who move to a different college appear to have done so by the end of two years.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

2015 Cohort = 164

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Agricultural Sciences	99	89	85	82	83	84
Graduated	0	0	10	62	74	82
Enrolled but not graduated	99	89	75	20	9	2
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	23	28	25	25	27	28
Business	3	3	4	3	5	5
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	1	1	1	2	2	2
Forestry	0	1	1	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	8	7	6	6	6	6
Liberal Arts	5	10	10	10	10	10
Science	2	3	3	3	3	4
University Exploratory Studies Program	3	3	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	42	47	54	57	54	52
% Changed College	14%	17%	15%	15%	16%	17%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	60%	54%	52%	50%	51%	51%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	74%	71%	67%	65%	67%	68%

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2015 Cohort = 427

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Business	313	258	237	230	227	227
Graduated	0	0	8	164	217	224
Enrolled but not graduated	313	258	229	66	10	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	56	83	90	85	86	84
Agricultural Sciences	1	1	0	0	0	0
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	1	0	0	0
Engineering	5	4	4	4	3	4
Forestry	2	2	2	2	2	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	9	20	21	19	19	19
Liberal Arts	30	50	57	54	55	53
Science	3	6	5	6	6	6
University Exploratory Studies Program	6	0	0	0	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	58	86	100	112	114	116
% Changed College	13%	19%	21%	20%	20%	20%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	73%	60%	56%	54%	53%	53%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	80%	77%	74%	73%	73%

COLLEGE OF EARTH, OCEAN, AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

2015 Cohort = 46

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Earth, Ocean, and Atmos. Sciences	28	22	19	10	10	10
Graduated	0	0	0	8	10	10
Enrolled but not graduated	28	22	19	2	0	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	14	18	20	28	28	28
Agricultural Sciences	1	4	4	5	4	4
Business	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	1	1	2	2	2	2
Forestry	2	3	3	2	3	3
Public Health & Human Sciences	1	1	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	3	4	5	6	7	7
Science	2	3	5	12	11	11
University Exploratory Studies Program	4	2	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	4	6	7	8	8	8
% Changed College	30%	39%	43%	61%	61%	61%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	61%	48%	41%	22%	22%	22%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	91%	87%	85%	83%	83%	83%

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

2015 Cohort = 1111

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Engineering	797	681	627	579	594	590
Graduated	0	0	1	250	523	567
Enrolled but not graduated	797	681	626	329	71	23
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	150	192	205	201	197	199
Agricultural Sciences	5	11	12	9	10	10
Business	35	48	54	52	53	54
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	9	14	9	9	9
Forestry	7	11	12	11	11	10
Public Health & Human Sciences	13	19	19	17	15	16
Liberal Arts	18	37	42	41	40	41
Science	31	42	50	58	54	59
University Exploratory Studies Program	39	15	2	4	5	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	164	238	279	331	320	322
% Changed College	14%	17%	18%	18%	18%	18%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	72%	61%	56%	52%	53%	53%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	85%	79%	75%	70%	71%	71%

COLLEGE OF FORESTRY

2015 Cohort = 41

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Forestry	25	24	23	22	21	21
Graduated	0	0	2	9	19	20
Enrolled but not graduated	25	24	21	13	2	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	8	8	8	7	6	7
Agricultural Sciences	0	1	1	1	1	1
Business	1	1	1	1	1	2
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	2	2	2	1	1
Engineering	1	0	0	0	0	0
Public Health & Human Sciences	1	1	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	0	2	2	1	1	1
Science	3	0	0	1	1	1
University Exploratory Studies Program	2	1	1	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	8	9	10	12	14	13
% Changed College	20%	20%	20%	17%	15%	17%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	61%	59%	56%	54%	51%	51%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	80%	78%	76%	71%	66%	68%

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

2015 Cohort = 286

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Liberal Arts	184	159	152	153	151	150
Graduated	0	1	17	91	132	144
Enrolled but not graduated	184	158	135	62	19	6
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	36	36	37	38	35	35
Agricultural Sciences	1	2	2	2	2	2
Business	6	7	7	8	6	6
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	1	0	0
Engineering	2	0	0	0	0	0
Forestry	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Health & Human Sciences	16	20	21	20	21	21
Science	7	4	6	6	6	6
University Exploratory Studies Program	4	3	1	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	66	91	97	95	100	101
% Changed College	13%	13%	13%	13%	12%	12%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	64%	56%	53%	53%	53%	52%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	77%	68%	66%	67%	65%	65%

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

2015 Cohort = 286

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Public Health & Human Sciences	207	187	166	158	161	164
Graduated	0	0	5	114	154	161
Enrolled but not graduated	207	187	161	44	7	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	41	39	47	51	53	50
Agricultural Sciences	2	1	1	1	1	1
Business	18	16	17	18	19	17
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	1	1	2	2	2	2
Forestry	0	1	2	2	2	2
Liberal Arts	9	14	20	23	24	23
Science	4	5	5	5	5	5
University Exploratory Studies Program	7	1	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	38	60	73	77	72	72
% Changed College	14%	14%	16%	18%	19%	17%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	72%	65%	58%	55%	56%	57%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	87%	79%	74%	73%	75%	75%

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

2015 Cohort = 660

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Science	399	302	293	279	280	280
Graduated	0	0	26	198	261	270
Enrolled but not graduated	399	302	267	81	19	10
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	137	200	201	198	189	192
Agricultural Sciences	14	19	16	18	17	17
Business	18	28	29	28	29	31
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	5	5	3	3	3
Engineering	9	16	18	17	13	14
Forestry	4	4	2	4	5	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	35	73	78	76	74	75
Liberal Arts	27	49	48	51	48	48
University Exploratory Studies Program	28	6	5	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	124	158	166	183	191	188
% Changed College	21%	30%	30%	30%	29%	29%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	60%	46%	44%	42%	42%	42%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	81%	76%	75%	72%	71%	72%

University Exploratory Studies Program

2015 Cohort = 317

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
University Exploratory Studies Program	123	16	4	2	0	0
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled but not graduated	123	16	4	2	0	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	143	230	220	214	223	218
Agricultural Sciences	4	9	9	10	12	11
Business	42	51	48	49	49	47
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	5	8	8	2	2	2
Engineering	7	11	10	10	10	10
Forestry	4	4	2	4	5	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	33	54	54	53	54	54
Liberal Arts	37	76	72	67	71	70
Science	11	17	17	19	20	20
Not Enrolled or Graduated	51	71	93	101	94	99
% Changed College	45%	73%	69%	68%	70%	69%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	39%	5%	1%	1%	0%	0%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	84%	78%	71%	68%	70%	69%