

Movement in Primary College

Fall Term 2013 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 2013 freshman cohort, which consisted of 3553 students. The six-year graduation rate for this group was 67.1% and another 2.9% 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 188 freshmen that began with a major in the College of Agricultural Sciences in Fall 2013, six years later 95 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. 59 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 69% of the same cohort graduated or were retained from OSU as a whole.

**Table 1: 2013 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking Entering Cohort: Primary College Movement
(Graduated or Still Enrolled at 6 Years)**

College at Entry	2013 Cohort	College Movement								No Graduation or Enrollment	% Grad or Enrolled	
		AG	BUS	EOAS	ENGR	FOR	LA	PHHS	SCI		College	OSU
Agricultural Sciences	188	95	5	1	1	2	9	8	8	59	51%	69%
Business	401	1	202	0	6	1	53	19	2	117	50%	71%
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	51	2	1	22	1	4	5	2	5	9	43%	82%
Engineering	1174	12	65	10	629	12	47	26	38	335	54%	71%
Forestry	37	1	1	0	0	17	2	1	0	15	46%	59%
Liberal Arts	336	5	10	2	3	1	173	22	7	113	51%	66%
Public Health and Human Sciences	364	5	12	0	4	3	21	193	2	124	53%	66%
Science	677	13	26	7	16	1	51	86	273	204	40%	70%
University Exploratory Studies Program	325	15	32	3	14	7	80	57	10	107	n/a	67%
Total	3553	149	354	45	674	48	441	414	345	1083	50%	70%

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 40% 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

2013 Cohort = 188

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Agricultural Sciences	132	110	101	90	94	95
Graduated	0	0	8	61	86	90
Enrolled but not graduated	132	110	93	29	8	5
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	22	34	35	32	33	34
Business	5	3	4	3	4	5
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	1	2	1	1	1
Engineering	0	1	1	1	1	1
Forestry	0	3	3	3	2	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	2	5	8	8	8	8
Liberal Arts	7	14	9	8	10	9
Science	3	6	7	8	6	8
University Exploratory Studies Program	4	1	1	0	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	34	44	52	66	61	59
% Changed College	12%	18%	19%	17%	18%	18%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	70%	59%	54%	48%	50%	51%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	77%	72%	65%	68%	69%

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2013 Cohort = 401

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Business	293	243	209	196	198	202
Graduated	0	0	3	117	192	199
Enrolled but not graduated	293	243	206	79	6	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	42	66	91	87	84	82
Agricultural Sciences	0	1	1	2	2	1
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	3	8	8	7	6	6
Forestry	0	0	1	3	2	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	13	24	24	20	19	19
Liberal Arts	17	29	52	49	53	53
Science	2	1	1	3	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	7	3	4	3	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	66	92	101	118	119	117
% Changed College	10%	16%	23%	22%	21%	20%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	73%	61%	52%	49%	49%	50%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	84%	77%	75%	71%	70%	71%

COLLEGE OF EARTH, OCEAN, AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

2013 Cohort = 51

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Earth, Ocean, and Atmos. Sciences	29	23	21	22	22	22
Graduated	0	1	3	16	21	22
Enrolled but not graduated	29	22	18	6	1	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	15	19	19	20	20	20
Agricultural Sciences	1	0	1	1	2	2
Business	1	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	0	1	1	1	1	1
Forestry	2	3	3	5	4	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	2	3	3	2	2	2
Liberal Arts	5	6	5	5	5	5
Science	3	5	5	5	5	5
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	7	9	11	9	9	9
% Changed College	29%	37%	37%	39%	39%	39%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	57%	45%	41%	43%	43%	43%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	82%	78%	82%	82%	82%

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

2013 Cohort = 1174

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Engineering	847	712	640	605	619	629
Graduated	0	0	6	225	522	586
Enrolled but not graduated	847	712	634	380	97	43
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	147	203	211	211	207	210
Agricultural Sciences	10	10	13	12	13	12
Business	34	57	62	63	67	65
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	9	11	9	9	10
Forestry	8	13	13	10	12	12
Public Health & Human Sciences	15	23	23	25	24	26
Liberal Arts	21	33	43	47	44	47
Science	23	36	42	42	38	38
University Exploratory Studies Program	34	22	4	3	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	180	259	323	358	348	335
% Changed College	13%	17%	18%	18%	18%	18%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	72%	61%	55%	52%	53%	54%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	85%	78%	72%	70%	70%	71%

COLLEGE OF FORESTRY

2013 Cohort = 37

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Forestry	26	22	22	20	17	17
Graduated	0	0	0	7	13	17
Enrolled but not graduated	26	22	22	13	4	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	3	3	5	4	5	5
Agricultural Sciences	1	1	1	1	1	1
Business	0	0	1	1	1	1
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Health & Human Sciences	2	1	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	0	1	1	1	1	2
Science	0	0	0	0	0	0
University Exploratory Studies Program	0	0	1	0	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	8	12	10	13	15	15
% Changed College	8%	8%	14%	11%	14%	14%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	70%	59%	59%	54%	46%	46%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	78%	68%	73%	65%	59%	59%

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

2013 Cohort = 336

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Liberal Arts	227	189	178	172	172	173
Graduated	0	2	13	110	155	170
Enrolled but not graduated	227	187	165	62	17	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	47	55	58	54	49	50
Agricultural Sciences	6	3	5	5	4	5
Business	9	13	13	11	10	10
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	2	2	2	2	2
Engineering	3	4	3	3	2	3
Forestry	0	0	2	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	17	23	25	24	23	22
Science	6	9	7	7	7	7
University Exploratory Studies Program	4	1	1	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	62	92	100	110	115	113
% Changed College	14%	16%	17%	16%	15%	15%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	68%	56%	53%	51%	51%	51%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	73%	70%	67%	66%	66%

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

2013 Cohort = 364

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Public Health & Human Sciences	270	220	199	197	194	193
Graduated	0	2	7	130	181	191
Enrolled but not graduated	270	218	192	67	13	2
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	30	50	51	48	48	47
Agricultural Sciences	0	2	4	5	5	5
Business	8	17	12	12	12	12
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	4	5	5	4	4	4
Forestry	0	1	2	3	3	3
Liberal Arts	8	20	24	21	22	21
Science	3	4	3	2	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	7	1	1	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	64	94	114	119	122	124
% Changed College	8%	14%	14%	13%	13%	13%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	74%	60%	55%	54%	53%	53%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	74%	69%	67%	66%	66%

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

2013 Cohort = 677

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Science	432	308	284	268	271	273
Graduated	0	0	14	200	256	271
Enrolled but not graduated	432	308	270	68	15	2
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	140	199	208	207	198	200
Agricultural Sciences	9	12	12	14	13	13
Business	15	18	21	23	27	26
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	4	7	8	8	6	7
Engineering	17	17	15	17	16	16
Forestry	0	3	1	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	45	83	94	93	86	86
Liberal Arts	23	45	52	49	49	51
University Exploratory Studies Program	27	14	5	2	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	105	170	185	202	208	204
% Changed College	21%	29%	31%	31%	29%	30%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	64%	45%	42%	40%	40%	40%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	84%	75%	73%	70%	69%	70%

University Exploratory Studies Program

2013 Cohort = 325

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
University Exploratory Studies Program	155	19	5	2	1	0
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled but not graduated	155	19	5	2	1	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	119	233	237	228	214	218
Agricultural Sciences	9	17	17	15	16	15
Business	24	35	30	31	31	32
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	3	5	6	4	3	3
Engineering	15	15	13	13	13	14
Forestry	5	9	7	6	7	7
Public Health & Human Sciences	32	63	69	67	56	57
Liberal Arts	27	80	85	82	79	80
Science	4	9	10	10	9	10
Not Enrolled or Graduated	51	73	83	95	110	107
% Changed College	37%	72%	73%	70%	66%	67%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	48%	6%	2%	1%	0%	0%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	84%	78%	74%	71%	66%	67%