

Movement in Primary College

Fall Term 2014 Cohort Class

December 2021

Office of Institutional Research
Kerr Administration Building
Corvallis, Oregon 97331-8572



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 2014 freshman cohort, which consisted of 3449 students. The six-year graduation rate for this group was 69.3% and another 2.6% 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 161 freshmen that began with a major in the College of Agricultural Sciences in Fall 2014, six years later 89 received their first degree or were still enrolled with a primary major in Agricultural Sciences. Another 33 received a first degree or had a primary major under one of the other listed colleges. 39 did not receive an OSU degree and were not enrolled, at this point in time. Thus, 55% of entering Agricultural Sciences students graduated or were retained within the college six years later, while 76% of the same cohort graduated or were retained from OSU as a whole.

**Table 1: 2014 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking Entering Cohort: Primary College Movement
(Graduated or Still Enrolled at 6 Years)**

College at Entry	2014 Cohort	College Movement								No Graduation or Enrollment	% Grad or Enrolled	
		AG	BUS	EOAS	ENGR	FOR	LA	PHHS	SCI		College	OSU
Agricultural Sciences	161	89	5	1	1	1	11	5	9	39	55%	76%
Business	408	2	216	0	4	2	71	12	5	96	53%	76%
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	28	0	1	11	0	1	2	2	2	9	39%	68%
Engineering	1123	18	49	9	622	12	49	18	47	298	55%	73%
Forestry	44	1	0	0	4	25	1	1	0	12	57%	73%
Liberal Arts	296	1	12	1	6	0	153	21	3	99	52%	67%
Public Health and Human Sciences	330	1	10	0	2	1	29	163	8	116	49%	65%
Science	712	20	23	6	20	5	50	69	328	190	46%	73%
University Exploratory Studies Program	347	7	44	6	17	10	73	67	12	111	n/a	68%
Total	3449	139	360	34	676	57	439	358	414	970	52%	72%

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 28% 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 46% 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

2014 Cohort = 161

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Agricultural Sciences	119	96	88	87	88	89
Graduated	0	0	7	67	86	88
Enrolled but not graduated	119	96	81	20	2	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	20	31	33	31	31	33
Business	3	2	2	2	2	5
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	1	2	2	1	1	1
Forestry	2	2	1	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	6	6	6	5	4	5
Liberal Arts	1	7	10	10	11	11
Science	5	11	11	11	10	9
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	0	0	0	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	22	34	40	43	42	39
% Changed College	12%	19%	20%	19%	19%	20%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	74%	60%	55%	54%	55%	55%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	79%	75%	73%	74%	76%

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2014 Cohort = 408

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Business	330	247	223	217	219	216
Graduated	0	0	5	140	205	211
Enrolled but not graduated	330	247	218	77	14	5
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	37	92	96	97	95	96
Agricultural Sciences	0	3	3	2	2	2
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	4	5	4	4	4	4
Forestry	1	2	2	2	2	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	8	17	15	16	11	12
Liberal Arts	14	58	66	68	71	71
Science	7	5	5	5	5	5
University Exploratory Studies Program	3	2	1	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	41	69	89	94	94	96
% Changed College	9%	23%	24%	24%	23%	24%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	81%	61%	55%	53%	54%	53%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	90%	83%	78%	77%	77%	76%

COLLEGE OF EARTH, OCEAN, AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

2014 Cohort = 28

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Earth, Ocean, and Atmos. Sciences	19	14	11	11	11	11
Graduated	0	0	1	8	11	11
Enrolled but not graduated	19	14	10	3	0	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	6	7	8	9	8	8
Agricultural Sciences	1	0	0	0	0	0
Business	2	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forestry	0	2	1	2	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	1	2	2	2	2	2
Liberal Arts	0	0	2	2	2	2
Science	1	2	2	2	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	3	7	9	8	9	9
% Changed College	21%	25%	29%	32%	29%	29%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	68%	50%	39%	39%	39%	39%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	89%	75%	68%	71%	68%	68%

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

2014 Cohort = 1123

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Engineering	817	696	666	597	617	622
Graduated	0	0	4	239	523	595
Enrolled but not graduated	817	696	662	358	94	27
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	144	201	222	214	210	203
Agricultural Sciences	12	20	20	18	18	18
Business	28	44	56	52	52	49
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	5	10	9	10	10	9
Forestry	7	11	15	15	15	12
Public Health & Human Sciences	10	18	20	19	19	18
Liberal Arts	19	38	47	49	49	49
Science	36	42	45	48	46	47
University Exploratory Studies Program	27	18	10	3	1	1
Not Enrolled or Graduated	162	226	235	312	296	298
% Changed College	13%	18%	20%	19%	19%	18%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	73%	62%	59%	53%	55%	55%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	80%	79%	72%	74%	73%

COLLEGE OF FORESTRY

2014 Cohort = 44

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Forestry	29	28	26	22	22	25
Graduated	0	0	0	12	19	22
Enrolled but not graduated	29	28	26	10	3	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	9	7	6	7	7	7
Agricultural Sciences	2	1	1	1	1	1
Business	0	0	0	0	0	0
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	3	1	0	0	0	0
Engineering	3	3	3	4	4	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	1	2	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	0	0	0	1	1	1
Science	0	0	0	0	0	0
University Exploratory Studies Program	0	0	1	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	6	9	12	15	15	12
% Changed College	20%	16%	14%	16%	16%	16%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	66%	64%	59%	50%	50%	57%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	80%	73%	66%	66%	73%

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

2014 Cohort = 296

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Liberal Arts	201	175	171	162	156	153
Graduated	0	4	12	108	138	150
Enrolled but not graduated	201	171	159	54	18	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	40	49	46	45	44	44
Agricultural Sciences	2	2	1	1	1	1
Business	9	12	11	12	12	12
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	4	7	7	7	6	6
Forestry	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Health & Human Sciences	16	22	22	20	21	21
Science	3	4	4	3	3	3
University Exploratory Studies Program	6	1	0	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	55	72	79	89	96	99
% Changed College	14%	17%	16%	15%	15%	15%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	68%	59%	58%	55%	53%	52%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	81%	76%	73%	70%	68%	67%

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

2014 Cohort = 330

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Public Health & Human Sciences	225	179	173	164	163	163
Graduated	0	0	9	117	156	163
Enrolled but not graduated	225	179	164	47	7	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	41	55	54	55	53	51
Agricultural Sciences	0	1	0	1	1	1
Business	10	14	11	11	11	10
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	4	3	2	2	2	2
Forestry	2	2	3	2	2	1
Liberal Arts	9	22	30	31	29	29
Science	8	9	8	8	8	8
University Exploratory Studies Program	7	4	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	64	96	103	111	114	116
% Changed College	12%	17%	16%	17%	16%	15%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	68%	54%	52%	50%	49%	49%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	81%	71%	69%	66%	65%	65%

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

2014 Cohort = 712

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Science	464	370	337	326	329	328
Graduated	0	0	24	254	304	317
Enrolled but not graduated	464	370	313	72	25	11
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	136	194	206	193	186	194
Agricultural Sciences	13	23	23	20	20	20
Business	15	20	23	23	22	23
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	3	4	5	5	6
Engineering	16	23	22	18	18	20
Forestry	3	6	6	6	5	5
Public Health & Human Sciences	43	65	70	64	68	69
Liberal Arts	27	42	55	56	48	50
University Exploratory Studies Program	17	12	3	1	0	1
Not Enrolled or Graduated	112	148	169	193	197	190
% Changed College	19%	27%	29%	27%	26%	27%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	65%	52%	47%	46%	46%	46%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	84%	79%	76%	73%	72%	73%

University Exploratory Studies Program

2014 Cohort = 347

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
University Exploratory Studies Program	140	18	4	1	0	0
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled but not graduated	140	18	4	1	0	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	149	248	249	236	232	236
Agricultural Sciences	7	9	9	9	8	7
Business	37	41	44	42	44	44
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	4	6	6	6	6
Engineering	18	17	18	17	15	17
Forestry	3	14	12	10	9	10
Public Health & Human Sciences	38	70	70	68	68	67
Liberal Arts	34	76	76	72	70	73
Science	12	17	14	12	12	12
Not Enrolled or Graduated	58	81	94	110	115	111
% Changed College	43%	71%	72%	68%	67%	68%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	40%	5%	1%	0%	0%	0%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	83%	77%	73%	68%	67%	68%