

Movement in Primary College

Fall Term 2011 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 2011 freshman cohort, which consisted of 3335 students. The six-year graduation rate for this group was 65.3% and another 3.7% 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 213 freshmen that began with a major in the College of Agricultural Sciences in Fall 2011, six years later 117 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. 68 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 68% of the same cohort graduated or were retained from OSU as a whole.

**Table 1: 2011 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking Entering Cohort: Primary College Movement
(Graduated or Still Enrolled at 6 Years)**

College at Entry	2011 Cohort	College Movement								No Graduation or Enrollment	% Grad or Enrolled	
		AG	BUS	EOAS	ENGR	FOR	LA	PHHS	SCI		College	OSU
Agricultural Sciences	213	117	4	1	3	1	8	8	3	68	55%	68%
Business	367	8	172	2	4	1	41	20	5	114	47%	69%
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	35	2	1	14	0	2	2	3	1	10	40%	71%
Engineering	927	16	48	6	468	12	51	24	42	260	50%	72%
Forestry	43	2	0	0	1	21	2	1	0	16	49%	63%
Liberal Arts	341	5	16	0	2	1	161	37	8	111	47%	67%
Public Health and Human Sciences	348	8	16	2	3	1	20	182	8	108	52%	69%
Science	697	29	12	7	22	2	49	84	284	206	41%	70%
University Exploratory Studies Program	364	9	40	4	17	3	67	65	19	140	n/a	62%
Total	3335	196	309	36	520	44	401	424	370	1033	48%	69%

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 32% of freshmen who graduated or were enrolled after 6 years had a different primary college 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 41% of its students within the college had students migrate most frequently to Public Health and Human Services, 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 Liberal Arts, followed by Public Health and Human Services 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

2011 Cohort = 213

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Agricultural Sciences	151	134	125	120	116	117
Graduated	0	0	6	82	107	113
Enrolled but not graduated	151	134	119	38	9	4
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	26	30	30	30	29	28
Business	2	4	5	5	5	4
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	1	1	1	1
Engineering	3	2	2	1	3	3
Forestry	1	1	1	2	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	7	10	9	9	8	8
Liberal Arts	4	7	8	8	9	8
Science	7	5	3	3	2	3
University Exploratory Studies Program	2	1	1	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	36	49	58	63	68	68
% Changed College	12%	14%	14%	14%	14%	13%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	71%	63%	59%	56%	54%	55%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	83%	77%	73%	70%	68%	68%

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2011 Cohort = 367

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Business	261	215	184	168	172	172
Graduated	0	0	7	110	161	169
Enrolled but not graduated	261	215	177	58	11	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	40	59	83	87	85	81
Agricultural Sciences	0	2	5	7	8	8
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	3	3	2	2	2	2
Engineering	5	7	6	5	5	4
Forestry	0	0	0	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	14	17	22	22	23	20
Liberal Arts	8	21	36	42	40	41
Science	3	5	7	6	6	5
University Exploratory Studies Program	7	4	5	2	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	66	93	100	112	110	114
% Changed College	11%	16%	23%	24%	23%	22%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	71%	59%	50%	46%	47%	47%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	75%	73%	69%	70%	69%

COLLEGE OF EARTH, OCEAN, AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

2011 Cohort = 35

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Earth, Ocean, and Atmos. Sciences	20	20	17	15	16	14
Graduated	0	0	1	7	11	13
Enrolled but not graduated	20	20	16	8	5	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	8	8	8	9	10	11
Agricultural Sciences	1	0	1	2	2	2
Business	0	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	1	0	0	0	0	0
Forestry	1	1	0	1	1	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	2	2	3	3	3	3
Liberal Arts	1	1	2	1	2	2
Science	1	2	1	1	1	1
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	1	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	7	7	10	11	9	10
% Changed College	23%	23%	23%	26%	29%	31%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	57%	57%	49%	43%	46%	40%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	80%	80%	71%	69%	74%	71%

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

2011 Cohort = 927

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Engineering	679	554	507	435	456	468
Graduated	0	0	5	147	376	431
Enrolled but not graduated	679	554	502	288	80	37
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	114	169	185	184	195	199
Agricultural Sciences	9	13	13	15	16	16
Business	16	38	44	41	47	48
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	5	5	5	6	6	6
Forestry	8	12	11	8	9	12
Public Health & Human Sciences	12	22	26	23	25	24
Liberal Arts	15	30	42	51	52	51
Science	17	32	40	39	40	42
University Exploratory Studies Program	32	17	4	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	134	204	235	308	276	260
% Changed College	12%	18%	20%	20%	21%	21%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	73%	60%	55%	47%	49%	50%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	78%	75%	67%	70%	72%

COLLEGE OF FORESTRY

2011 Cohort = 43

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Forestry	32	28	25	23	23	21
Graduated	0	0	0	5	17	19
Enrolled but not graduated	32	28	25	18	6	2
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	2	3	5	6	5	6
Agricultural Sciences	0	1	1	2	2	2
Business	0	0	0	0	0	0
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	0	0	1	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	0	0	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	1	2	2	2	1	2
Science	0	0	0	0	0	0
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	9	12	13	14	15	16
% Changed College	5%	7%	12%	14%	12%	14%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	74%	65%	58%	53%	53%	49%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	79%	72%	70%	67%	65%	63%

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

2011 Cohort = 341

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Liberal Arts	217	182	171	168	159	161
Graduated	0	2	12	110	143	151
Enrolled but not graduated	217	180	159	58	16	10
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	61	79	73	66	68	69
Agricultural Sciences	2	3	3	4	5	5
Business	11	18	15	14	15	16
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	1	3	2	2	2	2
Forestry	0	1	1	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	29	37	41	37	37	37
Science	4	9	9	8	8	8
University Exploratory Studies Program	14	8	2	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	63	80	97	107	114	111
% Changed College	18%	23%	21%	19%	20%	20%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	64%	53%	50%	49%	47%	47%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	77%	72%	69%	67%	67%

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

2011 Cohort = 348

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Public Health & Human Sciences	250	203	195	180	178	182
Graduated	0	0	5	105	164	176
Enrolled but not graduated	250	203	190	75	14	6
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	48	63	53	55	57	58
Agricultural Sciences	3	8	8	7	7	8
Business	11	20	15	16	16	16
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	1	2	2	2
Engineering	2	4	3	3	3	3
Forestry	0	1	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	11	19	19	19	21	20
Science	5	9	6	6	7	8
University Exploratory Studies Program	16	2	0	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	50	82	100	113	113	108
% Changed College	14%	18%	15%	16%	16%	17%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	72%	58%	56%	52%	51%	52%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	76%	71%	68%	68%	69%

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

2011 Cohort = 697

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Science	465	340	302	283	278	284
Graduated	0	0	16	191	261	276
Enrolled but not graduated	465	340	286	92	17	8
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	126	197	213	203	211	207
Agricultural Sciences	12	18	23	27	28	29
Business	7	13	15	13	13	12
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	3	5	6	6	6	7
Engineering	16	23	22	22	23	22
Forestry	1	1	1	2	3	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	41	75	83	80	84	84
Liberal Arts	31	51	58	51	53	49
University Exploratory Studies Program	15	11	5	2	1	2
Not Enrolled or Graduated	106	160	182	211	208	206
% Changed College	18%	28%	31%	29%	30%	30%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	67%	49%	43%	41%	40%	41%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	85%	77%	74%	70%	70%	70%

University Exploratory Studies Program

2011 Cohort = 364

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
University Exploratory Studies Program	119	27	6	4	0	0
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled but not graduated	119	27	6	4	0	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	158	214	221	218	221	223
Agricultural Sciences	4	7	8	9	8	9
Business	33	38	41	38	38	40
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	4	5	4	4	4	4
Engineering	17	19	19	18	18	17
Forestry	3	1	1	2	3	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	44	60	66	64	64	65
Liberal Arts	38	62	62	65	68	67
Science	15	22	20	18	18	19
Not Enrolled or Graduated	87	123	137	142	143	141
% Changed College	43%	59%	61%	60%	61%	61%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	33%	7%	2%	1%	0%	0%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	76%	66%	62%	61%	61%	61%