

Movement in Primary College

Fall Term 2012 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 2012 freshman cohort, which consisted of 3324 students. The six-year graduation rate for this group was 67.0% and another 4.0% 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 175 freshmen that began with a major in the College of Agricultural Sciences in Fall 2012, six years later 93 received their first degree or were still enrolled with a primary major in Agricultural Sciences. Another 30 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, 53% of entering Agricultural Sciences students graduated or were retained within the college six years later, while 70% of the same cohort graduated or were retained from OSU as a whole.

**Table 1: 2012 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking Entering Cohort: Primary College Movement
(Graduated or Still Enrolled at 6 Years)**

College at Entry	2012 Cohort	College Movement								No Graduation or Enrollment	% Grad or Enrolled	
		AG	BUS	EOAS	ENGR	FOR	LA	PHHS	SCI		College	OSU
Agricultural Sciences	175	93	4	0	0	2	9	10	5	52	53%	70%
Business	374	5	183	0	5	1	58	20	1	101	49%	73%
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	46	2	3	14	3	2	4	2	5	11	30%	76%
Engineering	1052	22	54	9	528	14	45	20	44	316	50%	70%
Forestry	49	1	0	1	2	31	2	0	2	10	63%	80%
Liberal Arts	279	2	12	0	2	1	146	21	2	93	52%	67%
Public Health and Human Sciences	355	6	11	0	1	0	24	202	5	106	57%	70%
Science	662	28	16	6	21	3	42	100	279	167	42%	75%
University Exploratory Studies Program	332	12	31	5	13	12	64	68	16	110	n/a	67%
Total	3324	171	314	35	575	66	394	443	359	966	49%	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 31% 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 42% 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 Public Health and Human Services, followed by Liberal Arts 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

2012 Cohort = 175

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Agricultural Sciences	125	106	101	90	94	93
Graduated	0	0	3	58	86	90
Enrolled but not graduated	125	106	98	32	8	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	21	26	29	30	30	30
Business	4	4	4	4	4	4
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forestry	0	0	1	2	2	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	7	9	9	9	9	10
Liberal Arts	4	7	10	10	10	9
Science	3	6	5	5	4	5
University Exploratory Studies Program	3	0	0	0	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	29	43	45	55	51	52
% Changed College	12%	15%	17%	17%	17%	17%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	71%	61%	58%	51%	54%	53%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	83%	75%	74%	69%	71%	70%

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2012 Cohort = 374

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Business	254	221	191	184	184	183
Graduated	0	0	5	120	174	179
Enrolled but not graduated	254	221	186	64	10	4
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	57	76	90	90	88	90
Agricultural Sciences	4	4	6	5	5	5
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	4	7	6	6	6	5
Forestry	1	1	2	2	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	12	16	20	19	20	20
Liberal Arts	30	44	54	56	54	58
Science	1	1	1	1	1	1
University Exploratory Studies Program	5	3	1	1	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	63	77	93	100	102	101
% Changed College	15%	20%	24%	24%	24%	24%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	68%	59%	51%	49%	49%	49%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	83%	79%	75%	73%	73%	73%

COLLEGE OF EARTH, OCEAN, AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

2012 Cohort = 46

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Earth, Ocean, and Atmos. Sciences	28	18	16	15	14	14
Graduated	0	0	1	10	12	13
Enrolled but not graduated	28	18	15	5	2	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	13	18	19	19	22	21
Agricultural Sciences	3	3	3	2	2	2
Business	1	1	2	3	3	3
Engineering	2	2	2	3	3	3
Forestry	2	2	2	2	3	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	1	4	3	1	2	2
Liberal Arts	0	3	4	4	4	4
Science	1	3	3	4	5	5
University Exploratory Studies Program	3	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	5	10	11	12	10	11
% Changed College	28%	39%	41%	41%	48%	46%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	61%	39%	35%	33%	30%	30%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	89%	78%	76%	74%	78%	76%

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

2012 Cohort = 1052

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Engineering	763	637	585	514	535	528
Graduated	0	1	6	169	430	493
Enrolled but not graduated	763	636	579	345	105	35
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	139	186	203	204	198	208
Agricultural Sciences	10	16	18	20	22	22
Business	22	40	45	51	53	54
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	5	9	11	11	8	9
Forestry	4	9	12	14	14	14
Public Health & Human Sciences	14	27	26	23	20	20
Liberal Arts	17	31	37	42	41	45
Science	34	39	43	39	39	44
University Exploratory Studies Program	33	15	11	4	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	150	229	264	334	319	316
% Changed College	13%	18%	19%	19%	19%	20%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	73%	61%	56%	49%	51%	50%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	78%	75%	68%	70%	70%

COLLEGE OF FORESTRY

2012 Cohort = 49

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Forestry	37	34	31	31	28	31
Graduated	0	0	0	12	24	30
Enrolled but not graduated	37	34	31	19	4	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	5	6	7	7	7	8
Agricultural Sciences	2	3	0	0	1	1
Business	0	0	0	0	0	0
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	1	2	1	0	1
Engineering	1	2	2	2	2	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	1	0	0	0	0	0
Liberal Arts	0	0	2	2	2	2
Science	0	0	1	2	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	7	9	11	11	14	10
% Changed College	10%	12%	14%	14%	14%	16%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	76%	69%	63%	63%	57%	63%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	82%	78%	78%	71%	80%

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

2012 Cohort = 279

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Liberal Arts	196	161	154	143	145	146
Graduated	0	2	12	107	136	140
Enrolled but not graduated	196	159	142	36	9	6
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	33	45	45	41	39	40
Agricultural Sciences	2	2	1	2	2	2
Business	14	13	14	11	12	12
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	3	4	2	2	2	2
Forestry	1	1	1	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	7	23	24	22	20	21
Science	2	1	2	2	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	3	1	1	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	50	73	80	95	95	93
% Changed College	12%	16%	16%	15%	14%	14%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	70%	58%	55%	51%	52%	52%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	74%	71%	66%	66%	67%

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

2012 Cohort = 355

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Public Health & Human Sciences	253	220	216	201	204	202
Graduated	0	0	5	150	198	200
Enrolled but not graduated	253	220	211	51	6	2
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	31	43	43	45	47	47
Agricultural Sciences	3	5	5	6	6	6
Business	6	10	10	11	10	11
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	1	1	1	1	1	1
Forestry	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liberal Arts	11	21	20	22	24	24
Science	4	4	5	5	5	5
University Exploratory Studies Program	6	2	2	0	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	71	92	96	109	104	106
% Changed College	9%	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	71%	62%	61%	57%	57%	57%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	80%	74%	73%	69%	71%	70%

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

2012 Cohort = 662

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Science	437	323	291	278	269	279
Graduated	0	0	20	188	254	265
Enrolled but not graduated	437	323	271	90	15	14
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	134	199	221	212	217	216
Agricultural Sciences	20	26	26	28	28	28
Business	10	15	20	19	18	16
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	4	7	6	6	6
Engineering	16	21	23	17	20	21
Forestry	1	1	1	3	3	3
Public Health & Human Sciences	45	91	96	93	95	100
Liberal Arts	19	32	45	43	43	42
University Exploratory Studies Program	21	9	3	3	4	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	91	140	150	172	176	167
% Changed College	20%	30%	33%	32%	33%	33%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	66%	49%	44%	42%	41%	42%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	79%	77%	74%	73%	75%

University Exploratory Studies Program

2012 Cohort = 332

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
University Exploratory Studies Program	134	17	2	0	2	1
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled but not graduated	134	17	2	0	2	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	138	214	215	205	214	212
Agricultural Sciences	8	13	13	12	11	12
Business	29	28	32	29	31	31
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	4	6	5	6	6	5
Engineering	8	15	16	11	15	13
Forestry	6	1	1	3	3	3
Public Health & Human Sciences	40	73	70	65	67	68
Liberal Arts	35	63	63	66	64	64
Science	8	15	15	13	17	16
Not Enrolled or Graduated	60	101	115	127	116	119
% Changed College	42%	64%	65%	62%	64%	64%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	40%	5%	1%	0%	1%	0%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	70%	65%	62%	65%	64%