

Movement in Primary College

Fall Term 2016 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 2016 freshman cohort, which consisted of 3521 students. The six-year graduation rate for this group was 70.0% and another 3.0% 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 182 freshmen that began with a major in the College of Agricultural Sciences in Fall 2016, six years later 107 received their first degree or were still enrolled with a primary major in Agricultural Sciences. Another 24 received a first degree or had a primary major under one of the other listed colleges. 51 did not receive an OSU degree and were not enrolled, at this point in time. Thus, 59% of entering Agricultural Sciences students graduated or were retained within the college six years later, while 72% of the same cohort graduated or were retained from OSU as a whole.

**Table 1: 2016 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking Entering Cohort: Primary College Movement
(Graduated or Still Enrolled at 6 Years)**

College at Entry	2016 Cohort	College Movement								No Graduation or Enrollment	% Grad or Enrolled	
		AG	BUS	EOAS	ENGR	FOR	LA	PHHS	SCI		College	OSU
Agricultural Sciences	182	107	6	2	0	5	1	6	4	51	59%	72%
Business	480	3	280	2	8	0	31	15	2	139	58%	71%
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	71	0	1	34	1	5	7	0	1	22	48%	69%
Engineering	1125	11	55	16	649	10	47	23	35	279	58%	75%
Forestry	39	2	1	0	1	19	2	1	1	12	49%	69%
Liberal Arts	363	0	10	2	1	1	221	17	1	110	61%	70%
Public Health and Human Sciences	297	3	13	1	3	2	21	170	6	78	57%	74%
Science	677	9	17	7	23	3	53	53	337	175	50%	74%
University Exploratory Studies Program	287	4	39	8	19	4	62	48	18	85	n/a	70%
Total	3521	139	422	72	705	49	445	333	405	951	56%	73%

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 23% 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 50% of its students within the college had students migrate most frequently to Public Health and Human Services, followed by Liberal Arts and Engineering. 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

2016 Cohort = 182

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Agricultural Sciences	131	110	109	104	105	107
Graduated	0	2	12	72	97	101
Enrolled but not graduated	131	108	97	32	8	6
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	19	23	22	24	24	24
Business	5	6	6	6	6	6
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	1	2	2	2	2
Engineering	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forestry	4	3	4	5	5	5
Public Health & Human Sciences	4	6	6	6	6	6
Liberal Arts	1	1	1	1	1	1
Science	3	5	3	4	4	4
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	1	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	32	49	51	54	53	51
% Changed College	10%	13%	12%	13%	13%	13%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	72%	60%	60%	57%	58%	59%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	73%	72%	70%	71%	72%

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2016 Cohort = 480

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Business	365	307	288	291	284	280
Graduated	0	0	8	211	271	275
Enrolled but not graduated	365	307	280	80	13	5
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	41	61	62	66	59	61
Agricultural Sciences	2	3	2	2	2	3
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	1	2	2	2	2
Engineering	6	10	8	8	8	8
Forestry	1	0	0	0	0	0
Public Health & Human Sciences	9	14	16	17	16	15
Liberal Arts	13	26	29	32	29	31
Science	3	4	3	3	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	5	3	2	2	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	74	112	130	123	137	139
% Changed College	9%	13%	13%	14%	12%	13%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	76%	64%	60%	61%	59%	58%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	85%	77%	73%	74%	71%	71%

COLLEGE OF EARTH, OCEAN, AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

2016 Cohort = 71

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Earth, Ocean, and Atmos. Sciences	46	38	37	33	34	34
Graduated	0	0	1	26	33	34
Enrolled but not graduated	46	38	36	7	1	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	13	17	18	16	15	15
Agricultural Sciences	1	1	0	0	0	0
Business	1	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	1	1	1	1	1	1
Forestry	3	6	6	5	6	5
Public Health & Human Sciences	1	1	2	1	0	0
Liberal Arts	3	6	7	7	6	7
Science	1	1	1	1	1	1
University Exploratory Studies Program	2	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	12	16	16	22	22	22
% Changed College	18%	24%	25%	23%	21%	21%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	65%	54%	52%	46%	48%	48%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	83%	77%	77%	69%	69%	69%

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

2016 Cohort = 1125

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Engineering	845	722	664	620	650	649
Graduated	0	1	9	292	564	612
Enrolled but not graduated	845	721	655	328	86	37
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	139	181	201	201	197	197
Agricultural Sciences	4	6	10	11	10	11
Business	29	43	49	51	54	55
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	11	15	15	17	17	16
Forestry	8	13	14	11	11	10
Public Health & Human Sciences	12	24	27	25	23	23
Liberal Arts	23	37	49	46	46	47
Science	25	37	36	34	35	35
University Exploratory Studies Program	27	6	1	6	1	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	141	222	260	304	278	279
% Changed College	12%	16%	18%	18%	18%	18%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	75%	64%	59%	55%	58%	58%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	87%	80%	77%	73%	75%	75%

COLLEGE OF FORESTRY

2016 Cohort = 39

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Forestry	21	19	19	19	18	19
Graduated	0	0	0	14	18	19
Enrolled but not graduated	21	19	19	5	0	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	6	6	8	8	8	8
Agricultural Sciences	3	2	2	2	2	2
Business	0	1	1	1	1	1
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	1	1	1	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	0	0	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	1	1	2	2	2	2
Science	0	1	1	1	1	1
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	12	14	12	12	13	12
% Changed College	15%	15%	21%	21%	21%	21%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	54%	49%	49%	49%	46%	49%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	69%	64%	69%	69%	67%	69%

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

2016 Cohort = 363

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Liberal Arts	259	241	233	227	225	221
Graduated	0	2	16	172	209	214
Enrolled but not graduated	259	239	217	55	16	7
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	35	35	33	34	31	32
Agricultural Sciences	1	0	0	0	0	0
Business	12	13	10	10	10	10
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	2	2	2	1	2
Engineering	1	1	1	2	2	1
Forestry	1	1	1	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	11	16	16	18	16	17
Science	1	1	3	1	1	1
University Exploratory Studies Program	6	1	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	69	87	97	102	107	110
% Changed College	10%	10%	9%	9%	9%	9%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	71%	66%	64%	63%	62%	61%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	81%	76%	73%	72%	71%	70%

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

2016 Cohort = 297

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Public Health & Human Sciences	226	184	177	172	169	170
Graduated	0	1	12	142	165	168
Enrolled but not graduated	226	183	165	30	4	2
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	35	47	50	50	50	49
Agricultural Sciences	3	3	3	3	3	3
Business	12	13	12	12	12	13
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	1	2	3	3	3	3
Forestry	0	4	2	2	2	2
Liberal Arts	13	19	22	22	22	21
Science	3	5	7	6	7	6
University Exploratory Studies Program	3	0	0	1	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	36	66	70	75	78	78
% Changed College	12%	16%	17%	17%	17%	16%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	76%	62%	60%	58%	57%	57%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	88%	78%	76%	75%	74%	74%

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

2016 Cohort = 677

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Science	453	384	351	338	338	337
Graduated	0	0	28	279	325	333
Enrolled but not graduated	453	384	323	59	13	4
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	116	152	168	167	161	165
Agricultural Sciences	7	10	9	9	9	9
Business	13	17	18	17	16	17
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	6	8	8	8	7
Engineering	14	21	23	22	22	23
Forestry	2	2	3	2	1	3
Public Health & Human Sciences	33	47	55	55	54	53
Liberal Arts	27	45	51	54	51	53
University Exploratory Studies Program	18	4	1	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	108	141	158	172	178	175
% Changed College	17%	22%	25%	25%	24%	24%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	67%	57%	52%	50%	50%	50%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	84%	79%	77%	75%	74%	74%

University Exploratory Studies Program

2016 Cohort = 287

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
University Exploratory Studies Program	102	11	4	0	1	0
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled but not graduated	102	11	4	0	1	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	137	210	208	198	201	202
Agricultural Sciences	3	3	3	3	4	4
Business	34	42	40	39	39	39
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	5	9	8	9	9	8
Engineering	16	20	19	17	19	19
Forestry	3	5	3	4	4	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	34	47	51	46	46	48
Liberal Arts	33	67	67	63	62	62
Science	9	17	17	17	18	18
Not Enrolled or Graduated	48	66	75	89	85	85
% Changed College	48%	73%	72%	69%	70%	70%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	36%	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	83%	77%	74%	69%	70%	70%