

# Movement in Primary College

## Fall Term 2017 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 2017 freshman cohort, which consisted of 3418 students. The six-year graduation rate for this group was 70.6% and another 2.8% 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 186 freshmen that began with a major in the College of Agricultural Sciences in Fall 2017, six years later 94 received their first degree or were still enrolled with a primary major in Agricultural Sciences. Another 25 received a first degree or had a primary major under one of the other listed colleges. 67 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 64% of the same cohort graduated or were retained from OSU as a whole.

**Table 1: 2017 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking Entering Cohort: Primary College Movement  
(Graduated or Still Enrolled at 6 Years)**

College at Entry	2017 Cohort	College Movement								No Graduation or Enrollment	% Grad or Enrolled	
		AG	BUS	EOAS	ENGR	FOR	LA	PHHS	SCI		College	OSU
Agricultural Sciences	186	94	3	1	1	1	8	8	3	67	51%	64%
Business	462	1	275	0	9	2	33	10	3	129	60%	72%
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	65	5	3	33	2	4	4	1	1	12	51%	82%
Engineering	1130	6	69	15	669	8	47	11	52	248	59%	78%
Forestry	43	2	0	1	4	20	1	0	2	13	47%	70%
Liberal Arts	299	1	19	1	1	2	149	12	4	109	50%	64%
Public Health and Human Sciences	247	3	13	1	2	1	17	129	4	77	52%	69%
Science	676	16	27	6	17	1	51	57	342	159	51%	76%
University Exploratory Studies Program	310	13	51	6	20	4	57	57	8	94	n/a	70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3418</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>73%</b>

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 25% 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 51% 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 or 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

2017 Cohort = 186

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
<b>Agricultural Sciences</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>94</b>
Graduated	0	1	7	70	90	93
Enrolled but not graduated	126	110	95	23	6	1
<b>Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>
Business	2	3	2	3	3	3
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	1	1	1	1	1	1
Forestry	2	2	0	0	0	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	6	6	8	8	8	8
Liberal Arts	5	8	10	8	7	8
Science	4	5	4	4	3	3
University Exploratory Studies Program	4	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Not Enrolled or Graduated</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>% Changed College</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated in College</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>64%</b>

## COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2017 Cohort = 462

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
<b>Business</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>275</b>
Graduated	0	0	11	214	268	272
Enrolled but not graduated	353	302	273	61	6	3
<b>Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>58</b>
Agricultural Sciences	1	0	1	1	1	1
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	8	8	9	9	9	9
Forestry	0	1	2	2	2	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	10	10	11	10	10	10
Liberal Arts	10	33	35	34	34	33
Science	4	3	3	3	3	3
University Exploratory Studies Program	5	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Not Enrolled or Graduated</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>% Changed College</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated in College</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>72%</b>

## COLLEGE OF EARTH, OCEAN, AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

2017 Cohort = 65

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
<b>Earth, Ocean, and Atmos. Sciences</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>
Graduated	0	0	4	22	33	33
Enrolled but not graduated	41	34	30	11	0	0
<b>Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
Agricultural Sciences	3	3	4	4	5	5
Business	0	2	2	3	3	3
Engineering	2	1	1	2	2	2
Forestry	3	2	3	4	4	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	2	2	2	2	1	1
Liberal Arts	3	4	4	4	4	4
Science	4	4	3	1	1	1
University Exploratory Studies Program	0	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Not Enrolled or Graduated</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>% Changed College</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated in College</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>82%</b>

## COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

2017 Cohort = 1130

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
<b>Engineering</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>669</b>
Graduated	0	1	13	337	588	642
Enrolled but not graduated	826	726	652	317	72	27
<b>Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>213</b>
Agricultural Sciences	5	9	8	7	5	6
Business	46	68	64	69	66	69
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	6	11	16	15	15	15
Forestry	5	10	8	9	6	8
Public Health & Human Sciences	9	9	12	12	11	11
Liberal Arts	25	46	45	44	46	47
Science	33	51	54	54	52	52
University Exploratory Studies Program	24	4	19	9	10	5
<b>Not Enrolled or Graduated</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>% Changed College</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated in College</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>78%</b>

## COLLEGE OF FORESTRY

2017 Cohort = 43

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
<b>Forestry</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>
Graduated	0	0	0	10	18	19
Enrolled but not graduated	26	25	25	15	4	1
<b>Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
Agricultural Sciences	1	2	3	3	2	2
Business	0	1	0	0	0	0
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	2	2	0	0	4	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liberal Arts	1	1	1	1	1	1
Science	0	1	1	2	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	2	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Not Enrolled or Graduated</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>% Changed College</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated in College</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>70%</b>

## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

2017 Cohort = 299

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
<b>Liberal Arts</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>149</b>
Graduated	0	2	15	110	133	141
Enrolled but not graduated	199	167	144	45	12	8
<b>Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>41</b>
Agricultural Sciences	0	3	1	1	2	1
Business	14	19	19	20	19	19
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	0	0	0	0	1	1
Forestry	3	2	3	2	2	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	5	11	13	13	13	12
Science	4	2	2	3	4	4
University Exploratory Studies Program	3	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Not Enrolled or Graduated</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>% Changed College</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated in College</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>64%</b>

## COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

2017 Cohort = 247

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
<b>Public Health &amp; Human Sciences</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>129</b>
Graduated	0	0	8	93	124	127
Enrolled but not graduated	174	146	131	39	5	2
<b>Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>
Agricultural Sciences	2	2	3	3	3	3
Business	12	12	12	14	14	13
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	2	2	2	2	2	2
Forestry	1	1	1	1	1	1
Liberal Arts	9	17	19	18	16	17
Science	3	5	3	3	3	4
University Exploratory Studies Program	3	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Not Enrolled or Graduated</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>% Changed College</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated in College</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>69%</b>



## COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

2017 Cohort = 676

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
<b>Science</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>342</b>
Graduated	0	1	33	290	337	340
Enrolled but not graduated	444	374	319	54	8	2
<b>Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>175</b>
Agricultural Sciences	5	11	17	17	16	16
Business	21	24	28	27	28	27
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	5	5	5	6	6
Engineering	14	16	16	16	17	17
Forestry	0	0	0	0	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	44	51	58	58	57	57
Liberal Arts	28	47	52	48	49	51
University Exploratory Studies Program	20	9	2	1	0	0
<b>Not Enrolled or Graduated</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>% Changed College</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated in College</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>76%</b>

## University Exploratory Studies Program

2017 Cohort = 310

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
<b>University Exploratory Studies Program</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled but not graduated	91	3	0	0	0	0
<b>Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>216</b>
Agricultural Sciences	5	10	13	14	12	13
Business	46	58	54	54	53	51
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	6	8	7	6	6	6
Engineering	15	21	19	20	20	20
Forestry	3	5	5	5	5	4
Public Health & Human Sciences	39	58	58	58	56	57
Liberal Arts	35	63	59	56	56	57
Science	14	11	9	10	7	8
<b>Not Enrolled or Graduated</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>% Changed College</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated in College</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>70%</b>