

Movement in Primary College

Fall Term 2018 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 2018 freshman cohort, which consisted of 3339 students. The six-year graduation rate for this group was 70.1% 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 162 freshmen that began with a major in the College of Agricultural Sciences in Fall 2018, six years later 87 received their first degree or were still enrolled with a primary major in Agricultural Sciences. Another 26 received a first degree or had a primary major under one of the other listed colleges. 49 did not receive an OSU degree and were not enrolled, at this point in time. Thus, 54% 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: 2018 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking Entering Cohort: Primary College Movement
(Graduated or Still Enrolled at 6 Years)**

College at Entry	2018 Cohort	College Movement								No Graduation or Enrollment	% Grad or Enrolled	
		AG	BUS	EOAS	ENGR	FOR	LA	PHHS	SCI		College	OSU
Agricultural Sciences	162	87	3	1	2	3	11	4	2	49	54%	70%
Business	428	0	268	0	5	1	13	13	2	126	63%	71%
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	91	2	3	47	1	1	9	2	2	24	52%	74%
Engineering	1122	6	55	13	691	7	39	12	34	261	62%	77%
Forestry	49	2	2	0	3	29	2	0	0	11	59%	78%
Liberal Arts	298	1	10	1	4	2	154	13	3	110	52%	63%
Public Health and Human Sciences	226	0	10	2	3	0	12	130	3	66	58%	71%
Science	695	14	18	7	19	6	45	50	358	178	52%	74%
University Exploratory Studies Program	268	12	44	5	17	0	46	32	23	88	n/a	67%
Total	3339	124	413	76	745	49	331	256	427	913	57%	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 21% 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 52% 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 Business, and then Public Health.

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

2018 Cohort = 162

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Agricultural Sciences	115	92	86	84	85	87
Graduated	0	1	6	62	81	86
Enrolled but not graduated	115	91	80	22	4	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	18	24	26	28	29	26
Business	3	3	3	3	3	3
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	2	1	1	1	1	1
Engineering	2	2	3	4	3	2
Forestry	1	1	2	3	4	3
Public Health & Human Sciences	1	4	4	4	4	4
Liberal Arts	8	12	11	11	12	11
Science	0	1	2	2	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	0	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	29	46	50	50	48	49
% Changed College	11%	15%	16%	17%	18%	16%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	71%	57%	53%	52%	52%	54%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	82%	72%	69%	69%	70%	70%

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

2018 Cohort = 428

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Business	336	294	286	279	270	268
Graduated	0	0	20	210	255	265
Enrolled but not graduated	336	294	266	69	15	3
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	36	44	45	40	39	34
Agricultural Sciences	1	0	0	0	0	0
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	0	1	0	0	0
Engineering	3	6	6	6	6	5
Forestry	1	2	1	1	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	14	15	16	16	16	13
Liberal Arts	13	18	19	15	14	13
Science	2	2	2	2	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	1	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	56	90	97	109	119	126
% Changed College	8%	10%	11%	9%	9%	8%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	79%	69%	67%	65%	63%	63%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	87%	79%	77%	75%	72%	71%

COLLEGE OF EARTH, OCEAN, AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES

2018 Cohort = 91

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Earth, Ocean, and Atmos. Sciences	57	52	49	44	45	47
Graduated	0	1	3	33	42	47
Enrolled but not graduated	57	51	46	11	3	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	21	20	22	22	21	20
Agricultural Sciences	3	2	2	2	2	2
Business	2	3	3	3	3	3
Engineering	1	1	1	1	1	1
Forestry	2	4	4	3	1	1
Public Health & Human Sciences	0	1	2	2	2	2
Liberal Arts	8	6	8	9	10	9
Science	2	2	2	2	2	2
University Exploratory Studies Program	3	1	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	13	19	20	25	25	24
% Changed College	23%	22%	24%	24%	23%	22%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	63%	57%	54%	48%	49%	52%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	86%	79%	78%	73%	73%	74%

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

2018 Cohort = 1122

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Engineering	836	741	718	674	688	691
Graduated	0	1	18	357	604	663
Enrolled but not graduated	836	740	700	317	84	28
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	138	173	175	178	173	170
Agricultural Sciences	4	7	7	6	6	6
Business	37	49	52	56	58	55
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	10	12	14	13	12	13
Forestry	5	6	6	7	8	7
Public Health & Human Sciences	10	15	13	13	12	12
Liberal Arts	26	37	40	43	40	39
Science	29	32	32	35	35	34
University Exploratory Studies Program	17	15	11	5	2	4
Not Enrolled or Graduated	148	208	229	270	261	261
% Changed College	12%	15%	16%	16%	15%	15%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	75%	66%	64%	60%	61%	62%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	87%	81%	80%	76%	77%	77%

COLLEGE OF FORESTRY

2018 Cohort = 49

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Forestry	36	31	29	28	29	29
Graduated	0	0	1	19	29	29
Enrolled but not graduated	36	31	28	9	0	0
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	9	10	9	9	9	9
Agricultural Sciences	2	3	2	2	2	2
Business	2	3	3	2	2	2
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	3	2	3	3	3	3
Public Health & Human Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liberal Arts	1	1	1	2	2	2
Science	0	0	0	0	0	0
University Exploratory Studies Program	1	1	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	4	8	11	12	11	11
% Changed College	18%	20%	18%	18%	18%	18%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	73%	63%	59%	57%	59%	59%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	92%	84%	78%	76%	78%	78%

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

2018 Cohort = 298

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Liberal Arts	211	186	169	162	155	154
Graduated	0	1	20	122	142	150
Enrolled but not graduated	211	185	149	40	13	4
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	29	34	38	35	37	34
Agricultural Sciences	1	1	1	0	2	1
Business	9	10	11	11	11	10
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	0	2	2	2	2	1
Engineering	1	3	3	3	4	4
Forestry	0	2	2	2	2	2
Public Health & Human Sciences	7	11	14	13	13	13
Science	3	3	5	4	3	3
University Exploratory Studies Program	8	2	0	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	58	78	91	101	106	110
% Changed College	10%	11%	13%	12%	12%	11%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	71%	62%	57%	54%	52%	52%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	81%	74%	69%	66%	64%	63%

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

2018 Cohort = 226

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Public Health & Human Sciences	158	142	137	128	129	130
Graduated	0	0	12	104	128	129
Enrolled but not graduated	158	142	125	24	1	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	29	38	34	32	34	30
Agricultural Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business	6	12	12	10	10	10
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	1	2	2	2	2	2
Engineering	1	3	2	2	3	3
Forestry	1	1	0	0	0	0
Liberal Arts	10	14	13	14	16	12
Science	6	4	4	4	3	3
University Exploratory Studies Program	4	2	1	0	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	39	46	55	66	63	66
% Changed College	13%	17%	15%	14%	15%	13%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	70%	63%	61%	57%	57%	58%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	83%	80%	76%	71%	72%	71%

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

2018 Cohort = 695

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Science	466	412	382	356	358	358
Graduated	0	3	39	282	337	353
Enrolled but not graduated	466	409	343	74	21	5
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	142	161	172	166	167	159
Agricultural Sciences	12	11	11	12	15	14
Business	14	18	19	18	19	18
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	7	6	8	7	6	7
Engineering	16	19	24	22	21	19
Forestry	1	6	6	6	8	6
Public Health & Human Sciences	35	51	55	52	49	50
Liberal Arts	36	45	48	47	49	45
University Exploratory Studies Program	21	5	1	2	0	0
Not Enrolled or Graduated	87	122	141	173	170	178
% Changed College	20%	23%	25%	24%	24%	23%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	67%	59%	55%	51%	52%	52%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	87%	82%	80%	75%	76%	74%

University Exploratory Studies Program

2018 Cohort = 268

	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
University Exploratory Studies Program	61	6	0	1	2	1
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0
Enrolled but not graduated	61	6	0	1	2	1
Enrolled or Graduated in Other Colleges	153	192	191	175	179	179
Agricultural Sciences	3	10	9	9	11	12
Business	39	52	48	45	46	44
Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences	6	5	5	5	4	5
Engineering	15	15	16	14	15	17
Forestry	1	0	1	0	0	0
Public Health & Human Sciences	27	36	39	34	35	32
Liberal Arts	43	51	51	46	44	46
Science	19	23	22	22	24	23
Not Enrolled or Graduated	54	70	77	92	87	88
% Changed College	57%	72%	71%	65%	67%	67%
% Enrolled or Graduated in College	23%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%
% Enrolled or Graduated at OSU	80%	74%	71%	66%	68%	67%