



OUS Enrollment

Overview

Over the last ten years, the Oregon University System has **outpaced the national average for enrollment growth**, increasing 29% since 1996, about double the national rate. This is a 10-year increase of 18,155 students, or roughly the equivalent of an institution the size of Oregon State University. However, while OUS enrollment reached a record high of over 81,000 students in fall 2006, growth has been relatively flat since 2004. Enrollment in fall 2006 increased by only 114 students systemwide – **much lower than increases seen earlier in the decade** – and the **freshman participation rate** (the percentage of Oregon high school graduates attending OUS) **has been declining since 2002**. Factors related to these flat and declining rates include cuts to student pre-college and in-college services and programs as a result of decreased state investment after the 1999-2001 biennium; the continuing effect of tuition increases over the last several years, despite much lower rates of increase (in the 3% range) since 2005; low levels of need-based aid for middle- and low-income Oregonians; a decline in overall postsecondary attendance by recent high school graduates; a decline in the number of new transfer students from Oregon's community colleges; and more high school students leaving the state for college, particularly those who are considered "high achievers" based on SAT and GPA indicators.

Definitions and Background

Enrollment is **shaped by multiple forces**, including growth in the number of Oregon's college-age adults, increases in tuition and decreases in financial aid, perceptions about affordability, availability of programs and classes, changes in the economy, awareness of the need for a college degree, and changes in how students make decisions about attending college. OUS, like all higher education institutions, employs several definitions in counting enrollment. Historical enrollment is generally expressed in terms of fall **headcount**, and reflects the number of students enrolled in credit courses regardless of course load, including extended enrollment students, i.e., individuals in continuing education, web-based courses, and other courses that are not campus-bound. **Full-time equivalent (FTE)** translates credit into enrollment, showing how many students it would take to produce the total credit-bearing activity of a campus if each student took exactly a full-time load. The number of credits determining one full-time equivalent student varies with the level of the student; for undergraduates it is 15 credit hours per term, or 45 credit hours per year.

2006 OUS Enrollment Summary

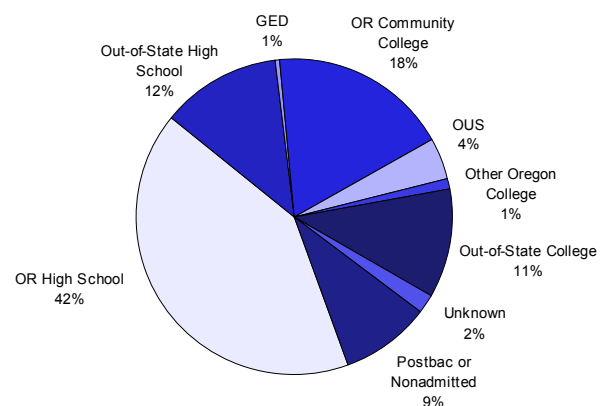
Combined undergraduate and graduate OUS enrollment increased 0.1% from 2005 to 2006, to a total headcount of 81,002, smaller than the 1.0% increase experienced in fall 2005 for the System's seven public universities and one branch campus. While the headcount increased marginally, **FTE enrollment across the system declined 0.4% in 2006**.

Undergraduates comprise the vast majority of 2006 enrollments at 81%; however, **undergraduate enrollment decreased 0.3%** from the 2005 level. The number of newly admitted freshmen increased by 3%, although much of this was due to a significant increase in nonresident freshmen of 18.4%; **enrollment of freshmen from Oregon declined by 1.2%**.

In 2006 new resident and nonresident **transfer student numbers declined** (by 5.3% and 3.9%, respectively). New undergraduate transfer enrollments from Oregon community colleges, which had been increasing steadily from 1999 through 2004, declined 2% in 2005 and 7% in 2006, possibly as a result of reduced enrollment at Oregon's community colleges as recent state funding decreases led them to raise tuition.

Graduate enrollment in fall 2006 increased 2.0% to 15,381, up from a 2005 increase of 1.7%. Numbers of new admitted graduate students increased for both residents and nonresidents, by 15.1% and 8.4%, respectively. A

Source of OUS Undergraduates



large percentage gain of 8.7% was shown in **non-admitted graduates**, a group who may be taking classes to upgrade their professional skills for the job market. **International student enrollment** increased by 4.4% in 2006, building on last year's increase of 1.1%.

Additional Factors:

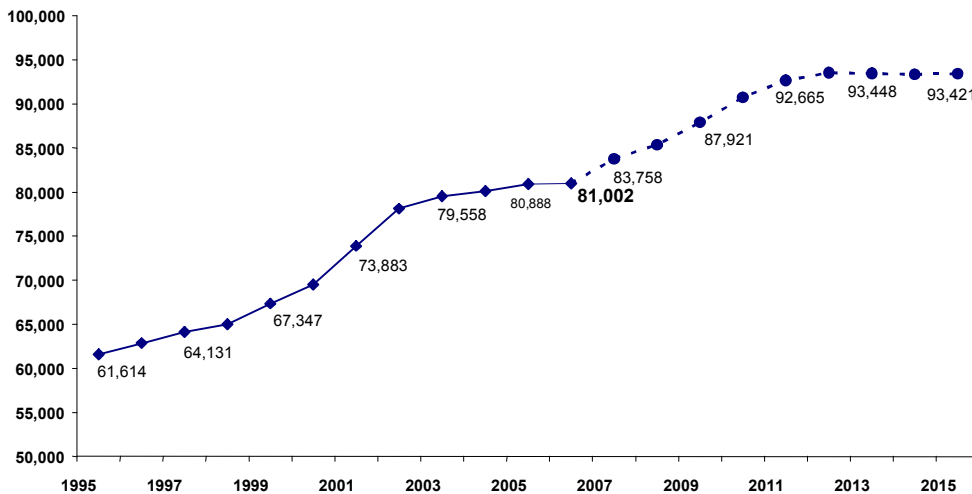
- Decreases in the level of state investment in the OUS have led to **program cuts** in outreach to high school students, student recruitment, campus support services, and class and course sections.
- For the first time since 1999, the proportion of high school **graduates leaving the state** for a four-year college is up (amounting to 11.5% of the high school graduates who entered postsecondary institutions by the winter following graduation). The proportion leaving increased especially among high academic achievers.
- Recent high school graduates who chose not to attend college expressed concerns about **costs as a top reason** for not pursuing postsecondary education. Although tuition at OUS universities rose by just 3% this year, the cumulative effect of rapid increases earlier in the decade is still being felt.

Historical and Projected Enrollment

While the rate of growth has slowed, OUS again had the largest graduating class in its history, awarding a **record 19,138 degrees and certificates in the 2005-06 academic year**. Over the next few years, as students who entered the system during the years of slower enrollment growth reach graduation, OUS will likely see a slowing in the percentage increase of degrees awarded.

Past and projected enrollment shows steady increases. The sharp rise in enrollment starting in 1999 coincides with increased funding from the Legislature. **The number of high school graduates continues to increase**, and most of the growth in high-wage jobs in Oregon and nationally is projected to occur in areas requiring a bachelor's degree or higher.

**OUS Fall 4th Week Headcount and Forecast:
1995 to 2015**



- Enrollment projections are made based on a number of factors:**
1. Term-to-term and year-to-year retention rates at OUS campuses
 2. Anticipated enrollment increases or decreases from academic program and admissions policy changes
 3. Historical enrollment patterns of transfer and returning students
 4. Final fall enrollment
 5. Applications and admissions for the upcoming fall term
 6. Oregon high school graduates projections which, in turn, are based on K-12 enrollment and demographic data about numbers of Oregon schoolchildren in the "pipeline"



Oregon University System

Office of the Chancellor · 503.725.5700 · www.ous.edu