



Oregon
University
System

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oregon University System Enrollment Slow-Down Continues

While universities still producing record degrees, enrollment is flat over last year

PORTLAND, November 9 – While Oregon University System’s fall 2006 enrollment reached a record high of 81,002 students, growth is flat compared with last year – increasing by 114 students systemwide – and much lower than increases seen in earlier years in the decade. At a growth rate of 0.1%, 2006 enrollment is lower than the 1.0% increase experienced last year for the System’s seven public universities and one branch campus.

“Looking at our 10-year growth, OUS has increased by over 18,100 students since 1996, evidence of the continued demand from Oregonians for a high quality university education,” said George Pernsteiner, chancellor of the Oregon University System. “The slow down in enrollment over the last few years parallels the lower levels of state investment in higher education. This directly affects university-sponsored programs, services and collaborations that aspire and academically prepare students for college, and support and retain them once they enroll,” Pernsteiner added.

The systemwide enrollment increase of 0.1% at fourth-week fall 2006 includes a total of 65,621 undergraduates – a decrease of 0.3% from last year – and 15,381 graduate students – an increase of 2% from 2005. Across the System, the number of newly admitted freshmen increased by 3%, although much of this was due to significant increases in nonresident freshmen of 18.4%; resident freshman enrollment declined by 1.2%. Both resident and nonresident transfer student numbers declined (by 5.3% and 3.9%, respectively). Numbers of new graduate students increased for both residents and nonresidents, by 15.1% and 8.4%, respectively.

“The decrease in undergraduate enrollment, particularly incoming Oregon freshmen, is a big concern for the state,” said Bob Kieran, OUS director of institutional research. “To meet the state economy’s demand for a more highly educated workforce, Oregon needs to increase the number of resident students entering and graduating with a degree. We don’t want to repeat the situation experienced in the 1990s when Oregon simply imported educated workers, leaving Oregonians behind,” said Kieran. “And with the rebound in the state’s economy and employment rates, demand for highly skilled employees, with higher levels of education, is only increasing.”

Portland State University saw the largest number and percentage increase of the seven OUS institutions, with an addition of 269 students, an increase of 1.1% over last year to 24,284 students. Oregon State University saw the next highest increase at 0.7% or 126 new students

over last year, with its Cascades branch campus in Bend seeing a slight increase of 0.8% in enrollment. Southern Oregon University began a rebound from two years of enrollment decreases with a slight enrollment increase of 0.3%. Western Oregon University experienced an increase of 0.2% or 10 students. Oregon Institute of Technology experienced the largest enrollment decrease, 5.8% or 194 students below last year, bringing their enrollment to 3,157. After several years of significant increases, Eastern Oregon University saw a decrease of 3.1% in enrollment, or 108 students. The University of Oregon enrollment remained at the previous year's level, decreasing by just 6 students.

“Although this year’s enrollment growth was relatively flat, increases seen in the more recent past have generated robust growth in graduating classes, the largest experienced in OUS history,” said Kieran. The 2006 graduating class included 19,138 degrees and certificates, 2% higher than the prior year, and contributed to a three-year increase of more than 12%. “As the students who entered the system during the years of slower enrollment growth reach graduation, OUS will likely see a slowing in the percentage increase each year of degrees awarded,” noted Kieran.

Pernsteiner said, “Our hope for Oregon is that students all across the state with the aspirations to attend college will be able to do so through improved investments by the Governor and the Legislature. Our knowledge economy requires greater levels of educational attainment to support and sustain our diverse communities and industries. Helping students gain the skills and education they need to successfully contribute in the workplace and to their families and communities must be Oregon’s promise and its legacy,” he added.

Fall 2006 Headcount Enrollment 4 th Week Totals Oregon University System				
Institution	Fall 2006	Fall 2005	# Change Fall '05 to Fall '06	% Change Fall '05 to Fall '06
Eastern Oregon University	3,425	3,533	-108	-3.1
Oregon Institute of Technology	3,157	3,351	-194	-5.8
Oregon State University - Corvallis	19,362	19,236	126	0.7
Oregon State University - Cascades	495	491	4	0.8
Portland State University	24,284	24,015	269	1.1
Southern Oregon University	5,002	4,989	13	0.3
University of Oregon	20,388	20,394	-6	0.0
Western Oregon University	4,889	4,879	10	0.2
OUS System Total	81,002	80,888	114	0.1
Undergraduates	65,621	65,810	-189	-0.3%
Graduates (includes Professional*)	15,381	15,078	303	2.0%

* Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy and Law
Source: OUS Institutional Research Services

For a fact sheet providing additional data, go to “Featured Documents” at www.ous.edu.

Oregon University System (OUS) comprises seven distinguished public universities, reaching more than one million people each year through on-campus classes, statewide public services and lifelong learning. The Oregon State Board of Higher Education, the statutory governing board of OUS, is composed of eleven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Oregon State Senate.

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