



Oregon
University
System

One Year Later: The Status of the Class of 2003 Bachelor's Degree Recipients

Fact Sheet
Fall 2005

Study Focus

One Year Later is an assessment of **how graduates of the Class of 2003** from Oregon's seven public universities - Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Southern Oregon University, University of Oregon, and Western Oregon University - **evaluate their educational experience** one year after receiving their diplomas. Graduates were surveyed in June and July 2004.

Key Findings of Study

- **Recent bachelor's graduates report a high level of satisfaction with their OUS education:**
 - **82% rate the quality of their education as a 5 or 4** on a 5-point scale (**5 as "excellent"** 1 as "poor"); this is slightly higher than the prior 2001 survey.
 - If they had to begin all over again, 84% of respondents would choose the *same* OUS institution; this is an increase from the 77% response provided by 2001 survey respondents.
 - More than three-quarters of graduates are very or mostly satisfied with the university's contributions to their abilities and skills in critical thinking, problem solving, cultural understanding, and group project skills.
 - Three-quarters of graduates were very or mostly satisfied with the accessibility of faculty.

- **Nearly all graduates are engaged productively despite the economic downturn:**
 - Almost **9 out of 10 graduates are employed and/or continuing their education**. Of those employed, 81% are working full time; 12% of those employed are also enrolled in an education program.
 - **80% of employed graduates work in Oregon**. Half are employed in the private sector, with another 25% employed in public or government agencies and/or education.
 - Nearly 23% are continuing their higher education, using their bachelor's degree as a stepping-stone to pursue graduate, professional or other studies.
 - 6% of graduates said they are "looking for work," an increase from the 4% seen in 2001, but not unexpected given the effects of the economic downturn. The overall rate of unemployment in Oregon was 8.5% at their time of graduation in June 2003. (When this survey was taken in June and July 2004, the unemployment rate in Oregon was 7.5% and 7.4%, respectively.)

- **OUS experiences helped graduates contribute to Oregon's economy:**
 - Almost half of graduates participated in an internship. 84% of these said it helped prepare them for their current activity.

- Of those employed, **16.4% use a language other than English** to communicate with customers, clients, students, or employees in Oregon's increasingly diverse work environments; this is up from 15% two years prior.
 - The median annual salary for Class of 2003 graduates was between \$25,000 and \$35,000, with 8% earning over \$50,000 a year after graduation.
- **Graduates choose different pathways to a bachelor's degree:**
 - **45% entered OUS as transfer students** – the majority from Oregon community colleges. Over two-thirds (68%) of these students were very or mostly satisfied with the transfer process.
 - Only four in ten graduates entered as freshmen right out of high school.
 - 31.2% are first in their immediate families to earn a bachelor's degree. These *first generation college students* were less likely than other students to have entered directly from high school.
- **While in school, many graduates borrowed to help manage college costs:**
 - More than **two-thirds of graduates took on debt** to complete their degree (67%).
 - First-generation students were more likely to borrow to cover college costs than other students, with 76% taking out student loans compared to 64% of other students.
 - 44% of graduates who borrowed took on debt of \$15,000 or less to complete their degree. Almost 17% took on a total debt load (from all sources) of more than \$30,000, a 25% increase from the Class of 2001.

Study Design

Using lists of graduates provided by the campuses, the University of Oregon's *Oregon Survey Research Laboratory* (OSRL) randomly selected from the 11,063 bachelor's degree recipients in the Class of 2003. From this representative sample, telephone interviews were conducted in the summer of 2004 with 1,170 recent bachelors degree recipients.

Citation and Contact Information

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