



Where Have Oregon's Graduates Gone? Survey of the Oregon High School Class of 2005

Fact Sheet

Enrollment

- Almost 73% of Oregon high school graduates are enrolled in some type of college by winter term following graduation.
- Oregonians continue to enroll at rates higher than the national average, but the gap is narrowing. Despite an increase of 10 percentage points over the past twelve years, overall enrollment has been declining gradually since 2001.
- Two-thirds of high school graduates not currently enrolled in college indicate they will definitely or probably enroll within the next year.
- Male respondents were significantly more likely than female graduates to indicate they definitely do not plan to enroll within the next twelve months.

College Choices

- Among the high school graduates surveyed, 39% were attending a four-year university or college after winter term and 33% had chosen a two-year college.
- The largest proportion of graduates choosing a four-year college were enrolled at an OUS institution, a total of 21.7% of the class of 2005. The proportion of graduates choosing OUS institutions is the lowest since the class of 1997 and is down from a high of 24.5% in 2001.
- The largest percentage of respondents selected an Oregon community college (30%). Over three-quarters of these students report they have definite or probable plans to transfer to an OUS institution.
- For the first time since 1999, the proportion of graduates leaving the state for a four-year college is up (11.5%), still below the high of 13.3% in that year.
- Among high achievers (those with a high school GPA of 3.75 or greater), OUS institutions remain the most popular choice, selected by 38%. However, the percentage of high achievers leaving the state for a four-year college (27%) increased from the previous study, a reversal of a long-term trend, but significantly lower than the 42% seen in 1995 following program cuts resulting from the implementation of Measure 5.

Demographics and Choice

- Attendance rates among female graduates are growing, reflecting national trends, while college enrollment for men remains flat.
- Compared to the class of 2003, enrollment rates declined for every racial/ethnic group except African Americans and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders.
- Oregon's African American graduates enrolled in larger proportions than the U.S. average for this group, and their enrollment rates are showing strong growth since the class of 2001 study.
- Enrollment rates among Asian Americans continue to be robust, but have not increased since 1999.
- Hispanic/Latino and American Indian respondents show the lowest college attendance rates among all graduates. Enrollment among both groups has declined since the class 2001 and the rate for Hispanic/Latino graduates is lower than the national average.

Reasons for Choice of College or Not Attending College

- The most important reason for students' choice of a four-year college was the institution's *academic reputation*. Other major reasons for choosing or not choosing a college are *availability of desired major program*, *costs to students*, and *proximity to (or distance from) home*. *Campus social environment* and *size* were also important factors to the classes of 2003 and 2005—reasons significantly less important to previous survey classes.
- *Affordable cost* was an important consideration for graduates choosing any Oregon public institution—whether four-year or two-year—but especially for those who opted for an Oregon community college, deemed very important by three-quarters of these respondents.
- Graduates choosing other four-year options (including Oregon independent colleges and out-of-state institutions) were more influenced by a scholarship award or good financial aid.

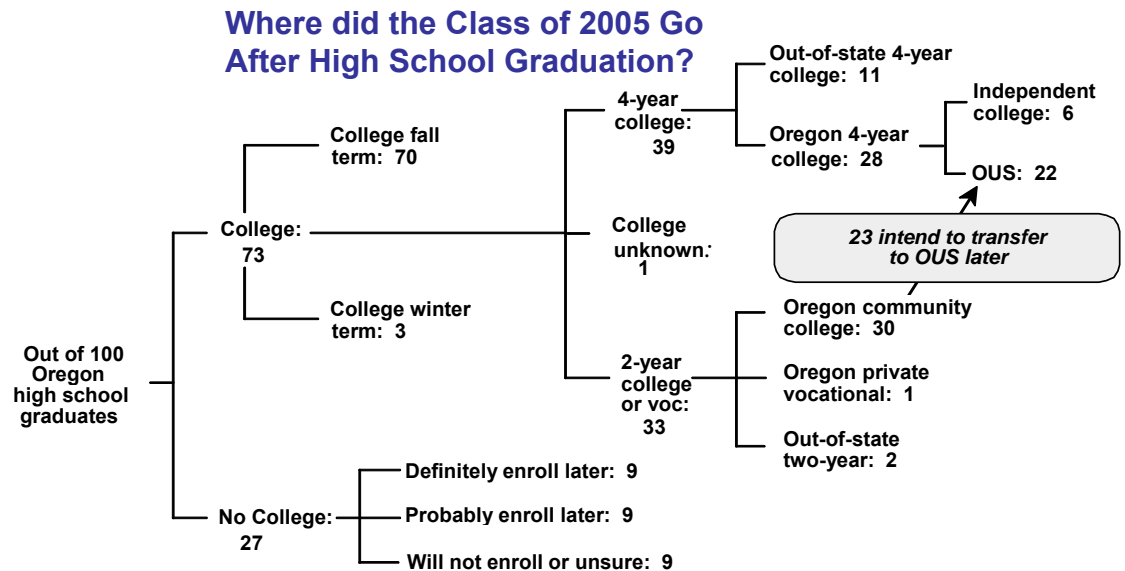
Study Background

In a continuing effort to understand the decisions and life choices of Oregon's high school graduates, the Oregon University System conducted a random sample telephone survey of the class of 2005. This biennial study—the seventh in a series—seeks to identify the proportion of the graduating class that attended a postsecondary institution, the type of college they chose, and the reasons for that choice, or for not attending college.

- The role of Oregon community colleges in providing broad access to postsecondary education was underscored by the large proportions (over 80%) influenced by *attainable admission requirements*, *a desire to take courses and explore options*, and a preference for *staying close to home*.
- Where parents provided responses for the graduates, they were more apt to consider *academic and program reputation* of a college while graduates said were more influenced by *overall cost* and *financial aid*. Parents more often cited a graduate's *desire to leave home*; graduates themselves were more likely to indicate a *desire to stay close to home*.
- For the respondents choosing not to go to college, an *inability to afford college*, a *work schedule that precludes school* and a *desire to take a break from school* were the reasons most frequently cited. Other reasons include a *lack of preparation for college* and other plans, such as the *military or travel*.

Sources of College Information

- In making their college choice, Oregon high school graduates most commonly used four sources of information: *booklets or brochures from colleges*, *college websites*, *visits to college campuses*, and *information from family and friends*. The use of college websites (by 80.5%) significantly increased from 75.5% in 2003, and had previously grown ten percentage points biennially from 66% in 2001 and 56% in 1999.



- Over two-thirds used information from high school counselors and teachers; students at two-year colleges were significantly more likely than those attending four-year universities to rely on information received from high school counselors or teachers.

College Preparation and Graduates' Majors

- Over one-third of respondents completed college-level courses while in high school – a slight increase over 2003, but significantly less than 40% reported by 2001 respondents. Predictably, more respondents enrolled at four-year colleges had completed early college coursework (45%) than those attending two-year colleges (32%).
- For students who have identified a major, seven disciplines are among the top ten choices for both four-year and two-year college students: Business, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Engineering, Fine Arts, Health Professions, and Education.
- Since 2001, the popularity of Health Professions has increased among four-year respondents and decreased among students in two-year colleges. Smaller proportions of students at both two-year and four-year colleges are pursuing majors in Education, with a significant decrease among four-year students. The proportion of those choosing Engineering has held steady at universities since 2001 and grown among community college students.

Parents' Educational Background

- Almost 46% of Oregon high school graduates have at least one parent with a four-year degree; 37% reported that neither parent held a college degree.
- This survey again confirms that a parent's education does matter. In addition to higher enrollment at a four-year institution, survey results indicate a positive relationship between parents with a four-year degree and graduation from a private high school, high GPA in high school, and full-time enrollment in the fall term immediately following graduation.

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