

Academic Programs: Graduate and Undergraduate Briefing

This briefing describes academic program enrollment and performance, provides updates on key metrics of student success, and reports the progress of ongoing initiatives.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The universe of OSU undergraduate programs across two campuses and Ecampus is shown in Figure 1. In total, OSU offers 102 bachelor’s degrees (BA/BS and HBA/HBS are counted as one degree), with 49 of those offered in more than one location and/or modality. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the 102 degrees across the nine colleges offering undergraduate programs (see next page for abbreviation guide to the colleges).

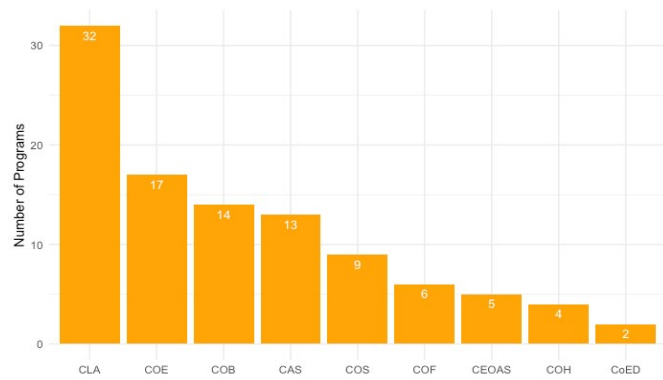
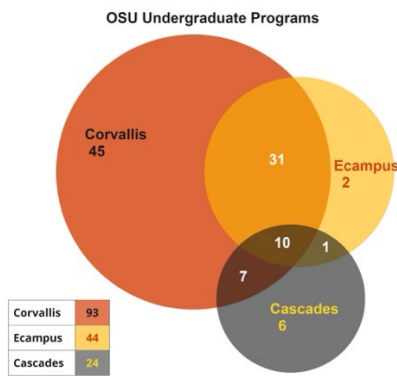


Figure 1. Undergraduate programs by location/modality. Figure 2. Undergraduate programs by college.

Similarly, Figures 3 and 4 show the distribution of graduate and professional programs.

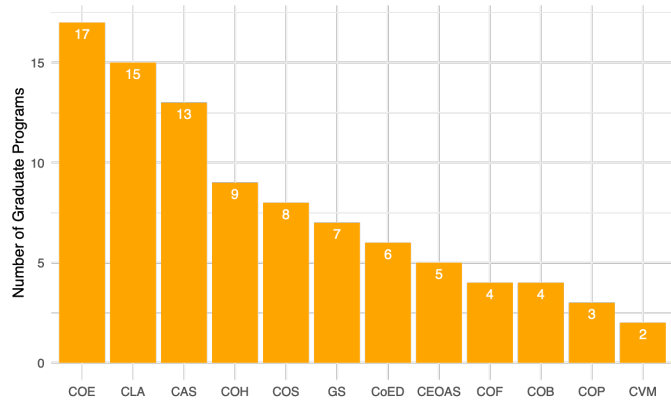
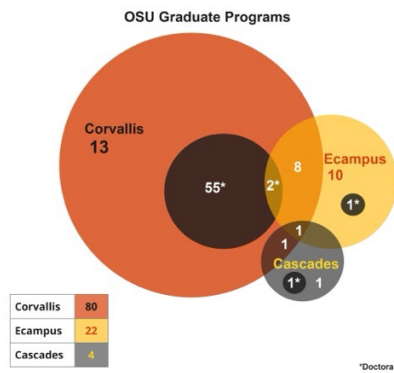


Figure 3. Graduate programs by location/modality. Embedded circles indicate PhD programs with corresponding MA/MS programs.

Figure 4. Graduate and professional programs by college.

Recently launched programs - undergraduate

The BS in Marine Studies (Corvallis) launched in 2021 has 90 enrolled students, and the BS in Creative Writing (Corvallis & Cascades) launched in 2020 has 161 enrolled, including 18 at OSU-Cascades. In 2020-21, the Earth Sciences (Corvallis) degree was split into Climate Science, Geology, and Oceanography, and those programs have current enrollments of 36, 100, and 101, respectively. Two recently launched Ecampus-only undergraduate degrees—Applied Humanities (launched in 2021) and Contemporary Music Industry (launched 2022)—are beginning to see good enrollment. The Political Science and Economics undergraduate degrees were launched at OSU-Cascades in 2022. These have seen fairly low enrollment, and they are being moved to hybrid modality to ensure adequate course availability for OSU-Cascades students.

Abbreviation guide	
COE	= Engineering
CLA	= Liberal Arts
COB	= Business
COS	= Science
CAS	= Agricultural Sciences
COH	= Health
CEOAS	= Earth, Ocean, Atmos Sci
COF	= Forestry
UESP	= Univ Exploratory Studies Program
CoEd	= Education
GS	= Graduate School
CVM	= Veterinary Medicine
COP	= Pharmacy

Recently launched programs - graduate and professional

The new Doctor of Physical Therapy program at OSU-Cascades enrolled its third cohort of students in Fall 2023 bringing the total enrollment to 126. The MA/MS in Communication launched in Corvallis in 2022 and has an enrollment of 7.

College Enrollments

Undergraduate enrollments across the nine undergraduate-serving colleges are shown in Figure 5. The high enrollment in the College of Engineering is fueled in part by the popular post baccalaureate degree in Computer Science offered via Ecampus (Fall 2023 enrollment in this post baccalaureate degree was 2,262). Even without considering the post baccalaureate degree, the College of Engineering is the largest undergraduate college.

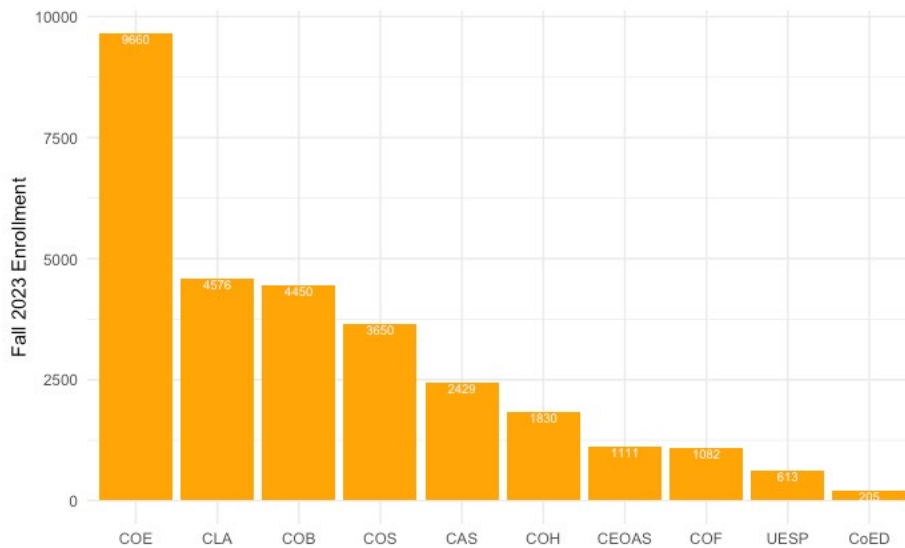


Figure 5. Fall 2023 undergraduate enrollment by college (UESP denotes the University Exploratory Studies Program for students who have not declared a major).

Figure 6 shows graduate and professional enrollments by college, where once again the College of Engineering has the highest enrollment by far, led by computer science (Figure 7).

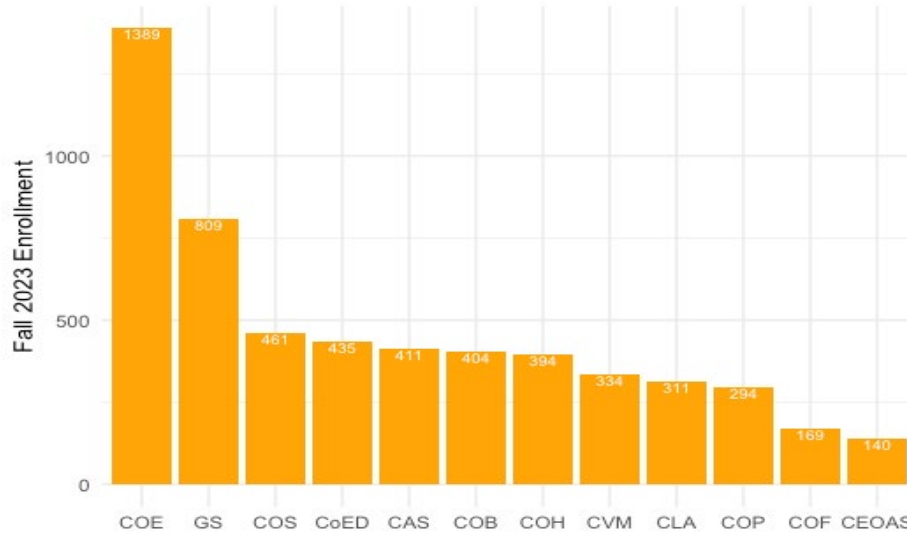


Figure 6. Fall 2023 graduate and professional enrollments by college. Graduate School enrollment includes 564 non-degree seeking students.

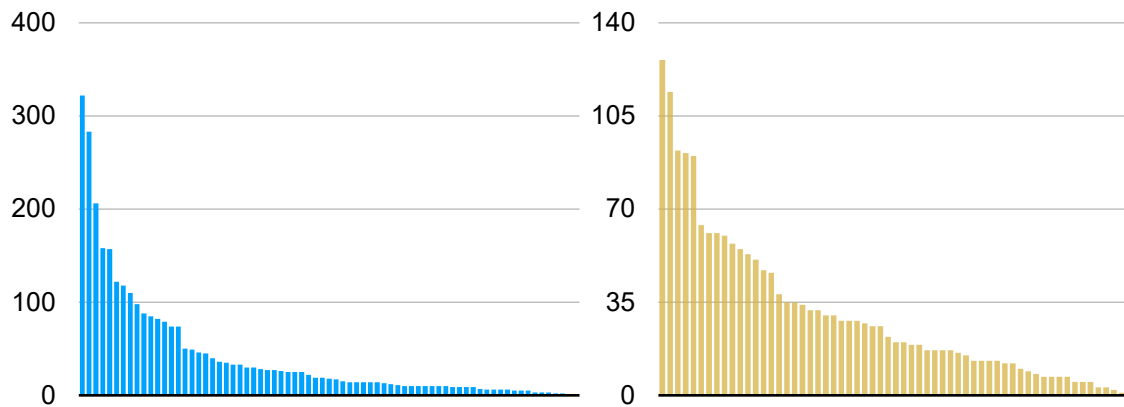


Figure 7. Enrollments in Fall 2023 of masters (left) and doctoral (right) programs (DVM and PharmD not shown, as they are much larger). The median program size is 19 for masters and 26 for doctoral programs.

Looking to new Ecampus programs as part of the *Prosperity Widely Shared* push to 30,000 Ecampus students, there are six undergraduate and two graduate programs for which proposals are in process. The undergraduate programs are Chemical Engineering, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Animal Sciences, English, Marine Studies, and Healthcare Management—all of these are existing in person program, except for Healthcare Management. The graduate programs are a MS in Clinical Psychology and a Master of Social Work—both of these would be new degrees for OSU. There are additional programs with potential for high enrollment via Ecampus, and Ecampus is working with college leadership teams to discuss those programs.

Program Strengths

When considering the strength of undergraduate or graduate academic programs, enrollment and student completion are important metrics. Trends in enrollment and variation in the rate of completion across demographic groups within programs are also important. However, small numbers for all but the highest enrollment programs imply large interannual variability, making comparisons across the demographic groups somewhat difficult. That said, it is at the program level where faculty, curriculum, and pedagogy have the greatest impact on student success.

Table 1 lists the ten undergraduate programs with the highest overall enrollment in fall 2023. The enrollment counts include undergraduate students across all classes but exclude post baccalaureate students. Also displayed are the most recent six-year graduation rates for each of these programs. Six-year graduation rates are necessarily calculated based on first-time full-time cohorts of students entering in fall term (in this case, in fall 2018). Therefore, the numbers upon which the six-year graduation rates are based are substantially smaller than the total enrollment numbers. For the smallest of these counts (e.g., in Zoology and Environmental Science), there is substantial interannual variability in the six-year graduation rate calculation.

Table 1 -- Top undergraduate programs in terms of total enrollment, listed with corresponding Fall 2017 entering first-time full-time cohort count and six-year graduation rate. Graduation rates are from OSU and not necessarily in the same major in which students started.

Program	Fall 2023 Enrollment	Fall 2018 FTFT Cohort Count	Six-Year Grad Rate
Computer Science*	2355	215	69%
Business Administration	1942	329	74%
Psychology	1670	73	62%
Mechanical Engineering	1383	265	73%
Biology	1094	276	74%
Kinesiology	921	136	66%
Biohealth Sciences	805	162	72%
Zoology	763	42	69%
Environmental Sciences	746	44	80%
Undecided Major	637	309	69%

* Does not include post baccalaureate students.

Table 2. Largest masters (top) and doctoral (bottom) programs in total enrollment (fall 2023), with 1-year retention (ending fall 2023) and 4-year (masters) or 8-year (doctoral) completion (ending fall 2023). OSU averages are, for masters students 91.3% 1-year retention Fall 2022 cohort and 84.0% 4-year completion Fall 2019 cohort; for doctoral, 93.9% 1-year retention and 68.3% 8-year completion Fall 2015 cohort. *PharmD completion is for 6 years; the program does not allow students to extend beyond six years. **4-year completion, i.e. 2019 to 2023. ***Data not available

Masters programs

Major	Enr	1y	4y
Business Administration	322	81	84
Computer Science	283	99	96
Counseling	206	91	92
Environmental Sciences	158	83	67
Natural Resources	157	74	69
MS Business	122	89	95
Radiation Health Physics	118	90	78
Public Health	110	97	93
Data Analytics	98	79	63
Mechanical Engineering	88	100	88

Doctoral programs

Major	Enr	1y	8y
Veterinary Medicine	309	100	96*
Pharmacy	267	97	95**
Physical Therapy	126	***	New
Computer Science	114	100	48
Civil Engineering	92	96	93
Chemistry	91	100	64
Electrical and Computer Engr	90	93	72
Adult and Higher Education	64	100	new
Mechanical Engineering	61	92	40
Counseling	61	93	83

Masters programs serve a variety of purposes for students and faculty and can be distinguished by attributes other than enrollment. One large group (e.g., MBA, MCoun, MNR) is entirely self-funded and most have no thesis or formal project requirement. Another group (e.g., Computer Science, Environmental Sciences) are more academic and are offered along with a PhD, and faculty may expect students to perform publishable research and provide assistantships to do so. Often these students go on to earn a PhD. A third group (e.g., Creative Writing, Marine

Resource Management) are standalone masters programs but may also provide assistantships to half or more of the students.

Professional doctoral programs offered at OSU include the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (309), Doctor of Pharmacy (267), and Doctor of Physical Therapy (126). Along with the doctorates in Adult and Higher Education, and Counseling (the bottom circles in Figure 8b), students in these programs typically pay the full cost. The majority of doctoral programs support at least 75% of students on assistantships or fellowships (Figure 8b). Overall, approximately a third of graduate students are supported by internal or external funding at any given time.

Our portfolio of graduate programs includes some niche doctoral programs that are unusual in the US (e.g., Rangeland Management) and have high value for the state and/or the nation. Many of these are in the College of Agricultural Sciences and one or two in the College of Forestry. For their size, they contribute a lot to our reputation as a research-intensive university.

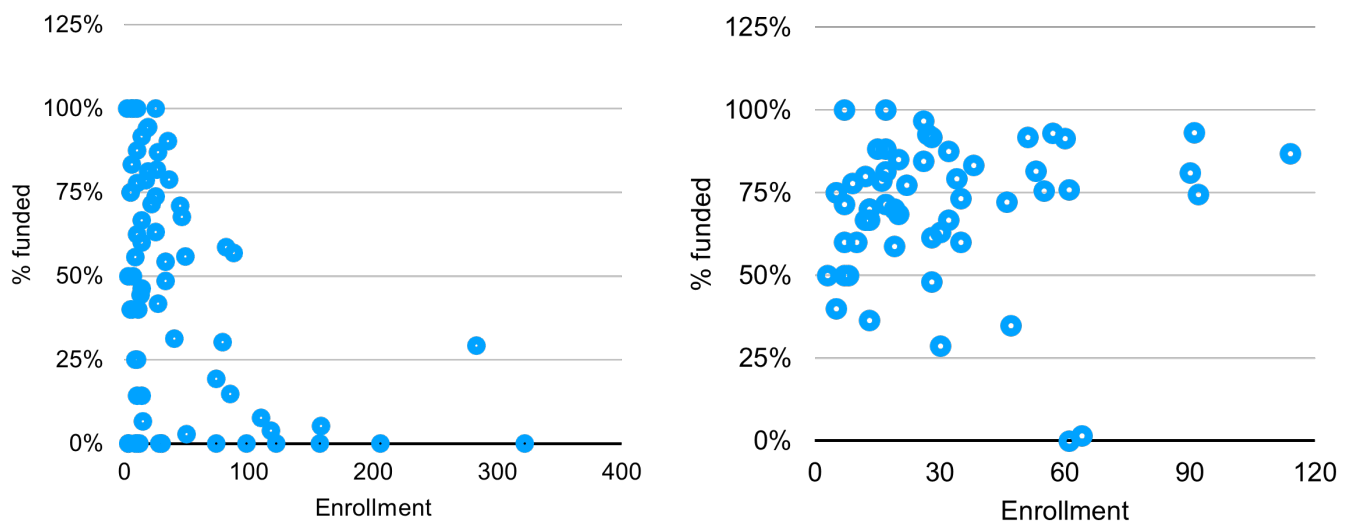


Figure 8. Characteristics of masters (left) and doctoral (right, excluding DVM, PharmD and DPT) programs. The y-axis is the percentage of students funded on assistantships or fellowships. As discussed in the text, these two attributes distinguish three primary groups of programs.

STUDENT SUCCESS METRICS

Undergraduate

Progress on key student success metrics is reported in Table 3. For the *Prosperity Widely Shared* goal of 80% six-year graduation, OSU must increase its first-year retention rates to the mid-90's in percentage. While the metrics in Table 3 are moving in the right direction, steeper increases will be needed, especially for Pell-eligible students and for first-generation students. In addition, the metrics in Table 3 are all tracked on the first-time full-time freshman cohorts entering Fall term. The *Every Student Graduates* initiative, described in the Continuous Improvement section below, will use data tools that allow college leadership to track student success broadly, not only for these specific cohorts.

Graduate

Similarly, key metrics of success at the graduate level are the first-year retention rate (typically above 90% for on-campus students) and the 4-year graduation rate for masters, 8-year graduation rate for doctoral students. Some colleges’ student success rates are very similar for different demographic groups while other colleges’ programs show significant gaps in the rates. As at the undergraduate level, college leaders are working with the Office of Academic Affairs and the Graduate School to better understand and track graduate success.

Table 3 — Oregon State University Undergraduate Student Success Metrics. Cohorts are for first-time college, full-time degree-seeking undergraduates (Corvallis and Ecampus) for the designated fall term or preceding summer term. 2013, 2018 and 2023 one-year retention rates are for students entering in 2012, 2017 and 2022, respectively. 2013, 2018 and 2023 six-year graduation rates are for students entering in 2007, 2012 and 2017, respectively. First-generation status was not collected on application before 2010. Red typeface indicates areas that need improvement.

Updated November 2023

	1 Year Retention Rate (%)			6 Year Graduation Rate (%)		
	2013	2018	2023	2013	2018	2023
Overall OSU	84.2	84.2	87.4	61.4	67.0	70.6
Pell	80.7	82.1	83.4	61.1	61.5	64.4
Non-Pell	87.0	86.7	88.5	61.6	70.4	73.2
Pell – Non-Pell Gap	-6.3	-4.6	-5.1	-0.5	-8.9	-8.8
Students of Color (SOC)	84.0	84.7	87.3	59.6	64.9	68.7
Non – SOC	84.7	85.1	88.8	61.9	67.7	71.4
SOC – Non-SOC Gap	-0.7	-0.4	-1.5	-2.3	-2.8	-2.7
Male	83.8	83.2	88.0	57.6	63.4	68.4
Female	84.6	85.2	86.9	65.5	70.9	72.9
Male – Female Gap	-0.8	-2.0	1.1	-7.9	-7.5	-4.5
Nonresident	82.6	82.0	85.6	56.3	64.7	67.1
Oregon Resident	84.7	85.1	88.8	62.6	67.7	72.0
Nonresident – Resident Gap	-2.1	-3.1	-3.2	-6.3	-3.0	-4.9
First-Generation	80.4	79.4	83.2	N/A	62.9	62.2
Not First-Generation	85.6	85.4	88.4	N/A	68.5	72.7
First-Generation Gap	-5.2	-6.0	-5.2	N/A	-5.6	-10.5

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

UNIVERSITY ACCREDITATION

OSU's seven-year institutional accreditation site visit will occur in spring 2026. In preparation for that, the university will submit a six-year report, called the *Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review* (PRFR), in March 2025. The *PRFR* addresses institutional governance, academic freedom, policies and procedures, institutional integrity, financial resources, human resources, student support resources, library and information resources, and physical and technology infrastructure.

The PRFR will be followed by a seven-year report, called the *Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness* (EIE), to be delivered six weeks prior to the site visit. The *EIE* focuses exclusively on the assessment of student learning. Both the reports will form the basis of the year-seven site visit and university accreditation. The university also provides the accreditor with access to additional resources electronically as requested.

An important element of university accreditation will be continued attention to and compliance with US Department of Education requirements. Approximately 15 years ago, the DoEd implemented reporting requirements related to gainful employment to address concerns about students graduating from programs with high student loan debt and low earning prospects with jobs in their trained field of study. These requirements have been amended several times, most recently in 2024. The 2024 requirements add additional reporting responsibilities, notably for all academic programs, not just certificate programs, and the DoEd seeks to enhance financial value transparency by providing information about financial costs and benefits to students at postsecondary institutions that are eligible to participate in Title IV funding. Increased reporting requirements are effective July 1, 2024.

ACADEMIC UNIT ASSESSMENT

The first full round of academic unit assessments will be completed this winter and spring terms with site visits by external reviewers providing input on two departments in the College of Agricultural Sciences (Crop & Soil Science and Horticulture), two programs in the College of Liberal Arts (Economics and Ethnic Studies), and four programs in the College of Business (Apparel Design, Design Innovation and Management, Interior Design, and Merchandising Management). These reviews will result in recommendations and action plans for the units. In fall, the second full round of assessments will be conducted. Each round assesses outcomes and performance at the college, school, and department levels in the dimensions of academic performance, student success, research productivity, resources, Extension and engagement work, and DEI efforts.

ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

All graduate and undergraduate academic programs report on assessment annually. Assessment Office staff rate the assessment reports on several dimensions according to best practices in program assessment. Of relevance for continuous program improvement, staff evaluate whether the assessments are leading to tangible changes designed to improve student learning. For example, programs that regularly convene faculty to discuss and respond to assessment of student learning are given a high rating. Across ten elements, undergraduate program assessments rated at 3.3 on a 4-point scale (up from 3.2 in 2021). Across nine elements, graduate program assessment rated 2.8 on the same 4-point scale—this is a substantial improvement from 2.3 in 2021.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Undergraduate

Academic Advising Review

The university initiated a review of OSU's undergraduate academic advising practices in the 2023 academic year. The review involved self-evaluations of advising structures within the colleges and at OSU-Cascades and well as academic coaching services provided through Ecampus and the Division of Student Affairs. Two consultants from NACADA, The Global Community for Academic Advising, were engaged and visited the Corvallis campus in early 2023. Findings in the consultants' reports together with results from additional rounds of engagement with advising teams in all colleges are informing the development of recommendations to improve advising services for all OSU students, be they in person, online, transfer students, or first-time full-time students at OSU. This improved advising structure and approach, along with a new student onboarding effort being advanced by another task force, will contribute to efforts to elevate retention and graduation rates and close equity gaps.

Every Student Graduates Initiative

The university launched an *Every Student Graduates (ESG) Initiative* in fall 2023, in advance of the official launch of *Prosperity Widely Shared*. The effort is led jointly by the Office of Academic Affairs and Division of Student Affairs, and the team works in coordination with all undergraduate serving colleges to support and track their student success efforts. This spring will see the launch of new data tools that facilitate colleges setting annual target rates for retention, graduation, and other metrics and then tracking their progress on reaching those targets. The ESG team meets quarterly with each college leadership team to discuss college efforts and share tactics and interventions that may be working in other colleges.

General (Core) Education Implementation

The new Core Education program (replacing the Baccalaureate Core) is on schedule for launch in June of 2025. Faculty are actively undertaking professional development on curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment, and new and updated courses are making their way into the Curriculum Management System. The Transitions course in the new curriculum is another lever that will help improve first-year retention numbers, along with renovated academic advising and focused new student onboarding. A novel component of Core Education is the Beyond OSU category, a zero credit requirement designed to help students make connections between their coursework and their eventual career.

Common Course Numbering

The statewide effort to align 100- and 200-level courses transferred in high volume among Oregon community colleges and public universities is underway as mandated by Senate Bill 233, passed in the 2021 legislative session. The second round of 12 courses in the new common course numbering system is now making its way through curriculum management processes at the various institutions in Oregon, including OSU. A new set of faculty subcommittees to the statewide Transfer Council are being charged to begin work on the third

round of courses. This third round includes biology, chemistry, economics, psychology, and sociology courses.

Graduate

In summer 2023, OSU offered [Grad Summer Step](#) for the first time, a 2.5 day community building experience for arriving graduate students primarily focusing on those from underrepresented groups. Of the 31 participants, 55% were first-gen, 48% were students of color, and 45% were low-income. Five peer mentors – current graduate students – supported the event before, during, and after.

Most OSU graduate programs now use a [holistic approach to admissions](#) and the Graduate School considers whether programs are using holistic admissions when distributing certain central resources - Laurels tuition waivers, Provost fellowships and scholarships.

[Faculty continue to be trained in mentorship](#) using the Center for Mentored Experiences in Research program, now required for new graduate faculty after a recent resolution by Faculty Senate. By July 2024, over half of OSU's graduate faculty will have taken at least one workshop.

Over 400 students have availed themselves of [OSU Grad Advantage](#) package of opportunities to develop transferrable skills and produce an Individual Development Plan, which will soon be required of those supported by NSF.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Artificial Intelligence for transformation of student learning and program delivery
- Continued interest in Ecampus and distance learning
- Growing interest in sub-degree credentials like certificates and microcredentials
- Professional Science master's degrees, both in person and through Ecampus
- Growth in inter- and transdisciplinary research and education

THREATS

- Continued low level of state support for four-year public universities in Oregon
- Continued narratives of distrust in and devaluation of higher education

NEXT STEPS

The Academic Strategies Committee will discuss the annual academic programs undergraduate and graduate briefing at its April 2024 meeting.