Enrollment and Financial Aid Briefing

BACKGROUND

Enrollment management (EM) is the set of functions and strategies that together ensure that OSU’s enrollment is balanced along several occasionally conflicting objectives. This includes enrolling the right number of students, of the proper academic preparation, with the appropriate capacity to generate tuition revenue necessary to balance the budget annually, as well as executing research, processes, and services that keep them enrolled to graduation. Ensuring the right mix of students is as much art as science. Enrollment managers traditionally serve at the nexus of historical trends, current realities, and aspirational goals looking forward. All three perspectives are necessary components of a disciplined approach to ensuring OSU is well positioned to achieve its mission and the goals in Strategic Plan 4.0 (SP4.0).

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT AT OSU

The Division of Enrollment Management at Oregon State is ultimately driven by the vision articulated in SP4.0: Leadership among land grant universities in the integrated creation, sharing, and application of knowledge for the betterment of humankind.

Strategic enrollment management at Oregon State is led by the Division of Enrollment Management (DEM), but is not contained wholly within that unit. While DEM manages and coordinates many of the processes that help understand, identify, recruit, admit, enroll, and retain undergraduate students in our programs, success requires a collaborative effort of multiple units across the university. DEM units include:

- **Office of Admissions** identifies, recruits, and admits qualified undergraduate applicants to OSU in alignment with enrollment goals and in collaboration with university partners;

- **Office of Financial Aid** administers funds from Federal, state, institutional, and private sources to ensure higher educational opportunities are available to all eligible students;

- **Office of the Registrar** provides enrollment and instructional tools and services for students, faculty, and staff; maintains academic history records; and works with university partners to ensure policies and processes are geared toward student success;

- **Office of Scholarships** administers institutional level scholarships, provides scholarship information to students and families, and supports academic colleges and other campus partners in management and awarding of their scholarship funds;

- **Office of Precollege Programs** supports and oversees programs designed to provide youth from diverse backgrounds pathways to an OSU education;

- **Degree Partnership Program** allows students to be jointly admitted and enrolled at OSU and any of our community college partner schools;

- **Enrollment Management Information Technology** supports systems, third party data integration, digital marketing, business and data analysis, routine reporting, and hardware management;
• The Office of International Admissions: The Director of International Admissions is the liaison between INTO OSU and the Division of Enrollment Management, and reports directly to the Vice Provost of Enrollment Management;

• Gear Up is a federally funded program housed in DEM that prepares middle- and high school students to be ready to enroll in college via tutoring and college engagement programs, including FAFSA completion, financial literacy, and parent support.

Additionally, DEM partners particularly closely with the following units:

• University Relations and Marketing (URM): DEM units, specifically the offices of Admissions and Scholarships, partner with URM to ensure branding and messaging alignment in various student recruitment marketing and communications strategies. URM provides creative and design support for print publications as well as web and digital advertising aimed at student recruitment.

• INTO OSU: Directly recruits, admits, and supports the enrollment of international students through pathway and direct entry degree programs.

• Office of Undergraduate Education: Supports the development of new undergraduate academic programs by colleges, schools, and departments; aids in creation and delivery of experiential learning experiences (including Education Abroad); and is a valuable partner on issues of retention and graduation rates.

• Division of Student Affairs: Supports students’ academic progress and success through the Office of Academic Achievement, University Housing and Dining Services, health and wellness services, and multiple co-curricular programs.

• Division of University Information and Technology: Provides enrollment management technology and data solutions to meet the complex needs of internal and external users.

• Division of Extension and Engagement: Provides education and programming for Oregon youth related to preparing for and attending college, including, but not limited to Oregon State. Programs include 4-H, Outdoor School, and Juntos, Extension and Engagement’s successful pilot Gateway project, which supports transfer students, has been rolled into DEM.

• Academic colleges: Academic colleges play a significant role in attracting, retaining, and graduating their students. While current practices allow colleges to focus recruitment efforts to include lead generation and yield of admitted students, future initiatives will divert more attention to the latter while reducing decentralized efforts on the former. The colleges are also charged with raising scholarship funding to improve both recruitment and retention, and in providing advising services to keep students on track to graduate.

In addition, DEM convenes formal and ad hoc groups to coordinate efforts between and among university units.
ENROLLMENT TRENDS: OVERVIEW

Overall Enrollment
Enrollment at all universities is complex and, at Oregon State, the combination of campuses and delivery level, student levels (graduate, undergraduate, and professional), student residency, and student status (full-time versus part-time) makes a simple overview of enrollment difficult, if not impossible. Each component of our student enrollment contributes in various ways to our mission and budget.

Taking a portfolio approach to understanding and managing the changing mix is critical to the university’s financial health and vitality, and to mitigating the risk of enrollment swings based on demographic or economic factors moving forward. The data presented here are not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of enrollment patterns, but rather to highlight key trends and to provide important takeaways to frame opportunities and challenges.

Key Trends
Oregon State’s growth since 2005 is remarkable when measured against larger national trends, and even against growth in populations in the Pacific Northwest. In fall 2018, the university experienced its first slight dip in total headcount enrollment in well over a decade, but that trend reversed itself in 2019 with a modest increase, making this year the largest fall enrollment in the university’s history. It is clear, however, that the rate of growth has been leveling off in recent years, and while we still anticipate and desire growth going forward, it is prudent to anticipate a less aggressive growth trajectory, for reasons discussed later.

Of additional note is the relatively slower growth in credit hours (middle chart, page 4) when compared to headcount enrollment (top chart). Because OSU charges student tuition on a straight per-credit basis, the credit hour metric is perhaps a better measure of actual growth over time.

The differences between the growth in headcount enrollment and the growth in credit hours are driven largely by the astounding growth in Ecampus enrollment (2100% increase in credits since 2005), which tends to skew away from full-time enrollment toward part-time enrollment, coupled with a slight skew toward part-time enrollment of Corvallis undergraduates.
Fall Enrollment – Total Headcount and Percentage Change

Fall Enrollment – Total Credits and Percentage Change

Fall Enrollment – Ecampus credit hours
The complexity and fluidity of the enrollment mix makes attempting to answer simple questions like, “What is our enrollment?” difficult, if not impossible, without some context. To give some perspective to the portfolio and to add nuance to the discussion, it is important to understand the relative contribution of each of the components of the total enrollment over time.

**Fall Enrollment – Undergraduate Headcount at Corvallis**

**Fall Enrollment – Credit Hours by Campus and Student Level**

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Undergraduate Enrollment at Corvallis

Undergraduate enrollment on the main campus in Corvallis accounts for almost three of every four credits produced at Oregon State. Not surprisingly, this causes the university to focus most intentionally on this enrollment segment because small percentage increases or decreases can have dramatic effect on budgets and operations and, as such, is the focus of much of the remainder of this report.

Much like overall headcount and credit hour trends, a quick inspection of undergraduate enrollment at Corvallis shows a long-term, highly positive pattern, but a shorter view shows some reason for concern. After a long-term and rapid increase in both credit hours and headcounts that seem to have taken root with the economic difficulties of 2007 and 2008, fall 2019 undergraduate enrollment in Corvallis has fallen back to levels not seen since 2013.

There are other components of the enrollment mix that also deserve attention and focus. Understanding enrollment requires not just a counting of how many, but an analysis of who has been affected by changes.

For instance, trends over time show a continuing increase in non-resident enrollment of undergraduates on the Corvallis campus that can also be instructive. In this case, the increase
is generally a positive trend, as non-resident undergraduates bring higher levels of tuition, enrollment growth allows the university to operate at higher efficiency, and the ability to draw from outside of Oregon speaks to the university’s growing regional and global reputation. Additionally, since 2008, INTO OSU, the university’s partnership with INTO University Partnerships, has driven consistent and substantial growth in international enrollment. However, over-reliance on this segment can be perilous based on constant changes in political, social, and economic trends. Factors beyond the university’s control, such as exchange rates, elections, and even public health crises can affect enrollments quickly in ways we are unable to fully anticipate or plan for.

Of course, politics within the boundaries of Oregon are also critical to the university’s success. While Oregon State, as a public university, must be sensitive to declining percentages of resident undergraduates, the overall number of resident undergraduates in Corvallis has stayed between 14,000 and 15,000 for a considerable period, but is now at a level not seen since 2008 (14,193). Some of the analysis recently completed and discussed later in this document will discuss the patterns that have driven this, along with means to reverse the trend.

Oregon State’s enrollment surge was almost certainly based on several factors, but, as indicated above, the genesis appears to have coincided with the economic crisis of 2007 and 2008. At the same time, much of that growth was fueled by increased enrollment of students eligible for the federal Pell Grant (needs based) program.

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1 While there is no precise cut-off for Pell Grants, and there are several factors that go into the eligibility calculation, in general, recipients have family incomes of less than $50,000 per year.

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Between 2005 and 2013, undergraduate enrollment at Corvallis grew by 4,938 students, split almost equally between Pell-eligible (2,426) and non-Pell-eligible students (2,512).

Since 2013, however, the number of Pell Grant recipients on the Corvallis campus has fallen dramatically, while the number of non-Pell-eligible students has increased. Over that period, Pell enrollment has decreased by 1,307, representing an almost perfect swap for the increase in non-Pell students (1,369). The current percentage of Pell-eligible students (25.4%) is close to what it was in 2005 (26.6%), and down from the high point of 32.1% in 2013. There are a few possible explanations for this included in the discussion about financial aid allocation later in this document.

It is not surprising to see a similar pattern among first-generation Corvallis undergraduates. Again, there is a close swap of one for another: the number of first-generation students has fallen by almost 800 students since 2014, while the number of students with college-educated parents has increased by just over 600. Given the strong correlation between parental educational attainment and income, the similarity of the Pell and first-generation patterns is not surprising.

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2 Note that the university did not keep good data on first-generation status until fall 2010.
At the same time, and on a positive note, Oregon State’s traditional undergraduate enrollment population has become more diverse. In 2005, over three-quarters of all OSU students identified as White; that has fallen to 60% in fall 2019. Hispanic students are currently the second largest ethnic group on campus, at just over 11%, and Asian students represent just under 8%. (Note that a change in federal reporting policy effective in fall 2009 changed the way Hispanic students were classified, which accounts for some of this growth.)

Removing international students and those who decline to provide a response — to show only US citizens with known ethnicity, as in the second chart, below — changes the percentage of White students to about two-thirds of all Corvallis undergraduates.
Fall Enrollment: Undergraduate Headcount Corvallis

Fall Enrollment: Undergraduate Headcount Corvallis: US Citizens with known ethnicity

Ethnicity
- Native Hawaiian/Polynesian
- American Indian/Alaska
- Declined to Respond
- Black
- Asian
- Two or More Races
- Hispanic
- White

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OTHER DATA REGARDING CORVALLIS UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

Admissions data for the past four years can provide some clues to the cause of the freshman enrollment decline, as well as perspectives on the challenges ahead. The chart below shows a summary of four years of freshman admission data to Corvallis, including applications, admits, and enrolling students, as well as the yield rate (the percentage of students offered admission who enrolled). New freshman enrollment has fallen by almost 300 students over the past four years, but the problem is not with the number of applications (gray) or admits (orange), both of which have increased. The university is simply not converting a sufficient number of admitted students into enrolling students. Changing these conversion or “yield” rates is not a function of operations or more recruitment tactics; it has to do largely with institutional goals (implicit or tacit; expressed or perceived) and the strategic response to them, especially on aid allocation.

Some of this application growth and decreased yield is tautological, and both are driven by the university’s membership in the Common Application, which tends to increase application numbers overall. These incremental applications tend to be “softer,” that is, inherently less likely to enroll.

However, splitting the data between residents (top) and non-residents (bottom), below, shows a marked difference between the two groups. While the number of Oregon residents has fallen by about 150, the yield rate for residents has plummeted even faster than the yield for non-residents.
Typically, an enrollment manager would look for some shifting profiles in the admitted student pool, but that does not seem to be the case. Although the admitted pool has become more diverse (below), other factors that predict enrollment show remarkable consistency from one admissions cycle to the next (second chart):
What happens to Oregon resident students who are admitted but do not enroll? Those who chose Western Oregon, Southern Oregon, Eastern Oregon, Oregon Tech, or Portland State over Oregon State were much more likely to be Pell recipients (in increasing numbers), and students of color. And their numbers have increased by 28% in three years, from 300 to 384.

Even in aggregate, however, those institutions are far less competitive with Oregon State than the University of Oregon (UO) individually, which has been dominating in freshman yield in recent years. The number of admitted freshmen to Oregon State who ultimately enrolled at UO has increased by 51% over the past three years, and Oregon State is losing more Pell students to them (132 vs. 219) as a result.
Breaking down the Pell-eligible students by unmet need, all but four of the 738 over four years had unmet need in their OSU Aid Package of $6,000 or more. For the 734 other students with high need, the average unmet need hovered around $20,000 from 2016 to 2018; it then dropped to $14,800, when the number dropped from 237 to 217.

While the academic and demographic profile of the freshman class has not changed dramatically over the past four years, the economic profile is another story. The top chart below shows mean and median parental income over the past four years, and the second chart shows percentage change over that same period.

One small caveat in interpreting this data: There is a higher percentage of parents who have no need but who are completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), which provides the income data shown. In previous years, many of these parents might not have completed a FAFSA, so the data would not have been available to compute, and given the higher incomes associated with this group, it may present a slightly skewed picture.
Regardless of the absolute precision of the analysis above, however, it is clear that Oregon State’s financial aid strategies have effectively raised the net price to students considerably faster than the rate of inflation, and it was raised faster on resident students than on non-residents. Not surprisingly, raising net price has caused lower enrollment, as indicated below. The net effect? Relatively flat overall net tuition revenue even as averages are rising rapidly.

DISCUSSION ABOUT THE CAUSES OF PELL MELT AND ENROLLMENT EFFECTS

The landscape of higher education in the US is competitive, but strategic plans at Oregon State have historically eschewed facile measures of “academic excellence” so often contained in the plans of other universities. Nowhere in Strategic Plans 2.0, 3.0, or 4.0 does OSU make mention of selectivity or standardized test scores, input measures that serve as shorthand for quality for many institutions.

Still, there has been the perception that Oregon State must attract the best and brightest, not just from Oregon, but from the western US, and all three versions of the Strategic Plan mention increasing the percentage of “high achieving” students. This term has worked its way into the lexicon of admissions and financial aid metrics, and has become a point of optimization, to the extent that internal reports even put these students into their own categories.

This is not unique among US universities, of course, but when tasked with growing the overall population, increasing the academic quality, and doing so with a financial aid budget that was believed (whether correctly or not) to be fixed to a dollar amount, the natural outcome would seem to be allocating aid to affect both to the extent possible.
Aid optimization assumes students, or groups of students, have varying ability to pay, and varying academic achievement, and that for most institutions, it’s necessary to conduct tradeoffs to come close to meeting goals. But when aid policies (actually micro-pricing strategies) focus on high achieving students, the university tends to reward standardized test scores as an “objective” measure of achievement; by doing so, the institution is competing for the most sought-after groups of students. The university is also tacitly competing for the wealthiest and most advantaged, given the strong correlation between test scores, family income, parental attainment, and ethnicity.

From last year’s enrollment management report to the Board of Trustees:

OSU has experienced strong growth among high achieving resident freshmen, going from 32.7% of the resident freshmen ten years ago to 44% this past fall. For the past six years we have operated a scholarship program that was designed to improve this metric and move us closer to 50%. The result of our success over time has been increased merit scholarship spending via discounts, which in turn has reduced the amount of discount dollars available to award to low-income students with less or no merit aid. The result is fewer low- and lower middle-income students enrolling at OSU over time…

This focus away from Pell students was necessitated in part by dramatic cuts in state support for college students. Data from SHEF (State Higher Education Finance) illustrates this rollercoaster trend in the state of Oregon.
While these trends are concerning, they do lead to some positive net effects. For instance, retention and graduation rates have been rising recently, and the shifting demographics of the student body, to some extent, contribute to the rise, along with renewed attention to retention issues by advisers, financial aid staff, and deans, including the University Student Success Initiative (USSI).
OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS: OSU-CASCADES AND INTERNATIONAL

While Corvallis undergraduates deserve the majority of our focus given the importance to the fiscal health of the university, there are two other areas that deserve attention: Enrollment of international students, and enrollment at OSU-Cascades.

International Enrollment

For over a year, enrollment of students from primary international markets for OSU has been shifting away from the US and toward places where exchange rates are considerably more favorable (England, Australia, and New Zealand, for instance) based on effective lower net cost to students. This has placed some pressure on our margins, and forced us to think about slowly increasing discounts in order to respond to the pressure. Until a few months ago, this was the primary concern as we looked at the short-term future of our international enrollment portfolio.

However, very recent developments with regard to pandemics and global health suggest that international enrollment for fall 2020 (and perhaps beyond) is extremely tenuous, and may depend heavily on the US response to COVID-19, and the perception of competence in dealing with a widespread outbreak of disease, or the development of a vaccine.

On a moderately positive note, Oregon State is perhaps less exposed than other large public universities for a few reasons:

- Only about 5% of our total credit hours are produced by the enrollment of international students; for undergraduates, that percentage falls to 3.3%, while for graduate students, it increases to 8.8%. Intuitively, it would seem to make sense that funded graduate enrollment is less susceptible to variation.

- For overall enrollment, we are perhaps less dependent on one country (China, at 40%) than other universities are, although at this point, it is impossible to say how much COVID-19 will affect enrollment from other countries outside of China, Iran, South Korea, and Italy, the nations currently most severely affected.

- The INTO OSU partnership allows us to more quickly and efficiently monitor, communicate, and assess the prevailing sentiment on the ground in remote locations, via the well-connected and broad agent network as well as the existing infrastructure to assist in adjusting strategy, pricing, or approaches to the market.

OSU-Cascades Enrollment

For OSU-Cascades, expediting new academic program approvals is needed to accelerate relatively flat growth rates beyond our internal or HECC projections.

New graduate programs in occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech pathology will serve to increase enrollment as well as elevate the reputation of OSU-Cascades as a particularly important resource for Central Oregon, which is both growing and currently already underserved by higher education opportunities.

Additionally, DEM has made some changes in the ways we recruit new undergraduates to OSU-Cascades. DEM has eliminated the separate application fee students were formerly required to
pay to each campus, and instead, students submit a single application to Oregon State University, and then designate one or multiple campuses as a part of the application.

We believe this will help both campuses (rather than cannibalizing from one to another) by offering students options and flexibility that will make OSU more appealing overall. We are also allowing students greater flexibility in inquiring about Oregon State by not forcing them to choose one campus over another.

![OSU-Cascades Enrollment Projections](chart.png)

**THREATS**

None of the threats on the horizon should come as a surprise to anyone who has read about trends in US demographics. [WICHE](https://wiche.org) produces high school graduate projections that provide some insight into the future.

A short-term ramp up in high school graduates is expected in Oregon, followed by a gradual slide back to current levels. In 2021, there will be about 37,000 high school graduates in Oregon; that will increase to about 40,500 by 2024, and then fall back to 37,000 by 2032.
However, in the key feeder states outside of Oregon, the peak comes earlier, and the slide is more pronounced. These states are also far more diverse than Oregon and students may find a campus like OSU, with less diversity than they are accustomed to, less appealing than we would like.
Affordability: It is no surprise that students’ ability to pay is being affected by shifting income distributions in the United States, coupled with dramatically escalating college costs.
Additional Threats:

- Natural disasters, including earthquakes or — as we are currently witnessing — global pandemics of disease.

- Economic and political shifts: The extent to which state and federal government are willing to fund education moving in future years will have dramatic effects on budget and enrollments.

- Decreased fund-raising: National data suggest people are more willing to give to causes rather than organizations. Additionally, deductibility of gifts may be decreasing.

- Growing concern that the value of a college education is falling.

- Mistrust of universities and even the admissions process in light of *Varsity Blues*.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**Opportunity: California**

IPEDS data, visualized below, shows that even Washington State, in a far less attractive area much farther from California, attracts more new students than does Oregon State; we are also dwarfed by UO and the University of Washington in that regard. (Washington State University is a WUE institution; more about that below).
Opportunity: Other States

Data from the same set suggests students from out of region are attracted to four-year, public institutions in the Pacific Northwest, but that Oregon State’s share is intuitively far less than it should be. Dedicating some time and attention to these distant markets has the potential to pay substantial dividends going forward.
Opportunity: Leverage Slate and Data in Predictive Modeling

The university has begun implementation of Technolutions Slate® CRM for higher education. Slate is the most widely used software for admissions and recruitment, and allows us to manage information through all parts of the recruitment lifecycle in one location. While the short-term advantage is in operational ease of use and more powerful recruitment tactics, the long-term benefit is a much more robust data platform for historical analysis to be used in predictive modeling moving forward.

With a relative dearth of data available to use in looking forward and making predictions about enrollment outcomes, we have the opportunity to create our own systems and data structures to start from scratch, and can have a robust system in place in three to four years. DEM has already begun discussions with campus IT partners about ensuring that we have the capacity to build and use such systems going forward.

The university plans to use Slate to begin capturing contact information for the thousands of students OSU interacts with via Outdoor School, 4-H, Juntos, FFA, and other programs. In many instances, we will begin with parents (as laws do not permit us to solicit students under 13) and begin working with them on helping their students prepare for college. Ultimately, the goal is for Oregon State to be top of mind among parents and students when it comes time for them to think about continuing education past high school.

Opportunity: Greater Focus on Transfer Students

Despite being the largest transfer destination in the state, and despite the attractiveness of transfer enrollment to begin quickly turning around enrollment, Oregon State still struggles with systems and seamless transfers between our institution and our partner community colleges. We have instituted processes that are heavily reliant on human resources going forward, and have placed staff members inside community colleges to facilitate advising, but there are still opportunities to articulate and post credit for transfer applicants to speed and smooth the enrollment process, especially in Ecampus, where the prospective student expects quick turn around an online service.

The university’s current enrollment in the Degree Partnership Program (DPP) has been growing for years, thus the groundwork for increased transfer enrollment is already in place, and data from a recently published report by the Ford Family Foundation suggests our focus on transfer students is well placed. Transfer students from almost all community colleges in the state graduate from OSU at a higher rate than their counterparts at other public universities in Oregon.
Opportunity: Thinking Differently About Tuition and Pricing

Growing tuition discount levels, driven by increasing tuition levels and continuing economic uncertainty, can quickly become unmanageable and inescapable. Oregon State's freshman discount has hovered around 21% for the past four years, bucking the trend on increasingly rising discount rates nationally. But the trends for non-residents and residents is different: Non-
resident student discounts are rising while enrollment is falling, and resident discount is falling while enrollment is down.

DEM is investigating the merits of the university joining the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), and to implement it the way Washington State does, with large awards for select non-residents, which take the net tuition to 1.5 times the resident rate. Further study should be conducted.

The university will also begin a review of base tuition levels, especially in light of UO’s proposal to guarantee tuition for four years after a substantial first-year increase. A look at fall 2018 tuition puts Oregon State near the bottom of Research I universities in the Northwest on published tuition.
But any such study needs to consider the effect of pricing on access for low-income students and as well as student debt. Fortunately, recent data from the Department of Education shows Oregon State students with very low student loan default rates.

CURRENT SPECIAL INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

Establishing Trust and Confidence in the Division of Enrollment Management

While DEM staff members are widely respected and liked on campus, there has been some confusion about the alignment of responsibilities with regard to recruiting new students, which is understandable in light of the university’s budget model; with that comes some reluctance to turn over responsibility for leadership to a central office that has not been long established in its current form. DEM is currently working with deans and associate deans to establish rapport and good working relationships that will generate positive enrollment results and enthusiasm for the benefits of centralized management by professionals whose jobs focus solely on EM practice.

Eliminating Standardized Testing as a Requirement for Freshman Admission

Standardized tests have a long and troubling history, and offer little in the way of predictive capability in the admissions process. DEM has formally proposed the elimination of the testing requirement (while still allowing it for students who wish to submit) and has discussed with multiple groups at OSU: the Board of Trustees Academic Strategies Committee, the OSU Foundation Board of Trustees, the OSU Alumni Association, the Faculty Senate, as well as the Inter-institutional Faculty Senate of the eight public universities in Oregon. There has been widespread support, and the OSU Faculty Senate endorsed the proposal. At the time of this report, the proposal is with the president.
OSU is working with the other public universities in the state and we are hopeful that every institution will eliminate the testing requirement effective for the fall 2021 admission term.

**Updating Academic Regulations and Processes Updates**

Pursuing changes to academic regulations that prevent quick-to-market, innovative academic offerings, which meet the changing demand for higher education. For example, we are in the final stages of the Faculty Senate process to allow Oregon State to offer certificate programs to undergraduate students not pursuing an OSU degree. If the Faculty Senate approves this measure, standalone certificate programs may be available to prospective students as early as fall 2020.

**Departmental Class Scheduling Tool**

Rolling out an online scheduling tool for academic departments that allows for multi-year planning and time optimization tools to ensure they are offering courses when students can attend. This prevents academic departments from scheduling courses over the top of other required courses for students in the major.

**Student Registration**

Improving the student registration experience by coupling it with degree plans so students are triggered to register for courses that keep them on track toward graduation as well as prevent students from taking courses they have already taken.

**Institutional Awarding**

Following the completion of phase one which awards degrees to these students upon completion of requirements and not requiring a graduation application, phase two is focused on providing reliable data to students in their final 60 credits instead of students in their final 15 credits. This will help students stay on track earlier by reducing barriers to graduation and ensuring degrees are awarded even sooner.

**Analytics and Reporting Capabilities**

Data and analysis is the lifeblood of modern enrollment management practice, and Oregon State is hobbled by data systems and structures that rely mostly on pre-built reports that cannot be queried for further insight. In many cases, we have no data warehouse capabilities to allow us year-to-date snapshots and comparisons for benchmarking purposes. Other important metrics, such as financial aid and Foundation account expenditures can only be viewed using systems run by specialists. Led by the Division of University Information and Technology, OSU is revising these capabilities, especially to create live connections to current and historical data to allow better analysis and projections moving forward.

**Fine Tuning Financial Aid and Scholarship Philosophy and Strategy**

DEM has replaced OSU’s former financial aid analysis partner with a new one that uses a more robust analytics approach to fine-tuning and optimizing financial aid in an attempt to enroll more students from first-generation and low-income families. Additionally, we have stopped thinking
of waiver-based tuition discounts as a budgeted expense, and instead have begun considering them a contra-revenue, consistent with common enrollment management practices. In addition, DEM has identified pools of available OSU Foundation funds that are not being spent regularly. This creates two problems: We lose the opportunity to add cash to our university budget to replace unfunded aid where necessary, and we lose the associated revenue that enrolling students contribute to revenue streams. We are currently working with the OSU Foundation to get a better picture of how much is available to be more efficiently allocated each year.

Finally, we have recently contracted with a different provider for our scholarship database, which will give us greater control on awarding scholarships, and will provide a better, more integrated experience for students, including multiple-year awards, enforcement of scholarship budgets, and an application programming interface (API) to Banner.

International Direct Admit

Oregon State will introduce a customized experience for international first-year undergraduates at OSU called International Direct in fall 2020. All international first-year undergraduate students will receive consistent and robust support by INTO OSU. The International Direct model is the result of significant and extensive global market research into current and future international recruitment trends and patterns as well as analysis of current undergraduate offerings at US universities. We anticipate this initiative to positively impact undergraduate international recruitment, diversity, student success and retention at OSU.

Creating Better Enrollment/Budget Models

Although timing will not allow for revamping this year, and data systems need to be more robust before we can proceed, it appears we can develop systems to create better, more responsive, and more precise enrollment projection models, which will then provide input to the budget process in a more timely way. This should allow for deans to have greater input into the enrollment projections, and to build new initiatives into a system that will encourage enrollment growth, while adding a new layer of accountability to the process.

SUMMARY

Many universities in the US would consider the enrollment growth that Oregon State has experienced in the last 15 years to be remarkable, and the tradeoffs we have implicitly made, including the results of them, to be acceptable: recent slight downturn with more students at higher average prices, slowly increasing total net revenue, fewer first-generation and low-income students, improving academic quality as measured along traditional lines, moderately increasing diversity, and improved retention and graduation rates.

Oregon State is now at a critical pivot point, with a demographic downturn on the horizon, continuing economic uncertainty, a national election, and even reminders about how dependent the university is on public health systems to maintain normal business operations. As Oregon’s land grant university, and with a mission including “promoting economic, social, cultural and environmental progress for the people of Oregon, the nation and the world” and “contributing to society’s intellectual, cultural, spiritual and economic progress and well-being,” we must ask ourselves how we best effect these outcomes.
It is clear that constraints make it impossible for us to do everything we would like to do, so we are compelled to ask, “What should we do, and what can we do?” Sound enrollment management is a critical part of achieving the goals and objectives Oregon State University sets for itself. The Division of Enrollment Management, together with its many partners across the university, are working closely together to ensure OSU’s DEM effort is maximally effective.