

OSU Enrollment Management Task Force

Final Report
February 2012

I. Introduction

The dynamic expansion of Oregon State University's student body over the past decade has had a marked impact on Oregon's land grant university. The addition of approximately 8,000 students over the past decade has grown enrollment to more than 25,000 – a number that includes the largest share of Oregonians of any university in this state. The student body includes greater percentages of high achieving¹, historically underrepresented² and international students than ever before. In particular, the growth among high achieving students has helped OSU become known more publicly and accurately as the leading “university of choice” for Oregon's best and brightest high school graduates.

While such enrollment growth is critical to meet both the letter and spirit of Oregon's new 40-40-20 law, as well as to further OSU's progress toward a goal of becoming one of America's top 10 land grant campuses, it has also created tensions in a variety of areas ranging from faculty and academic advisor workloads to course access difficulties to impacts in neighborhoods surrounding the university. To help the university plan more effectively for future enrollment and thus lessen those tensions, the Enrollment Management Task Force has sought to address three specific aspects of Provost and Executive Vice President Sabah Randhawa's charge to the group:

- *The **development of a 5-year enrollment plan** that outlines and defines enrollment objectives based on key performance indicators—educational experience, student body diversity, and revenue growth, and that considers our access mission as a land grant university.*
- *Within the context of enrollment plan, **strategies to achieve enrollment objectives**, including the use of predictive modeling for marketing and financial aid to reach targeted markets and populations.*
- ***Outline the requirements of a working university-wide effort on recruitment and retention**, including the role of Admissions, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and colleges and academic units in recruiting and retaining a high-performing, diverse student body. I hope that besides an enrollment plan, several collaborative structures emerge from this process to coordinate and guide our efforts.*

The following plan represents the culmination of six months of Task Force meetings, discussions and fact finding, successfully completed subgroup assignments and synthesis of all of the above.

¹ For the purposes of this report, a “high achieving” student is an applicant for admission with a high school grade-point average of 3.75 or higher. In select circumstance, the term may also include individuals who are also high school valedictorians, salutatorians and/or National Merit scholars.

² For the purposes of this report, “historically underrepresented” students are those who identify as African American or black, Latino/a or Hispanic or Native American.

II. Process & Timeline

Appointed by Provost and Executive Vice President Sabah Randhawa in Spring 2011, the Task Force met 10 times through the summer and fall terms and created the following subgroups to focus on fact-finding around key aspects of the charge, data analysis and recommendations:

- A. Demand & Marketing
- B. Staffing & Financial Issues
- C. Facilities / Physical Capacity
- D. Data Gathering
- E. Retention & Student Services
- F. High Achiever Work Group Report
- G. Ecampus Information & Background

The work of those subgroups forms the heart of this report. Group discussions have been helpful in arriving at consensus relative to overall recommendations and suggested priority order of proposed actions.

III. Members

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IV. Enrollment Management Philosophy

The Task Force recognizes the driving philosophy of Enrollment Management at OSU:

Oregon State University is committed to implement strategies consistent with effective enrollment management. A successful enrollment management plan will provide us with direction, stability and focus to improve our university's performance, benefiting the OSU community, students, faculty, and staff. In our context, enrollment management involves adopting and implementing mission-centered approaches to recruit, admit and retain students; approaching student outreach in a way that honors our Land Grant heritage; building on our current strengths and long-range goals; and demonstrating our commitment to promote an achievement-oriented learning environment. Successful enrollment management requires broad involvement and collaborative effort across the university

community – it is the shared responsibility of faculty and administration to improve processes, refine services, and implement appropriate strategies to inspire high-level student success.

Through this plan, OSU’s enrollment management efforts will focus on more intentional approaches to influence student enrollments and manage institutional growth. By approaching enrollment management in a holistic and strategic way we will thoughtfully address such important mission-centered issues as increasing diversity in the student body, increasing student retention, aligning enrollment with academic program strengths and capacity, effectively utilizing institutional resources (human, physical and financial), and ensuring programs and services are in place to meet the needs of enrolled and prospective students. Our enrollment plan will allow us to build on our strengths, be explicit in our aspirations, and be assertive in the actions we take to pursue our desired future; this effort will only be possible if the university community broadly owns the enrollment management process and its success.

A well-crafted enrollment management plan will reinforce OSU’s commitment to a culture of excellence and further articulate our institutional ethos of student achievement. At the same time the plan will provide guidance for where we should focus our efforts, where we should allocate our resources, and how we should measure our progress.

V. Factors affecting enrollment projections

A variety of factors affect the viability of enrollment predictions. Any change or adjustment in these factors must be monitored to anticipate and manage growth effectively.

- Demand is impacted by internal and external factors that include, but are not limited to:
 - Recruitment strategy and efforts
 - Admissions policy
 - Economic conditions
 - Growing cost of attendance, ability to pay and availability of scholarships and financial aid
 - Degree offerings and accessibility

VI. Recommendations

As its primary, overarching recommendation, the Task Force calls for pursuit of **enrollment growth at an annual rate of no more than an average of 2 percent for Corvallis campus undergraduates** to produce an overall Corvallis campus **enrollment not to exceed 28,000 by 2017.**

Over the same period of time, Ecampus leadership conservatively projects average annual unduplicated headcount growth of “distance only” student enrollment of 9 percent, with more than 7,600 such students enrolled by 2017-18. In Central Oregon, OSU-Cascades leadership projects enrollment growth of 12 percent annually, growing headcount to 1,525 by 2017. And additional headcount is expected from the Hatfield Marine Science Center

campus, though conversations around this opportunity are too early to support an enrollment projection.

The growth recommended and projected above would increase total OSU unduplicated headcount, inclusive of OSU-Cascades and Ecampus, to approximately 36,000 by 2017-18, though the number of individuals served in Corvallis still would not exceed 28,000. This rate of measured growth ensures the university will be able to deliver the type of high-quality educational experiences at the core of our mission and values.

The following additional recommendations and actions for implementation are intended to bolster academic excellence in the context of the recommended enrollment growth and to support the ongoing goal of improving student success and graduation rates.

1. Recommendations for Recruitment and Admissions

- a) To meet the strategic plan objective to increase the number of high-performing students on the Corvallis campus, **fully integrate the goals and strategies of the high-achievers strategy work group into campus-wide recruitment efforts.**
- b) To retain our current level of out-of-state students and maintain robust non-resident tuition revenues, **increase investments in marketing and recruiting activities.**
- c) To respond to increases in **Transfer** and **Degree Partnership Program (DPP)** populations, the university should **undertake intentional enrollment planning to manage those enrollments** (*see also related recommendations below*).
- d) To account for the interdependencies between graduate and undergraduate enrollments, the university should **combine this set of recommendations with the plan currently under development in the Graduate School.**

2. Recommendations for Instructional Capacity

- a) To ensure adequate instructional FTE for the projected 2017 undergraduate population, the university must **increase instructional FTE, taking into account the current and desirable course fill rates.**
- b) Also, the **GTA FTE must increase.** The university should **further study the growth in tenure-line faculty needed** to accomplish this growth in **graduate enrollments.**
- c) To address pressures from recent rapid enrollment growth and emergent needs of growing transfer and DPP populations, the university must **undertake**

additional planning to increase seats and sections in upper-division courses for majors.

3. Recommendations for Retention and Student Services

a) Course access at all levels is a significant obstacle to student persistence and success. The Task Force recommends that the university **reduce its overall undergraduate course fill rate**.

b) All student services units are currently functioning at or beyond capacity. It is unrealistic to expect improvements in retention and graduation rates under current staffing conditions. It is critical that student services FTE and programming funds increase in proportion to enrollment growth. The **Provost should charge support unit leadership with identifying FTE and resources needed to “catch up” with recent enrollment growth and sustain service excellence** under further growth. Disability Access Services, Financial Aid and academic advising have been identified initially as highest priority for increased staffing and resources.

c) To respond to demographic changes in undergraduate enrollment, the university must **develop specialized support services** (currently non-existent) for **Transfer/DPP students, non-traditional students and distance students**.

d) To equalize success rates of minority populations vis-à-vis the overall population, the university must **undertake intentional investigation and planning for the adequacy, comprehensiveness and effectiveness of minority-serving retention programs**.

e) **Encourage first-year students to engage in living-learning experiences** to improve academic success and retention rates, and include on-campus housing considerations in the first-year experience program.

e) To meet university goals for diversity and internationalization, we must **collaborate with INTO staff to determine student support needs and undertake training for faculty, staff and student leaders**, as well as hire additional bilingual faculty and staff, to contribute to an increasingly globalized campus community.