

# Portland State University Research Update

## Office of Institutional Research and Planning

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Fall 2005

### Profile of the Entering Class of 2005

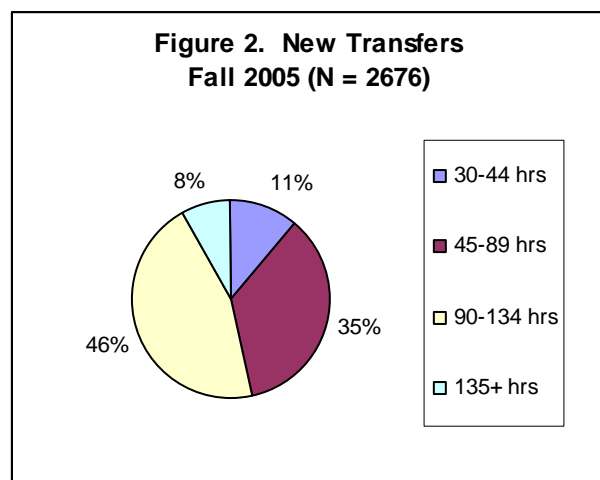
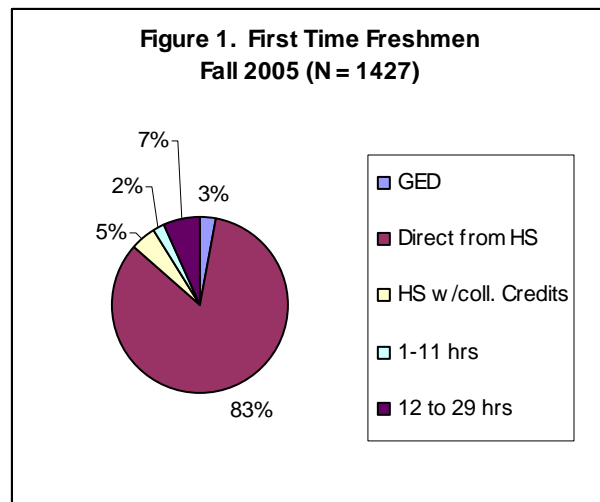
#### First-time Freshmen and Transfer Students

The entering class of Fall 2005 consisted of 4,103 students. Two types of students comprised the entering class: first-time freshmen (1,427, 34.8%), and transfers (2,676, 65.2%). First-time freshmen enrollment increased by 2% and new transfer enrollment increased by 4% compared to Fall 2004.

As indicated in Figure 1, most of the first-time freshmen for Fall 2005 entered directly from high school (80%). Other first-time freshmen transferred fewer than 30 college credits to PSU (17%) or obtained a GED (3%) before enrolling at PSU.

Approximately 71% of first-time freshmen who reported a high school of origin came from an Oregon high school. Twenty-four percent of this group attended high school in other states. The remainder attended high schools in other countries. Students entering PSU from Oregon high schools for Fall 2005 decreased as a percentage of the entering class. During Fall 2004, 79% of first-time freshman reporting high school as their source of origin indicated they graduated from an Oregon high school. It is not unusual for a university to draw heavily from students in its home state. Nationally, 80% of freshmen who graduated from high school in 2002 attended a college in their home state.\*

Figure 2 shows that students who transferred 90 to 134 credit hours were the largest group of transfer students in the 2005 entering class (45.7%). More than one third (34.9%) of new transfer students transferred between 45 and 89 credits. These proportions were similar to the fall of 2004 when those groups represented 41.5% and 36.6%, respectively.



\* All national level data presented in this report are taken from The Chronicle of Higher Education, Almanac Issue 2005-06, (August 26, 2005) L11 (1).

Most (81%) first-time freshmen attended PSU on a full-time basis during Fall 2005, which is similar to the percentage that attended full time during the Fall of 2004. Two-thirds (67%) of new transfer students attended PSU full-time during Fall 2005, which is a decrease of three percentage points compared to the 70% of transfers who enrolled full-time during Fall 2004.

A majority of new students were Oregon residents (77.9%). Of first-time freshmen, 76.6% were Oregon residents and of new transfer students, 78.6% were Oregon residents.

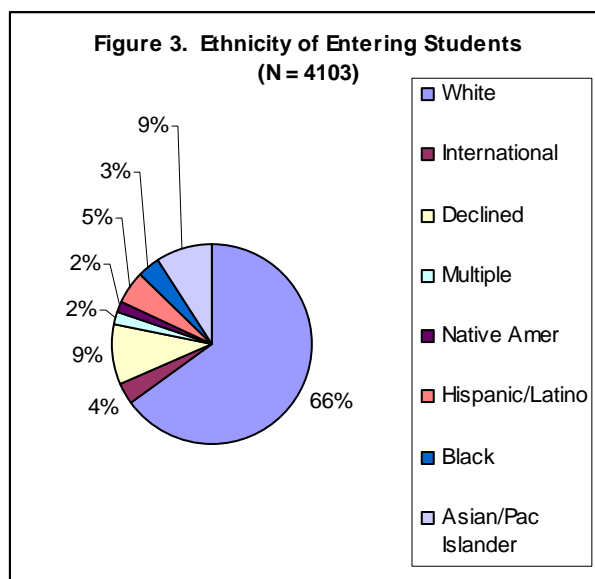
Similar proportions of new freshmen and transfer students applied for federal financial aid to assist with their school expenses (64.7% and 66.5% respectively). However, new transfer students were more likely to receive financial aid than first-time freshmen. 35.5% of new transfer students received Pell Grant funds and 53% received loans. Only 25.5% of new freshmen received Pell Grants and 45.5% received loans.

### Age and Gender

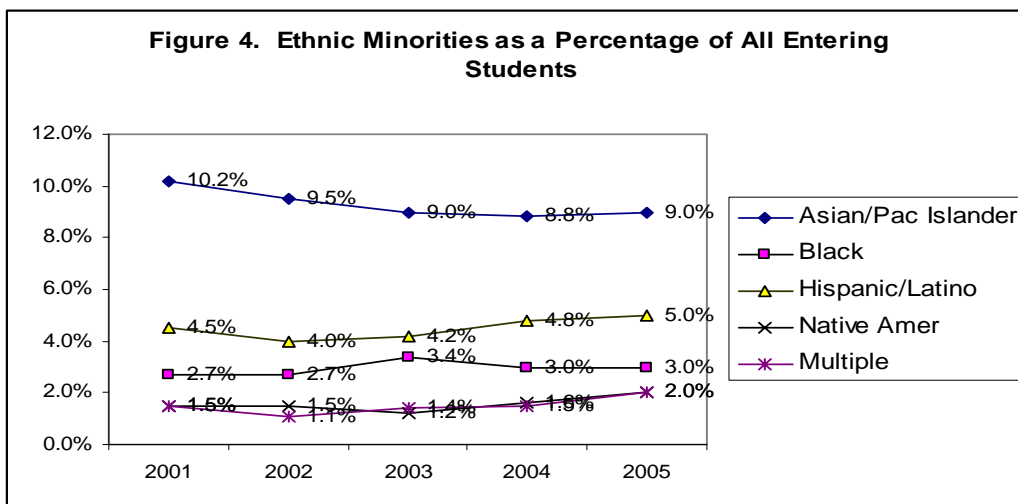
The average age of first-time freshmen entering PSU during Fall 2005 was 19 years; however, their median age was 18, which indicates that half of the freshmen class were 18 years of age or younger. The class included students ranging in age from 17 to 54. Transfers represented an older group of students with an average age of 25. Women represented 54% of incoming freshmen and 55% of incoming transfers this fall. Enrollment of women at Portland State is similar to the national enrollment of women in institutions of higher education (56%)\*.

### Ethnic Diversity

Approximately 902 (22%) students in the entering class were members of racial/ethnic minority groups. The largest minority group among entering students was Asian/Pacific Islander (9.2%). Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and persons of multiple ethnic backgrounds together constituted 13% of the entering class. Another 4% were international students. 9.5% of students declined to provide ethnic information. (See Figure 3.) This mirrors the composition of public four-year institutions nationally, whose student bodies are approximately 25% ethnic or racial minority, and it is higher than the average for other four-year public institutions in Oregon whose student bodies are approximately 14.1% ethnic or racial minorities\*.



The five-year comparison of ethnic and minority enrollment from Fall 2001 to Fall 2005 illustrated in Figure 4 indicates that the percentage of students in the entering class that identify with ethnic and racial minority groups has remained fairly consistent. The largest change is seen in the decrease in the percentage of students identifying themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander (a total decline of 1.2 percentage points). The other groups have not seen changes greater than one percentage point.



For first-time freshmen, Fall 2001 represented a high point in enrollment for ethnic minority students when 28% of the class were racial or ethnic minority students. Since then, the percentage of racial or ethnic minority students in the entering freshman class has ranged from 23% (in Fall 2004) to 25% (in Fall 2003 and 2005). Asian students have decreased as a percentage of the entering freshmen class during the past five years and the percentage of students claiming multiple ethnic or racial categories has increased. During the same period of time, international students have increased: 1.9% in 2001 to 4.2% in 2005. The percentage of racial or ethnic minority students in the entering class of transfer students has remained stable over the past five years and the percentage of new transfers who are international students has not increased.

### Academic Background and Major: First-time Freshmen

For first-time freshmen, high school grade point average (GPA) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores are commonly used as indicators of academic preparedness. The mean high school GPA for 2005 first-time freshmen was 3.24. The average composite SAT score for 2005 first-time freshmen was 1,048. Fall 2005 is the second year in which new freshmen at PSU were admitted under stricter GPA requirements. An in-depth study of the effects of the new GPA policy on the characteristics of the entering freshmen will be reported in a future issue of *Research Update*.

Consistent with previous years, the most popular majors for new PSU freshmen include Psychology, Management, Art, Biology, Accounting, and English. This reflects the national trend which includes Business, Arts & Humanities, Professional degrees, Education Studies and Social Sciences among the top five most popular majors.

### Summary

First-time freshmen and transfer students entering PSU during Fall 2005 are similar to new students admitted in recent years. PSU continues to serve students predominantly from Oregon. The ethnic or racial minority make-up of the incoming student body reflects the ethnic or racial make-up of public four-year universities across the country and has not changed appreciably in the last five years.

*Rowanna Carpenter, Institutional Research Analyst, created this edition of the Portland State University Research Update.*