

5% decline since 1975

Enrollment drops again

By ERIC BENJAMINSON
Of the Emerald

Fall term enrollment at the University dropped 1.4 percent from last year's figures, but administrators will have to wait to know what financial impact the decline will have.

Registrar totals released at the end of the term's first four weeks showed 16,463 students at the University.

State aid to the University is determined by dividing the total number of credit hours for all undergraduate students by 15, the full-time equivalency "magic number" that is considered the average number of credit hours a student takes each term.

The FTE figures are still being compiled, however, and the figures from the end of the first month may undergo fluctuations that could change the University's financial allotment.

The drop in enrollment was not unexpected and in fact, came close to the decline predicted by Gary Lane, an analyst for the State System of Higher Education.

"Enrollment at the University has dropped 5 percent since 1975, from almost 17,400 to 16,700 some-odd now," Lutz says.

Lutz speculates that the continuing losses of the last few years are the result of more freshman dropping out and other students transferring after their sophomore year.

"There was, for various reasons, a large enrollment drop in 1975, and what we are seeing now is partially the result of those low years," he says.

Johnson of the University adds that "high schools have been graduating fewer and fewer people each year, and this has some effect on university registrations."

Johnson says, however, that the number of women enrolled at the University showed an increase of 156, following a trend begun several years ago.

"I have a feeling that affirmative action programs are beginning to have some effect," Johnson says, "there is also a great attraction to the community education program."

Graduate student enrollment increased this year by 149 students, many of whom have also been absorbed into the community education program. CEP has

increased this year from 617 to 748 students.

Figures indicate that the drop in enrollment comes from the ranks of the undergraduates, yet reasons are hard to find for the slip.

Additional data show 12,526 Oregon residents are currently registered, while 3,937 non-resident students are recorded.

Two other state system schools show noticeable changes in their fourth week enrollment levels.

Oregon College of Education in Monmouth reports a 7.7 percent drop in enrollment from last year's figures. Bob Vieira, OCE assistant director of admissions, says the drop was not unexpected, but is not sure of the reasons for the slip.

"Along with the general decrease in high school graduates, we had a projected loss of graduate and transfer students," Vieira explains.

"Monmouth is known as a somewhat specialized teacher's

school, and I suppose that the current tight teaching market can explain some of our enrollment losses," he says. "I'm just not sure that we will know exactly why we have slipped... at least not until later in the year."

Eastern Oregon State College in LaGrande reported a surprising 12.9 percent enrollment jump for the 1978-79 year. Lutz says the increase might not be the whole story.

"There is a possibility that LaGrande could be including their community education and other special program students in their headcounts, which could cause some inflation of enrollment figures," he guesses.

Oregon State University's enrollment is ahead once again of the University's percent increase as was projected earlier.

Other state system schools showed little or no fluctuations from last year's enrollment levels.

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