

# OSU-Cascades grows, despite pandemic

By NICOLE BALES  
The Bulletin

BEND — The number of students pursuing degrees at Oregon State University-Cascades has continued to grow despite the impact the coronavirus pandemic has had on enrollment at colleges and universities nationwide.

Students seeking degrees at the Bend campus increased 2% this fall over fall 2020, and students are taking significantly more courses. Of the 1,247 students enrolled, 1,043 are undergraduates and 204 are graduate students, according to the university.

Jane Reynolds, the university's executive director of enrollment management, said growth has been in graduate students, particularly for the new doctorate of physical therapy program, which has a cohort of 45 students.

While the university saw a big jump last year in freshmen undergraduate students, the number stayed about the same this year, with nine fewer students, or 1% less than in fall 2020.

"We feel lucky that we're very close to the same in undergraduate students," Reynolds said. "Many schools are down. But I think there's students who are super excited to be back on campus and there were some who are concerned about their safety or meeting in person. There are masks in the classroom, but for some students that felt risky, and so I think they made other choices."



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Salma Parnell, left, and Deyva Chaney study together in the recently completed Edward J. Ray Hall at Oregon State University-Cascades.

She said some students opted to join Oregon State University's online Ecampus program, which saw enrollment spike by 14%.

While undergraduate enrollment at the university has not been hit as hard as other universities, its graduate enrollment trends seem to match trends nationwide.

As of late September, fall 2021 enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, an education nonprofit, showed no signs of recovery from last year's declines.

Undergraduate enrollment is down 3.2% from a year ago, and a total of 6.5% from two years ago, according to the organization. First-year student numbers declined by 3.1% overall. Meanwhile, graduate enrollment has grown by 2.1% from last fall, and a total of 5.3% over two years.

Enrollment at private nonprofit four-year schools fared better than other higher education institutions, and community colleges have continued to be the most adversely affected.

Reynolds said the university saw a gap in the number of transfer students. She said that because fewer students started at community colleges last year, fewer students transferred.

Of the 541 transfer students at OSU-Cascades, 69% are from Central Oregon, and 57% transferred from Central Oregon Community College.

COCC, which has seen overall enrollment drop over the years, saw an increase in fall enrollment by 2.5% compared to fall 2020.

Fifty-one percent of OSU-Cascades students this fall are from Central Oregon, and 81.8% are

from Oregon. Students from out-of-state increased 4.7%, and five other countries are represented within the student body.

Of the students enrolled at OSU-Cascades, 20% are students of color and 25% are first-generation undergraduate students.

Most first-year students live in the on-campus residence hall, and Reynolds said that the return of in-person instruction has brought new energy back to the campus.

"It was so quiet last year," she said. "The energy just feels so great this year. It's a huge difference and we're really excited to see that."

Samara Shinholster, a first-year student from Albany, said that after having her junior and senior year of high school disrupted by the pandemic, she was ready to go off to college and back to in-person instruction.

She said that while the last two years of high school are notoriously stressful, she enjoyed having a lighter load as a result of the pandemic. But she said the lighter load also had ramifications on her academic performance at the start of the school year. She said students were also eager to socialize.

"It was a hard adjustment because you just want to hang out with people and you want to catch up on what you've missed out on the last two years, but you can't forget what you're here for and that's school," Shinholster said. "And that's been a hard adjustment that we're all getting used to, I think."

# Judge weighs wolf protections

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

SALEM — The West's tug-of-war over wolves went via Zoom to a federal judge in Oakland on Friday, Nov. 12, as environmental groups asked U.S. District Judge Jeffrey White to restore federal protection to wolves along the West Coast, and in the central Rockies and Great Lakes states.

Attorney Kristen Boyles said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was abandoning gray wolves outside the Northern Rockies.

Justice Department attorney Michael Eitel said state boundaries shouldn't dictate how the agency carries out the Endangered Species Act.

"This is not a case where Fish and Wildlife is trying to skirt its obligations under the ESA," he said.

The lawsuits before White challenge the Trump administration's decision to take gray wolves throughout the Lower 48 off the federal list of endangered species.

Wolves in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and the eastern one-third of Oregon and Washington were already de-listed and are not addressed in the suits.

The Biden administration has defended the Trump rule, arguing that gray wolves aren't threatened in the U.S. because wolves are established in the Northern Rockies, as well as the western Great Lakes.

Ironically, however, the Biden administration is also reviewing the ESA status of wolves in the Northern Rockies because of wolf hunts in Idaho and Montana.

Meanwhile, lawsuits led by Defenders of Wildlife, WildEarth Guardians and the Natural Resources Defense Council seek to immediately repeal the Trump rule. The three suits were merged into one hearing Friday.

Earlier in the week, White notified lawyers that he didn't want to hear written arguments reshaped. He posed several questions about whether the USFWS correctly applied the ESA.

Wolf advocates argue USFWS gave too little consideration to wolves in Pacific Coast states and the central Rocky Mountain states of Utah and Colorado.

USFWS said wolves in those regions are not distinct populations and therefore not eligible for ESA protection.

Utah has had nine confirmed wolves, but it anticipates more and intervened in the lawsuit, arguing the state and not the federal government should manage wolves.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in 2020 counted 30 wolves in the newly delisted area. If the Trump rule stays in place, Fish and Wildlife could resort to killing wolves to stop attacks on livestock. Under the ESA, lethal control is not an option.

The hearing lasted one hour. White said he will make a written ruling.

# Supply-chain issues roil crop inputs

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS  
Capital Press

SALEM — As producers plan for the next growing season, chaos in the supply chain has them concerned about the cost and availability of crop inputs.

By and large, producers — other than fruit and vegetable growers — didn't face the structural shifts in the supply-chain when COVID-19 hit in the spring of 2020 because they were already in the middle of production, said Allan Gray, director of the Center for Food and Agribusiness at Purdue University.

He doesn't think producers faced the supply-chain fallout this year, either, because agrochemical suppliers had inventories on hand.

"What's happening now is there's no adjustment left in the system; the inventories are gone," he said during the latest "Farm Country Update" podcast, presented by Farm Journal.

It's important to realize the supply-chain problems are a confluence of several factors, not just one or two things, he said.

"The reality is it's a very, very complicated set of factors from geopolitics to weather conditions to structural issues," he said.

One thing that struck him is he hadn't understood until this summer how short the U.S. is on active ingredients for crop protection chemicals and the difficulties of getting active ingredients into production plants, he said.

That's really a leading indicator not just for the year coming up but for the year after that even, he said.

"These chains take a long time to reset, and we're going to have to be prepared for this for a period of time to come," he said.

Jeff Tarsi, senior vice president of North America retail for Nutrien Ag Solutions, said his company had indications in the

fall of 2020 things could possibly get tight.

A lot of people don't realize it but 70% to 75% of the active ingredients that make up crop protection chemicals come from China, which had been experiencing shutdowns and lockdowns. An arctic freeze in Texas in February, which took refineries and petrochemical plants offline for a month or more, was another big impact, he said.

His company managed through the year pretty well but started getting first-hand knowledge this summer that 2022 might be a bigger challenge, he said.

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