



Fall enrollment at Oregon colleges and universities increases on average, but results are mixed

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Southern Oregon University's Churchill Hall.

Oregon Tech saw enrollment go up, but SOU's numbers fell, though less than expected.

Across Oregon's public universities and community colleges, student enrollment rose by an average of 3% this fall.

That's according to fall 2024 enrollment numbers released by the [Higher Education](#)

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But numbers across Southwestern Oregon were mixed.

Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls, for example, has shown increasing enrollment over the last three years and currently has about the same number of students enrolled as it did before the pandemic.

Associate Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment Management Greg Stringer said they've focused on in-person interactions with students to get them interested in the school.

"To get the students to understand what it is they can get here at Oregon Tech requires just as much in person as it does digital correspondence. So I think that's what we've done well," he said.

"According to the colleges, the enrollment boost is especially notable in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, which prepare students for well-paid careers in fields such as healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and skilled trades," according to a Friday statement from the Oregon Community College Association. "The increased enrollment in CTE programs reflects a growing demand for job-ready training as Oregon's economy continues to evolve, requiring skilled workers across a wide range of high-demand industries."

Meanwhile, enrollment at Southern Oregon University declined, but only by about 1%, which was less than the projected 6%.

Provost and Executive Vice President Casey Shillam said the reason for this decline was the delayed rollout of the federal financial student aid form, known as the FAFSA.

"Whereas the application typically would open in October, it didn't open until the spring, and so that had a serious impact on our ability to recruit students, to get them through the application process and determine what their financial aid plans would look like," she said.

The school's enrollment is still below what it was before the COVID pandemic. SOU has faced a dire financial situation in recent years, with a budget shortfall once forecasted to reach \$14.6 million by the 2026-27 academic year.

Enrollment increased at Rogue Community College for the fourth year in a row, although

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"We're really excited about these numbers," said Dean of Enrollment Management Nicole Sakraida. "Our hope is to get to pre-pandemic numbers by the end of this academic year."

School officials across the region also highlighted the importance of supporting students once enrolled and ensuring they make it to graduation.

"We want to make certain that if there is any barrier in that path [of graduating college], that we are doing our best to remove it. And so we can bring in classes of 500,1,000, 2,000 – any university can," Stringer said. "But the fact of the matter is this: you have to retain those students. And I think that's going to become a big focus area for us going forward."

Meanwhile, Klamath Community College's enrollment declined slightly, putting it almost even with its pre-COVID numbers. Enrollment at Oregon Coast Community College also declined, still well below pre-pandemic numbers. At Umpqua Community College, enrollment increased, putting enrollment about even with pre-COVID numbers. Enrollment at Southwestern Oregon Community College also rose, but still below what it used to be before the pandemic.

Statewide, the data was mixed.

Enrollment rose at 12 out of 17 community colleges and four out of seven public universities.

The number of students enrolled in Oregon's community colleges is still about 17% lower than pre-pandemic levels, while enrollment at the public universities is close to pre-pandemic levels.

Across the colleges, the number of students enrolled in 2024 was between 21% lower and 30% higher than it was in 2023. Meanwhile, across the universities, the number of students enrolled in 2024 was between 3% lower and 4% higher than it was in 2023.

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