

### The Office of Degree Authorization has three principal functions:

- Degree validation
- Degree authorization
- Adverse impact mediation

### Degree Validation

- ODA provides information and validation services for:
  - Academic credentials => for Oregon employers and licensing boards.
  - Equivalency of a foreign or unaccredited degree => for Individuals
- ODA investigates reports of persons who are:
  - claiming a degree they haven't earned
  - using a degree from an unauthorized/unaccredited school in Oregon
- ODA sends orders to cease and desist claim of a degree
- ODA responds to public and media inquiries about accreditation and authorization, and participates in various national and international professional groups
  - Council of State Governments working group on inter-state reciprocity
  - Network of international higher education professionals

### Issues in Degree Validation

- There is no international standard equivalent to regional accreditation. We require equivalency to be established by NACES member evaluation services or by AACRAO. There are times when equivalency cannot be established due to the lack of comparable standards or lack of trust in the oversight by the country of origin.
- We work within an informal network of higher education professionals that spans the globe, but whose capacity is limited to information sharing and does not extend to enforcement.
- Staying abreast of diploma mill activity that may affect Oregon students and employers, in a largely unregulated international environment requires a certain investment in time and focus that is difficult under a deficit staffing model.

### Degree Program Authorization

- ODA regulates all degree-granting institutions of higher education with active programs in Oregon that are either:
  - For profit, or
  - Lack regional accreditation, or
  - Have operated in Oregon for fewer than 5 years
- ODA is not responsible for regulating:
  - Private independent colleges that are regionally accredited and have operated under oversight in Oregon for >5 years
  - Public colleges, universities (OUS)
  - Community colleges (ODE)
  - Career schools that do not have degree programs (ODE)

### Degree Program Authorization

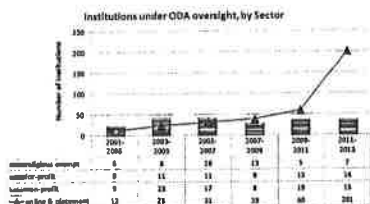
- ODA reviews and authorizes each individual degree and diploma program, not the school
- The review process follows 20 standards outlined in section 583-030-0035 of the Oregon Administrative Rules
- The review is a thorough evaluation of each school, looking at:
  - General administration, structure, and operations
  - Specific degree programs individually

### Degree Program Authorization

- The review of each school's general administration and operations covers:
  - Organizational structure and operational oversight
  - Financial stability
  - Qualifications of key administrators and staff
  - Award of credit and academic oversight
  - Facilities, records, and student support services
  - Recruiting and admissions policies and practices
- The review of each degree program covers:
  - Curriculum structure and content
  - Faculty qualifications
  - Learning environment

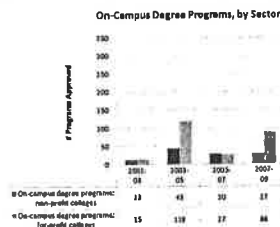
## Degree Program Authorization

- The number of schools and programs under ODA authorization changes as new programs come in and other programs are discontinued



## Degree Program Authorization

- The number of schools and programs under ODA authorization changes as statutory changes are made



## Degree Program Authorization

### Status and trends in ODA-approved programs:

- The workload has increased exponentially
  - Increase in number of schools
    - More programs that were previously "occupational-training" are offering Associate's degrees => moving to ODA jurisdiction.
    - More for-profit schools with a national presence have opened campuses in Oregon
  - Increase in percentage of for-profit schools
    - Larger number and variety of programs
    - More Associate degree programs => lower fees, more work
    - More frequent changes to their programs

## Degree Program Authorization

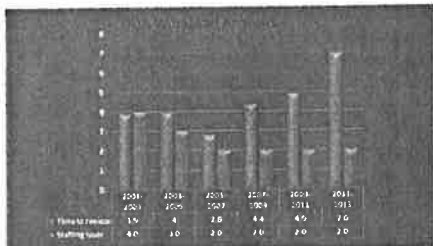
### Status and trends in ODA-approved programs:

- Our workload has increased exponentially

	2001-03	2003-05	2005-07	2007-08	2008-11	2011-13
Staff FTE	4.0	5.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0*
# Reviews completed	41	186	84	217	92	313
Total Fee Revenue	146,113	778,872	346,291	264,014	249,943	314,570
Avg Revenue/Review	3,564	4,187	4,109	1,217	2,731	1,005
# Reviews per 1.0 FTE	10.25	37.20	28.00	72.33	46.00	104.00
Avg Time to Review	3.8	4	3.8	4.4	4.9	3.0

## Degree Program Authorization

### Status and trends in ODA-approved programs:



## Issues in Degree Program Authorization

- Historically, we have required authorization for out-of-state programs when there is a practicum or placement requirement in the program, especially one related to licensure. For programs with no placement, we rely on regional accreditation as the basis for approval, and these schools are exempt from the normal ODA evaluation process and pay a reduced fee to cover verification of their accreditation status and establish and maintain their approval record in Oregon.
- Even regionally-accredited schools vary widely in the quality of their online programs, and even when their on-campus programs have a stellar reputation. Most regional accreditors have not separately evaluated distance delivery of programs at accredited schools, and some have approved partnership agreements with 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendors which include outsourcing instructional functions beyond the scope of technical assistance, which may impact the quality of instruction and student support. When questioned, the accreditors seem unaware that this is what they approved and believed that the vendor only provided the technology platform.
- There have been many issues with poor supervision and inadequate coordination of nursing students enrolled in out-of-state public and private regionally-accredited colleges and universities and these have caused significant issues for students and for nursing board and ODA staff.
- Regional and national reciprocity proposals have not adequately resolved the challenges related to pre-professional licensure education requirements to ensure that online programs offered by out-of-state schools prepare students for licensure in their home state.

### Adverse impact mediation

- The purpose of the adverse impact process is to avoid use of public funds for duplication of college programs in the same geographic area.
- ODA's role in the adverse impact process is to:
  - mediate and facilitate discussions between schools
  - recommend a decision to the Student Assistance Commission
- ODA currently receives no funding dedicated to adverse impact cases because current processes have eliminated the need for mediation in most cases

### Issues related to adverse impact

- ODA's role in the adverse impact process remains unclear and this creates confusion in ODA's relationship to community colleges and CCWD.
- The adverse impact law discourages development of new public programs, particularly at community colleges, which means students have fewer options and higher costs.
- There is some indication that this law is partially to blame for the deficit in educational opportunities in healthcare fields Associate's level and below.
- There have been no adverse impact claims by degree-granting institutions. All of the claims in recent years have been between community colleges and by private non-degree granting career schools and community colleges.
- Most of these have been in remote regions of the state where students already have fewer educational opportunities and have caused discord in the community and among higher education agencies within the state.

