



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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May 14, 2015

Co-Chair, Senator Rod Monroe
Co-Chair, Representative Betty Komp
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education

Dear Co-Chairs Monroe and Komp,

Thank you for the opportunity to answer questions that arose during the May 13 Higher Education Coordinating Commission's presentation to the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education.

Co-Chair Komp inquired about the projected Native American high school graduation rates in slide four, entitled "Context: Increasing Diversity." The projections utilized within this slide project the number of high school graduates by race and ethnicity by taking into account projected birth rates, historic grade by grade retention and graduation rates. While the total number of births in the American Indian/Alaskan Native has remained stable or increased, the number of high school seniors has dropped by 17% and graduation rates have dropped from 69% to 60% from 2008 to 2013. For this reason the projections referenced above indicate a persistent decline in Native Indian/Alaskan Native students over the medium to longer term. The model extends current trends into the future. This does not take into account recent policy interventions which are intended to reverse this trend.

Representative Huffman asked that we provide examples of programs and efforts that community colleges and universities are undertaking to improve graduation rates. He also asked about changes in completion in recent years. Because of differences in institutional mission, student populations and available resources, these initiatives and programs differ in scope and activity from campus to campus, but share a common focus on helping students access, retain, learn and complete their education.

For information on efforts at Oregon's seventeen community colleges, please see the addendum following this letter titled "Student Completion Initiatives at Community Colleges," which details a wide range of strategies. These programs are working, and we have attached slides (slides 1 and 2) that show increases in completions at the community colleges, and increases specifically for the Hispanic student population, a growing proportion of Oregon's demographic make-up. We are confident that increased investment will both cement and advance these gains at all levels of higher education.

For the seven public universities, we have provided in the addendum to this letter titled "Examples: Public University Student Success Initiatives" which describes just some of the programs at several Oregon's public universities, focused on advancing students to meet their educational goals. Each university has a unique student population and offers a diverse set of programs matched with the diverse needs of these students. We have also provided information on how four, five, and six-year graduation rates have changed over time in the attached slides (slides 3 and 4). As noted in the testimony, the university graduation rate has steadily increased

over the last decade. We similarly expect that increased investments will cement and advance these gains, particularly as the state increases focus on student access and support to completion.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our legislative deputy director Dana Richardson at dana.richardson@state.or.us.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Cannon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ben Cannon
Executive Director, HECC

Student Completion Initiatives at Community Colleges:

Connection and Preparation

- Range of collaboratives with high schools to increase college credits earned by HS students and to provide assistance for application, financial aid and college orientation.
- Middle school outreach programs to strengthen going to college rate and college aspiration of middle school students, particularly underrepresented students.
- Summer Bridge programs (predominantly focused on underrepresented students) for high school students to create awareness of college environment and processes.
- Strengthening pathway from Adult Basic Skills and GED to collegiate level enrollment.

Progression

- Institutional participation in national student success models including Achieving the Dream and Foundations of Excellence.
- First-year experience models to better orient and support first year students and improve retention.
- Learning Communities with student cohort enrollment in link core courses (writing, math, others) and content area courses, a strategy which creates a community of learners with deeper student-to-student and student-to-faculty relations.
- Expanded tutoring and advising systems.
- Computerized degree audit progress monitoring software to assist advisors and students in charting academic pathway and clarifying impacts of change of major.
- Mandated orientation and student success classes for first year students.
- Improved financial aid orientation and student financial planning support.
- Early Warning and Academic Support Interventions to identify and support students exhibiting behaviors or results which will negatively impact their progress.
- Developmental Education Redesign project resulting in more appropriate math pathways aligned with student area of study (moving away from pre-calculus for all); accelerated developmental education pathways reducing number of remedial courses required, corequisite remediation which provides complementary support for student in the college level course rather than prerequisite course to be taken prior to collegiate level course.
- Reduction or elimination of late registration in classes, a well-intended commitment to access but an action which historically leads to lower course completion rates.

Completion

- Automatic awarding of degrees in contrast to requiring students to apply for degree or certificate.
- Reverse Transfer processes to transfer university credits back to the community college resulting in degree award.
- Continued attention to articulation and degree partnership with universities.
- CASE grant (Credentials, Acceleration and Support for Employment), a Statewide grant which highlighted career coaches, expanded Credit for Prior Learning and accelerated student progress to completion.

Examples: Public University Student Success Initiatives

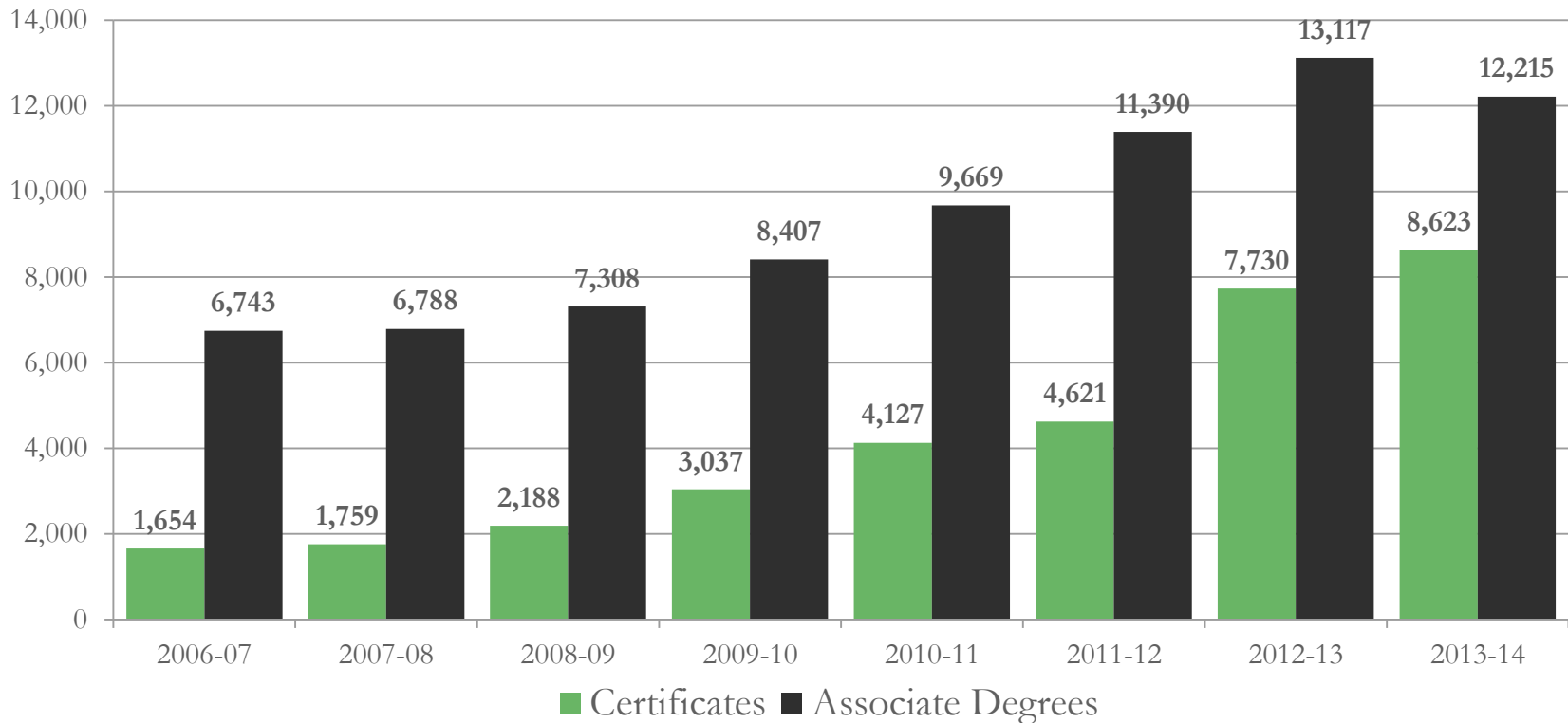
Below are examples of the many programs offered at each public university and focused on meeting the unique needs of each institution. This list is illustrative of these many programs and not a complete catalog of student support services. Each institution has expressed that their ability to offer these programs which have proven successful in helping students reach their educational goals is limited given current funding levels.

- Eastern Oregon University (EOU), despite undergoing a challenging resource reallocation process, has established a Career Center to assist students with preparing to enter the job market, and has added new bilingual admissions counselors and financial aid staff to better communicate with Hispanic students and their families. EOU has also worked with their K-12 partners on the innovative Eastern Promise program which provides dual-credit programs to high school students throughout rural north eastern Oregon.
- Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) offers the structured, holistic, student-centered Tech Opportunities Program (TOP) which has a retention rate of 98% and a graduation rate of 85%. This is significantly above the institutional average, and very high given the rigorous nature of OIT's programs. The TOP program is focused on disadvantaged students who are less likely to complete their course of study. OIT's Student Success Center offers a comprehensive set of services to students. This includes a robust Career Services center which has been integral in maintaining OIT's high placement and starting salary rates, as well as the innovative Peer Consulting Services program which leverages the skills and knowledge of students to empower and support their peers and assist them in clarifying concepts, theories and skills needed for succeeding in OIT's specialized engineering, health sciences and other hands on disciplines.
- Portland State University (PSU) has seen a marked increase in Hispanic and other students of color over the past several years, coinciding with an increase in low income (Pell recipient) students. Therefore, PSU has prioritized investments in outreach and recruiting to these very populations. Recognizing the needs of these students, PSU has bolstered academic advising, and has invested in a unified data platform to analyze and identify student needs and trends and to focus interventions. Additional investments will further these efforts which are critical to meeting 40-40-20.
- Western Oregon University (WOU) has developed a reputation for successfully enrolling and completing low income and minority students. WOU's TRIO/SSS program focusing on low-income, first-generation and disabled students is highly successful. Student who are in this program have retention rates that are ten points higher than similar student populations who can't be served because of lack of funding.
- Oregon State University (OSU) has a long standing commitment to serving historically underrepresented minority students succeed in higher education. OSU has created an Undergraduate Studies Program to strategically align efforts focused on student success. These efforts include a comprehensive First Year Experience program, a Learning Innovation Center to focus on enhancing pedagogy, hybrid and "flipped" classroom experiences, community and cultural centers supporting students connectedness, as well as Summer Bridge programs for at risk students. OSU has also strategically invested in early intervention programs for students who falter in their first few terms.
- The University of Oregon (UO) has developed a comprehensive set of student support services and scholarship programs focused on students at risk of not completing. PathwayOregon ensures that lower income Oregonians have access to higher education and a comprehensive suite of services designed to meet their academic, financial, and personal needs. This program has proven to be remarkably successful since its inception. Freshmen Interest Groups, or FIGs, are an intensive cohort-based system to explore and integrate academic programs and build relationships and connectedness to campus. Utilizing federal TRIO funding UO supports the academic needs of low income and first-generation students. With a focus on developing a cohesive and supportive campus climate with an increasingly diverse student body, the UO continues to support the Multicultural Education, Student Engagement and Success program, which enhances educational, personal, cultural and social development of students with a focus on historically underrepresented students.

DEGREES/CERTIFICATES

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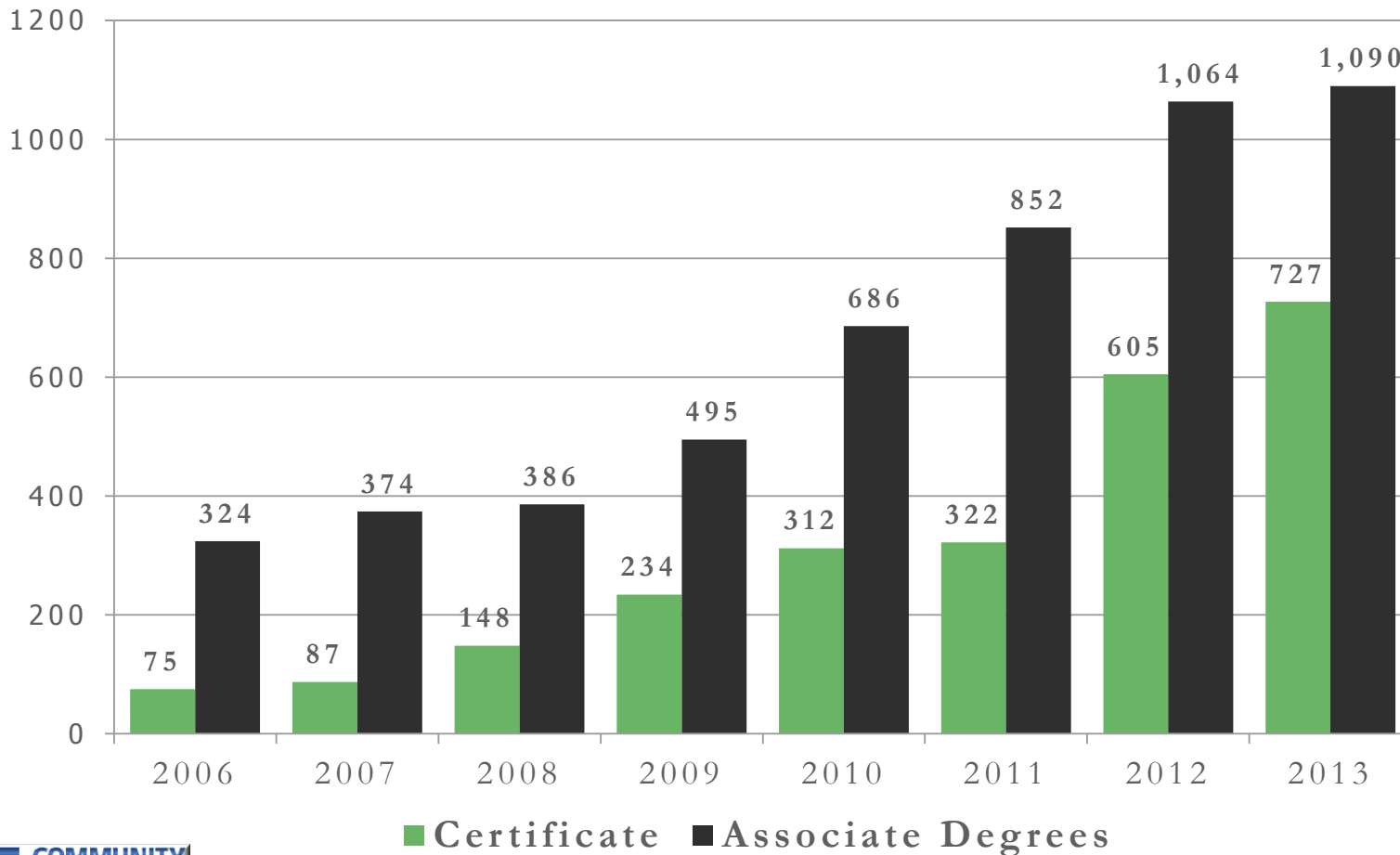
Total Degrees and Certificates Awarded to Community College Students



Data Notes: Data validation is still underway, any differences reported from previous years are a result of the transition to a new data reporting system and subsequent re-reporting.

Source: Data For Post Secondary Analysis as of 2/13/2015

HISPANIC STUDENTS: CREDENTIALS AWARDED AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES



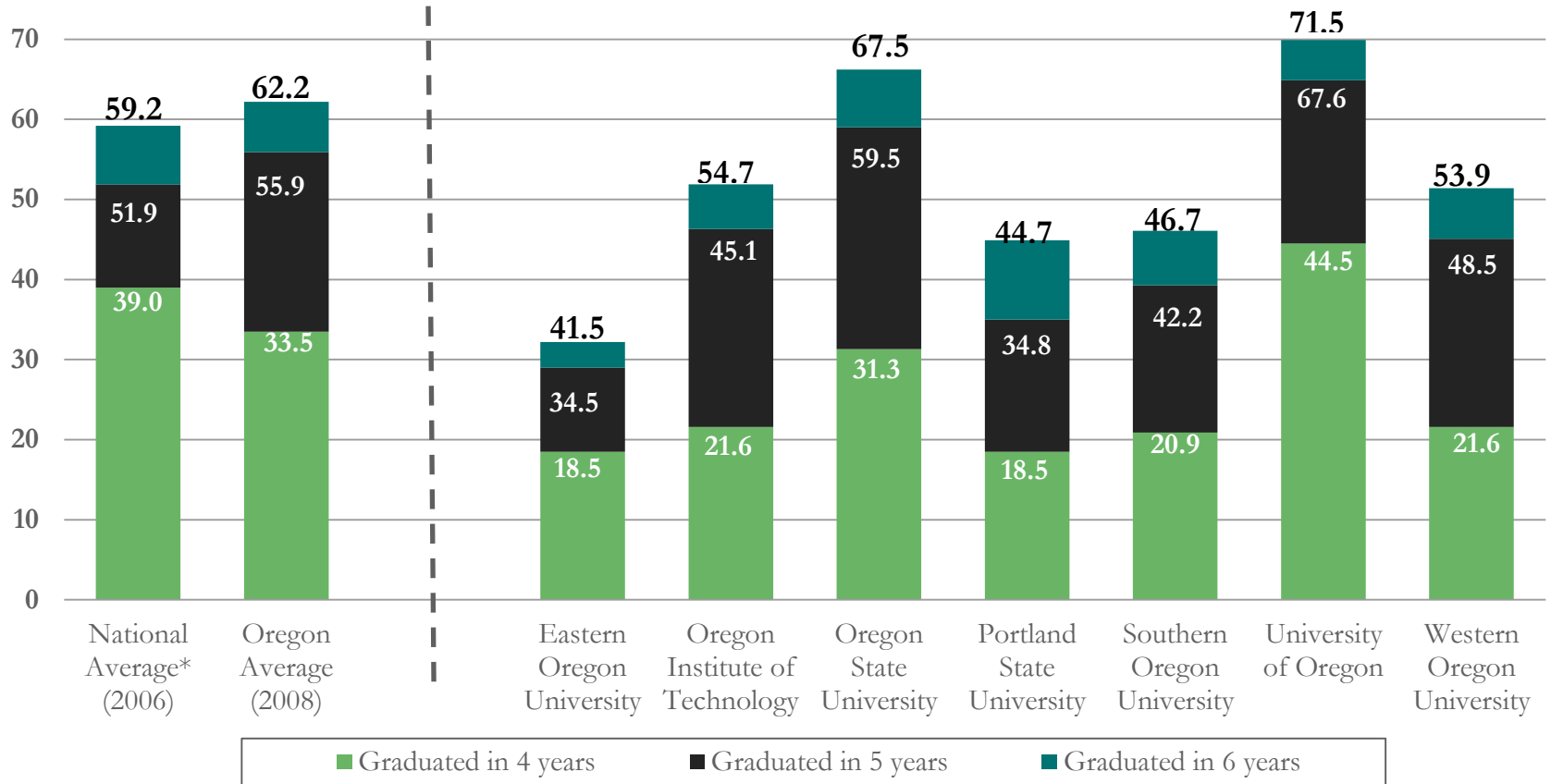
Source: Data For Analysis (D4A)



PUBLIC UNIVERSITY GRADUATION RATES: 4, 5, 6 YEARS

2008 Oregon Public University Graduation Rates for 4, 5 and 6 Years

first time full time freshmen including inter-OUS transfers

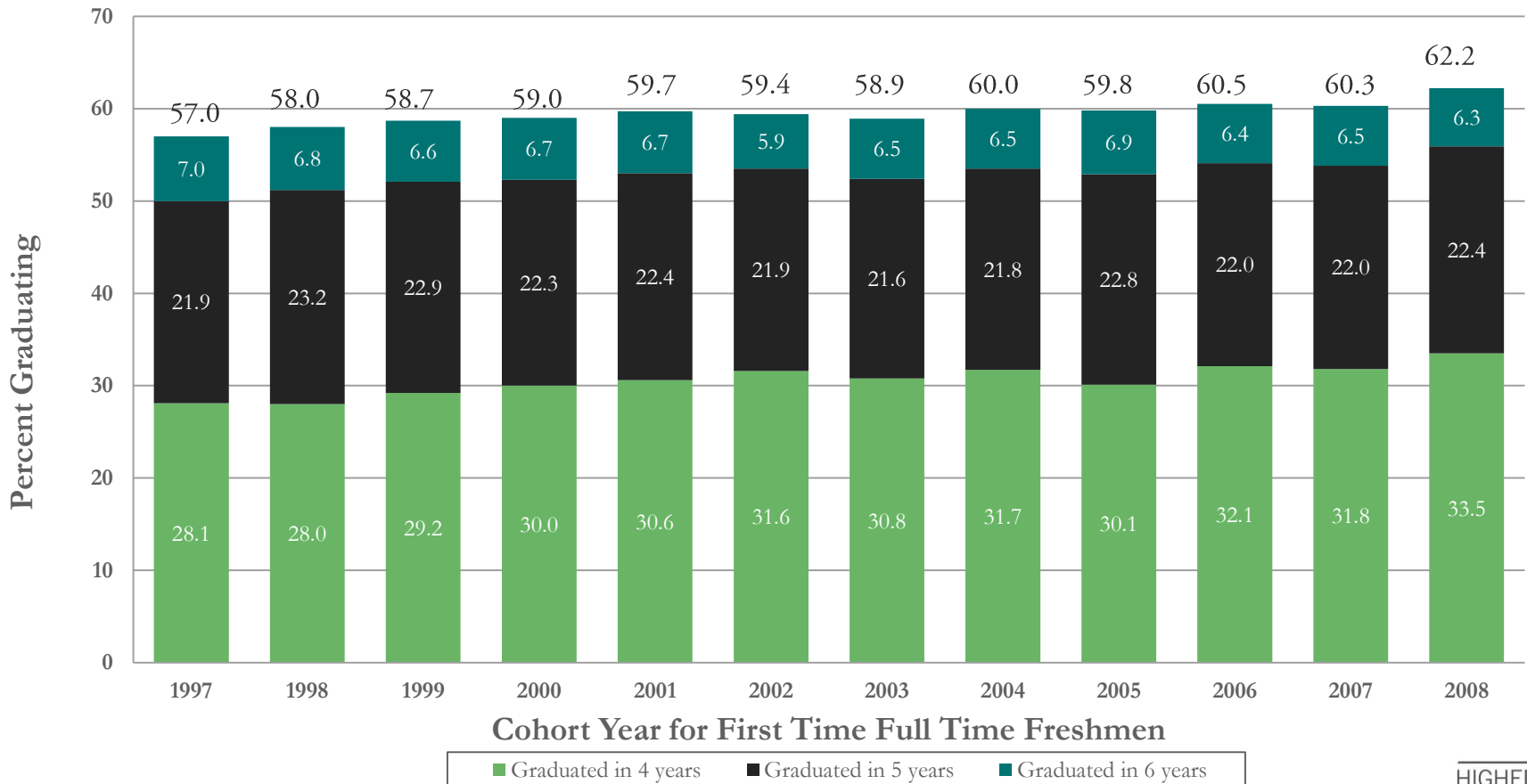


*From Digest of Educational Statistics, NCES, table 326.10

SOURCE: OUS Office of Institutional Research, Graduation Rate Survey reports

PUBLIC UNIVERSITY GRADUATION RATES: 4, 5, AND 6 YEARS

Oregon Public University Graduation Rates over 4, 5 and 6 years
including inter-university transfers



SOURCE: OUS Office of Institutional Research, Graduation Rate Survey reports