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# *Temporary Suspension of Admission GPA Requirements*

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Portland State  
UNIVERSITY



## *Background*

- High school visits and college fairs moved to virtual events
- High school guidance counselors have less access to their students
- General student Zoom fatigue
- Applications for admission to PSU were down 30% at the beginning of January
- Applications to the University of Oregon and Oregon State are both up significantly
- Half of the high schools from which we've seen the largest drop in applications are either Title 1 or teach more than 50% non-white students
- Nationally, first-year enrollments in college were down 13% for 2020
- FAFSA filers down 10% nationally, 20% in Oregon



## Background (cont'd)

*“The larger and more competitive colleges and universities are having a good year and getting lots of applications. But smaller and less competitive colleges are not. And **first-generation students and those who lack the money to pay for an application are not applying at the same rates they used to.**”*

[InsideHigherEd](#) (1/26/21)



## *Portland State's Mission*

“Portland State University is leading the way to an equitable and sustainable future through academic excellence, urban engagement and **expanding opportunity for all**. We pursue excellence through **accessibility**, innovation, collaboration, engagement, sustainability and transformation.”

“**We educate a diverse community** of lifelong learners.”

“Delivering on **our access mission**, contributing to a highly educated and diverse community.”

“**We promote access, inclusion and equity** as pillars of excellence.”



## *Portland State's Mission*

*Is requiring a 3.0 GPA for admission true to our mission and commitment to access and opportunity?*



## *COVID-19 Pledge*

### **Give every Oregonian the opportunity to earn a college degree and prepare for an impactful future**

**Challenge:** Portland is emerging from a significant intersection of pandemic and sustained racial justice protests that have disrupted our community and disrupted learning for tens of thousands of Oregon students. At PSU, the disruption has led to many students - especially BIPOC and low-income students - questioning whether they can afford or be successful in college. One manifestation of this at PSU is the significant decrease in applications for undergraduate enrollment for entering freshmen. The decrease is even more significant at high schools with significant numbers of underrepresented and first-generation students.

**Opportunity:** As PSU is a community leader, PSU and is committed to taking action to address the disruptions in education for Oregon students, many from underserved populations, by doing everything we can to eliminate barriers to application and enrollment, especially for BIPOC and low income students. As a result of investments by the federal government, we have an opportunity to do so, using these and investing one-time federal resources to invest in students, reopening and revitalizing the PSU campus, and reinvigorating in student success. At the same time, augment enrollment, work to reopen and revitalize campus, and reinvigorate the downtown Portland community.



## Proposal

- Suspend the 3.0 GPA required for admission to PSU and evaluate the effects of the new GPA requirement in fall 2022
- Continue to subject students under a 2.5 to holistic review
- Waive admission application fees through June 15
- Eliminate the GPA requirement for Four Years Free
- Reduce housing costs for the neediest students
- Provide a free summer course or courses for at-risk students
- Invest significantly in student persistence programs

*The suspension of the GPA is projected to result in between 200 and 400 additional students enrolling with less than a 3.0 GPA. This represents approximately 5-10% of the new student class, and 1-2% of the overall undergraduate student body.*



## *Student support proposal*

Summer bridge 'opt-out' program:

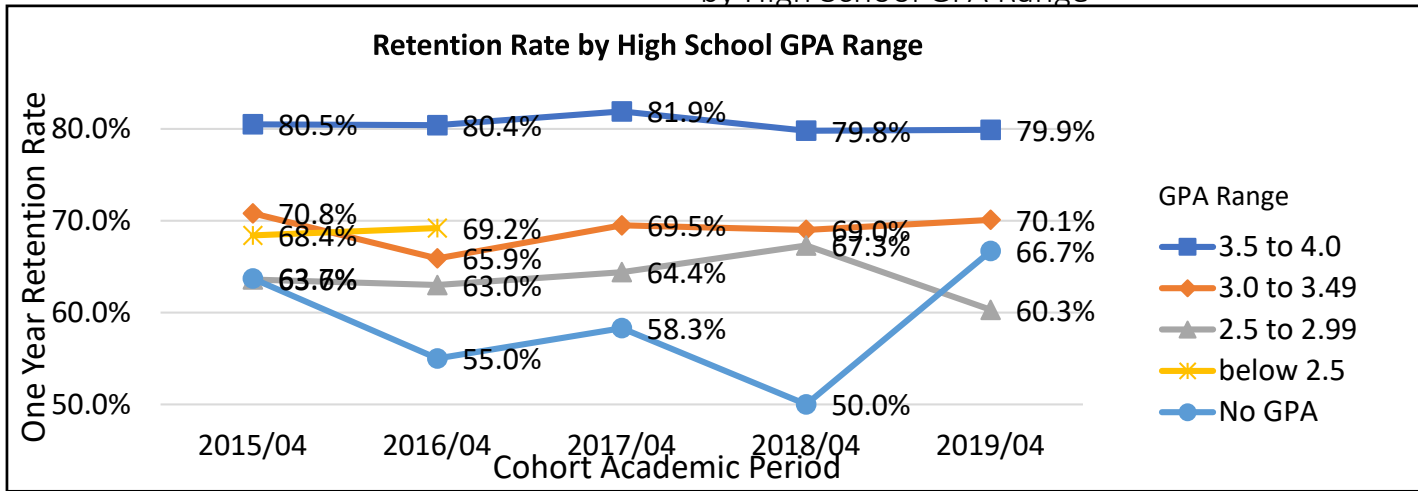
- Success course: study skills, time management
- Academic course: focused on either writing or math

First year student outreach

- Leverage existing student support
  - TRIO, MRS, Exito, L-SAMP, and more
- Scale current student support
  - Student success advocate
  - Early Alerts
- Circle-In
  - Student peer-studying platform



### First-Time Full-Time One Year Retention Rates Five-Year Trend (2015-2019) by High School GPA Range



*Data shows new, undergraduate, degree-seeking full-time first-time (freshman and advance standing) students. Excludes students who graduated within the first year*

Admission year/term	No GPA		< 2.5		2.5-2.99		3.0-3.49		3.5-4.0		Total N	Ret Rate
	N	Ret Rate	N	Ret Rate	N	Ret Rate	N	Ret Rate	N	Ret Rate		
2015/04	11	63.6%	19	68.4%	212	63.7%	774	70.8%	688	80.5%	1704	73.8%
2016/04	20	55.0%	13	69.2%	230	63.0%	698	65.9%	653	80.4%	1614	71.3%
2017/04	12	58.3%	-	-	180	64.4%	698	69.5%	941	81.9%	1840	75.2%
2018/04	18	50.0%	-	-	162	67.3%	677	69.0%	933	79.8%	1796	74.2%
2019/04	12	66.7%	-	-	116	60.3%	612	70.1%	854	79.9%	1603	74.7%

*N values under 10 are hidden*

On average, 10.6% of First-Time Full-Time students enter PSU with less than a 3.00 High School GPA

In Fall 2020 only 7.6% of First-Time Full-Time students had a high school GPA below 3.00 (n=111)

**First-Time Full-Time Six Year Graduation Rates**  
 Fall 2013 Cohort  
 Race/Ethnicity & High School GPA Range

Race/Ethnicity	< 2.5 Cohort			2.5-2.99 Cohort			3.0-3.49 Cohort			3.5-4.0 Cohort			No GPA Cohort			Total		
	N	Retained /Grad	Rate %	N	Retained /Grad	Rate %	N	Retained /Grad	Rate %	N	Retained /Grad	Rate %	N	Retained /Grad	Rate %	N	Retained /Grad	Rate %
Asian	1	0	0.0	19	9	47.4	67	32	47.8	92	62	67.4	-	-	-	179	103	57.5
Black	1	0	0.0	23	9	39.1	21	8	38.1	12	9	75.0	3	0	0.0	60	26	43.3
Declined to Respond/Other	3	1	33.3	4	1	25.0	23	15	65.2	22	12	54.5	-	-	-	52	29	55.8
Hispanic/Latino	2	1	50.0	37	15	40.5	124	50	40.3	64	39	60.9	-	-	-	227	105	46.3
International Students	2	0	0.0	15	3	20.0	45	16	35.6	52	28	53.8	3	1	33.3	117	48	41.0
Multiple Ethnic/Race	2	0	0.0	26	8	30.8	52	22	42.3	30	17	56.7	-	-	-	110	47	42.7
Native American	-	-	-	2	0	0.0	4	1	25.0	4	3	75.0	-	-	-	10	4	40.0
Pacific Islander	-	-	-	3	1	33.3	4	1	25.0	2	1	50.0	-	-	-	9	3	33.3
White	11	0	0.0	94	32	34.0	331	144	43.5	323	194	60.1	20	6	30.0	779	376	48.3
<b>Total</b>	22	2	9.1%	223	78	35.0	671	289	43.1	601	365	60.7	26	7	26.9	1543	741	48.0

*Italics indicate small N size; review with caution*

*Data shows new, undergraduate, degree-seeking full-time first-time (freshman and advance standing) students who began in the Fall 2013 cohort year. Excludes students who graduated within the first year.*

Data from [Intersectionality Exploration Tool](#)