

### Summary – Key Points

1. At least a **third of all faculty searches** undertaken in recent years in OUS universities have ended in **failure** (position not filled) or with a **diminished** result (not filled with the first-choice candidate). At some campuses, the proportion is approaching half of all searches.
2. Available data on failed and diminished searches **understate the problem**, especially since potential finalists frequently self-select out of the pool once they learn about the salary level, or never enter the pool after making inquiries about the salary level, historical salaries paid, and trends for the campus.
3. Although overall retention rates may appear to be stable, the **detailed data reveal worrisome trends** :
  - A disproportionate **loss of senior faculty**, beyond what would be expected through retirement.
  - Increasing losses of **mid-career faculty at the peak of their productivity** and accomplishment.
4. The data reported here **do not capture faculty at risk** of leaving or the consequences of current losses for future retention. Recent departures at UO's College of Education are an example of the snowball effect of the loss of a key faculty member.
5. The difficulties facing OUS universities in recruiting and retaining faculty in a competitive market are the result of:
  - **Low salaries** compared to those offered by most other universities
  - **Inability to provide support** in the form of equipment, labs, and graduate assistants
  - **Dim prospects for future resources** to carry out their academic work
  - **Increasing workload and frustration** at not being able to provide the needed level of advising and guidance to students
  - Lack of resources (available at competing universities) to address **“trailing spouse”** issues
6. The result is that the number of **regular rank faculty has decreased by 10%** over the past 10 years. Meanwhile, **enrollment has increased by 30% or nearly 20,000** students.
7. As enrollment growth has outpaced instructional capacity, particularly after the large number of faculty retirements in 2002-03, OUS universities have **turned to part-time and adjunct** faculty to meet teaching needs.
8. Since part-time and adjunct faculty chiefly provide classroom instruction, the growing numbers of students have placed a greater burden on the shrinking pool of **regular rank faculty who are the principal providers of non-classroom instruction**, including:
  - Student advising
  - Thesis and student research guidance
  - Mentoring
  - Extracurricular student projects
  - Program, curriculum, and course development
9. OUS universities are facing a set of interconnected issues involving **increasing losses of senior and mid-career faculty**, the **inability to replace them** because of diminished resources now and dim prospects for the future, **growing student demand**, and **increasing frustration** on the part of both students and faculty.

## Failed or Diminished Faculty Searches

At least a third of all OUS faculty searches in recent years have ended in failure (position not filled) or with a diminished result (not filled with the first-choice candidate). At some campuses, the proportion of unsuccessful searches is approaching half. Oregon State University and the University of Oregon have each averaged 60 to 75 failed or diminished searches over the past 3 years. About half of these unsuccessful searches ended in failure. Of the completed-but-diminished searches, about 80% were filled with the second-choice candidate; 20% of these searches were filled with the third or fourth choice candidate. The available information on failed and diminished searches is shown in the attached Table 1.

In the vast majority of these cases, salary is the major issue. The related issues of overall resource capacity, Oregon's commitment to support of public universities, and prospects for the future are also a significant concern for candidates. At OSU, for example, packages offered to faculty in engineering, forestry, and the sciences must include support for equipment, set-up, graduate assistants, and sometimes renovation expenses, with costs over and above salary ranging from \$45,000 to more than \$500,000 per faculty member. Nationally ranked programs—such as UO's College of Education—face the prospect not only of losing faculty who are lured away by attractive offers from top universities, but also of being unable to replace them with faculty of equal caliber because of the inability to compete on salary and other support. At PSU, it is frustrating enough to lose promising applicants to financially better offers from the International Monetary Fund (Economics) and the University of California-Irvine (English), but losing the competition for a young “star” in Biology to Mississippi State indicates the depth of the problem faced by universities in Oregon.

In many professional disciplines—e.g., engineering, technology fields, architecture, and journalism—departments encounter stiff competition from private industry in their recruitment of faculty. For some campuses, the heavier instruction load is an issue. All campuses must deal with trailing spouse issues in their searches, particularly as the number of academic couples increases. While many other universities have the resources and flexibility to accommodate this changing academic personnel landscape, OUS institutions do not. In several of the cases noted in Table 1, spousal issues were a factor in the candidate's rejection of an offer.

As distressing as these documented cases are, they understate the problem. Some failed searches represent a gradual transition from diminished to failed, as offers extended to second, third, and fourth choice candidates are rejected. OUS universities report that candidates frequently self-select out of the pool once they learn about the salary level and, more recently, the salary freeze. Other potential candidates never enter the pool after making inquiries about the salary level. These cases are not reflected in the available data, but are part of the challenges our universities face in maintaining a quality faculty resource.

## Faculty Losses

A recently completed study of faculty turnover data for the Oregon University System, from 1993-94 through 2003-04, shows that, on average, 5% of regular rank faculty leave the university system each year—about 100 faculty annually—through resignation, termination, or retirement (see Table 2). There has been some variation over the years, especially in 2002-03 when changes in the PERS system precipitated an unusually large number of retirements, but for most years during that period, turnover rates ranged from 4% to 6%.

The data in Table 3 show that, over the past 5 years, 80% of separating faculty left either early in their career (29% within the first 6 years) or relatively late (51% after 20 years or more).<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, the

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<sup>1</sup> In 2002-03, the proportion of faculty leavers older than 55 jumped to 76%, and in 2003-04 it dropped to 31%, even though the proportion of tenured or tenure-track faculty older than 55 did not differ significantly from previous

high incidence of early leaving conforms to institutional tenure practices: 77% of those who left within the first 6 years held the rank of assistant professor.

At the same time, in recent years a greater proportion of senior faculty members (professors or associate professors) who leave OUS are doing so relatively early in their career. In the seven years prior to and shortly after the adoption of Measure 5 in November 1990 – that is, from 1986-87 through 1992-93 – only 13% of professors or associate professors who left OUS did so during their first nine years within the system. Between 1993-94 and 2001-02, that proportion had grown to 20%. Moreover, recently there has been an increase in the proportion of departing senior faculty who leave before attaining 20 years of service. In the eight years from 1991-92 through 1998-99, 35% of senior faculty who left OUS did so before attaining 20 years of service; in the three following years (i.e., 1999-00 through 2001-02), that proportion had increased to 47% – nearly half of the leavers.<sup>2</sup>

This development has significantly reduced the percentage of full professors among OUS faculty. Between 1993-94 and 2003-04, the number of full professors declined by 30%, and the number of associate professors dropped by 6%, while the number of tenure-track assistant professors increased by 28%. In effect, the university system has exchanged tenured full professors for tenure-track assistant professors, an exchange that has taken place almost entirely in the last five years. The extraordinarily large number of faculty retirements in 2002-03 has placed a huge burden on the university system in replacing them in a competitive faculty market.

OUS universities are finding that too many of the associate professors who might have been expected to be promoted and take their place among the senior ranks are instead leaving OUS. In many cases, these are faculty who are approaching the peak of their career, young enough not to be too vested in the retirement system but distinguished enough in their professional accomplishments to be highly attractive to other universities or, in some cases, to industry.

In many cases, the reasons that create challenges in recruiting new faculty are the same reasons current faculty leave: salary, the prospects for future resources, and spousal issues. Excluding retirements, OUS campuses report that 80% of the faculty who leave do so for salary related reasons. A few examples:

- At **OSU**, all of the faculty who left the university for other employment accepted offers with more attractive salary. Ten went to other universities and three to a state or federal agency. Other faculty are “at risk”—that is, they are receiving active offers or inquiries from other institutions and are likely to leave. One case involves a dual career issue for an engineering professor—both husband and wife are professors and have expressed a strong preference to stay in Oregon if the spouse can find a tenure track position in OUS—but OSU is likely to lose this professor if both of them can find tenure track positions in another state. OUS does not have the resources to compete with other states in this way.
- At **UO** in the just the past few months, four distinguished faculty in the College of Education (two of them ethnic minority faculty) have announced they are leaving for better-funded and better-supported positions in other states. Their loss puts the College of Education’s top-five national ranking in jeopardy. UO has also lost a prominent faculty member in Chemistry to the University of California-Santa Barbara. UO’s Department of Chemistry includes leading faculty in a number of research areas, including materials science, biochemistry, and innovative efforts in “green

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years. Our conclusion is that the spike in 2002-03 was caused by retirement-age faculty who hastened their departure ahead of the July 1, 2003 PERS deadline, and the subsequent year’s trough resulted from the depletion of that faculty group.

<sup>2</sup> This trend was interrupted in 2002-03 and 2003-04 with the unusual PERS retirement phenomenon, which resulted in dramatically higher numbers of faculty retiring in 2002-03 and much lower numbers in 2003-04, as the normal retirement pool had been depleted the previous year. The pattern should return to normal in 2004-05.

chemistry,” and UO is unlikely to replace this faculty member with someone of comparable quality. All five of these faculty have been responsible for bringing more than \$20 million in research grants to UO in the past two years.

- At **PSU**, all of the faculty who left in the past four years did so because of better salary offers from out of state universities, and in some of the cases, because of better supporting resources. One associate professor with a national reputation in modeling and remediating pollutants in ground water left, taking \$500,000 per year in sponsored research with him. A highly productive Native American faculty member in the state’s only graduate social work program left to take a position at \$20,000 more per year.
- Not surprisingly, **OIT** faces particular problems in competition from industry: out of 11 departures over the past three years, 4 returned to industry. What may be unexpected, however, is that two others were offered higher salaries at community colleges. OIT is also in the unfortunate position of paying average salaries to faculty that are below the average for their bachelor’s recipients: the *average starting salary* of an OIT bachelor’s degree recipient is \$45,400, while the average salary of an OIT assistant professor (possessing a doctorate) is \$43,100.
- At **WOU**, 11 out of the 13 departures over the past 4 years have been for reasons related to salary. Along with salary, course load is a major reason: 6 left because the course load at the recruiting university was lower.

All universities report that current faculty, like prospective faculty, have serious concerns about the larger issue of disinvestment and prospects for future support of their academic work. UO notes that it takes four to six years to replace a lost national figure, and the loss of such visible faculty causes others to be cautious about coming to Oregon.

### **Part-Time and Adjunct Faculty**

While the pool of regular rank faculty declined by 10% between 1993-94 and 2003-04, OUS enrollment in the past 10 years increased by 30% or nearly 20,000 students. The accelerated retirements in 2002-03 created an exceptionally large number of vacancies that OUS campuses have not been able to fill with regular rank faculty. To meet this instructional demand, OUS universities have increasingly turned to part-time and adjunct faculty to supplement the instruction provided by regular rank faculty. These faculty hold teaching appointments that are not tenure-related, and may consist of practicing professionals hired to teach a single course or instructors who have longer fixed term contracts (such as those employed to teach composition, foreign language, or some general math courses).

Although these faculty provide excellent instruction and are an important resource in meeting instructional demands, their growing proportion is worrisome. Part-time and adjunct faculty do not provide many of the important instructional services provided by regular rank faculty, such as student advising and mentoring, thesis guidance, work on extracurricular student projects, or curriculum and course development. As enrollment has increased over the past 10 years, the burden of providing this kind of non-classroom instruction has been placed on a shrinking pool of regular rank faculty. Under these circumstances, students inevitably receive less attention than they should, and faculty feel frustrated at their inability to provide the level of service they would like. The growing student-faculty ratios are evidence of the overall resource concerns that underlie faculty departures and difficulties in successful faculty recruitment.

The current number and percentage of part-time/adjunct faculty are displayed in Table 4.

Table 1

Summary of OUS Failed/Diminished Faculty Searches

Campus/ Year	Total Faculty Searches	Failed & Diminished Searches	Failed	Diminished	Rank in candidate pool			Reasons & number of searches or candidates	Comment
					2nd	3rd	4th		
<b>EOU</b>									
2004-05	23 (see comment)	5 Asst. Prof.	5						The total of 23 searches for 2004-05 is the result of a one-time position conversion; many of those searches are still pending.  Some searches may take several attempts. A significant number of candidates withdraw in advance of visiting campus.  All EOU academic programs are small, so not filling a position can be damaging to the program.  While not a focus of this survey, EOU has a chronic problem recruiting administrators, again due to salary. Six Dean or Director positions reporting to the Provost are currently searching.
2003-04	9	1 Asst. Prof	1						
2002-03	6								
2001-02	11								
<b>OIT</b>									
2003-04	10	5 total	0	5	5			Salary - 4 Counter offer received - 1 Spouse issue - 1 Stayed in industry in Calif	OIT faces particular challenges in competition from industry as well as other academic institutions.
2002-03	10	1 Asst Prof	0	1	1				
<b>OSU</b>	Salary is not the only concern in recruiting faculty. Recent packages provided to faculty hired in engineering, forestry, and the sciences have included (in addition to salary) equipment, set-up, and renovation expenses ranging from \$45K to \$550K, plus additional expense for graduate assistants.								
2004-05	103	22	11	Estimated to be 10 to 12 per yr					
2003-04	64	22	11						
2002-03	86	24	12						
<b>PSU</b>	NOTE: Numbers shown here understate the diminished search problem. Departments report that candidates often self-select out of the pool once they learn about salary level and wage freeze. Some potential candidates make inquiries but don't apply due to salary level. Those numbers are not reflected here.  Data also do not include failed searches for Dean positions: in one case, at least 3 candidates declined; in another case, there was no acceptable second choice after two rounds of the search because the pool was so diminished due to salary and resource concerns.								
2004-05	51	6 total: 4 Asst Prof, 1 Assoc Prof, 1 Prof	4	2	2			Salary - 5 Spouse (health) - 1	In one search, lost first 3 choices because of salary.  In one search, 2 choices lost because of salary and spousal issues. One position required 3 searches and selection of 2nd choice in 3rd search.  A number of potential applicants declined to apply following an inquiry about salary. One position had 3 failed searches over several years. Salary offered is \$50K below market.
2003-04	24	6 total: 3 Asst Prof, 3 Assoc Prof	0	6	5		1	Salary - 5 Counter offer received - 1	
2002-03	31	4 total: 2 Asst Prof, 1 Assoc Prof, 1 Prof	1	3	3			Salary - 4 Spouse - 2 Stability of program/funding - 1	
2001-02	28	5 total: 4 Asst Prof, 1 Prof	1	4	3	1		Salary - 4	

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<b>SOU</b> Last 3-5 years	26	12	4	8	7	1		Salary - 2 Spouse issue - 2 Personal/professional - 2	3 candidates took another position before the interview process.
<b>UO</b> Last 3-5 years	215	71 total: Arts & Sci - 53 Business - 7 Law - 5 Music - 1 Library - 5							Candidates worry about resources; Oregon is perceived not to have a sustainable strategy for public universities. Failed searches mean greater reliance on adjuncts to handle instructional demands. Professional programs (e.g., Architecture and Journalism) face competition from private sector.
2003-04	58	23	14	9	6	2	1	Salary/resources - 15+ Personal/professional - 3	Even where searches are successful, all UO schools & colleges report an increase in the number of searches diminished from their optimum outcome by going to second or third or fourth candidates.
<b>WOU</b>	There are particular problems in recruiting in computer science and the natural sciences & math. Current salary schedule in computer science shows WOU approx 70% below Cal State Stansilaus, a peer comparator. In natural sciences, start up funds are an issue in getting candidates to accept an offer. Departments don't have funds to cover those packages.								
2004-05	20	16 total	7	9	7	2		Salary - 7 Personal - 2 Other (e.g., wanted more technology) - 6	Of the 9 completed searches, 7 searches went to a 2nd choice candidate; 2 went to 3rd choice. Of the 7 failed searches, one was halted after 3 offers; one after 2 offers; one after 1 offer; and in one case no offer was made from the applicant pool. Salary and workload are the 2 reasons cited for rejections.
2003-04	13	6 total, all assistant prof	4	2	2			Salary - 3	One of the candidates was highly interested in the position until salary was discussed.
2002-03	14	3 total, all assistant prof	1	2	1	1		Salary - 4 candidates; other resources - 1	In one search, no offer was made from the candidate pool. In another search, the position was filled with a 3rd choice candidate. In the third search, the position was filled with a visiting professor after a failed second try, and at a lower salary than had been expected by the candidate.

Source: OUS Office of Strategic Programs & Planning, from information provided by OUS provosts.

**Table 2**  
**Regular Rank Faculty by Institution & Employment Status,**  
**1993-04 through 2003-04**

Academic Year	Eastern Oregon University					Oregon Institute of Technology					Oregon State University					Portland State University				
	Left employmt		Continuing		Total	Left employmt		Continuing		Total	Left employmt		Continuing		Total	Left employmt		Continuing		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	N	%	N	%	N	N	%	N	%	N	N	%	N	%	N
1993-94	3	5.5	52	94.5	55	6	6.1	93	93.9	99	39	4.8	766	95.2	805	20	4.7	409	95.3	429
1994-95	1	1.9	53	98.1	54	10	10.2	88	89.8	98	35	4.3	770	95.7	805	16	3.8	410	96.2	426
1995-96	5	8.2	56	91.8	61	2	2.1	92	97.9	94	34	4.3	754	95.7	788	11	2.5	427	97.5	438
1996-97	4	6.8	55	93.2	59	5	5.3	89	94.7	94	62	8.1	703	91.9	765	19	4.4	417	95.6	436
1997-98	4	6.7	56	93.3	60	5	5.7	83	94.3	88	31	4.2	714	95.8	745	31	7.1	404	92.9	435
1998-99	2	3.5	55	96.5	57	2	2.1	95	97.9	97	34	4.5	718	95.5	752	14	3.3	404	96.7	418
1999-00	2	3.6	54	96.4	56	8	8.1	91	91.9	99	12	1.9	611	98.1	623	13	3.3	385	96.7	398
2000-01	1	1.7	58	98.3	59	3	3.4	86	96.6	89	20	3.2	601	96.8	621	14	3.4	397	96.6	411
2001-02	3	5.7	50	94.3	53	7	7.0	93	93.0	100	31	5.2	565	94.8	596	23	5.0	441	95.0	464
2002-03	0	0.0	63	100.0	63	9	8.7	95	91.3	104	84	13.9	522	86.1	606	27	5.8	437	94.2	464
2003-04	4	6.3	59	93.7	63	6	5.9	95	94.1	101	22	4.0	526	96.0	548	12	2.6	444	97.4	456
11-year avg.	2.6	4.5	55.5	95.5	58.2	5.7	5.9	90.9	94.1	96.6	36.7	5.3	659.1	94.7	695.8	18.2	4.2	415.9	95.8	434.1

Academic Year	Southern Oregon University					University of Oregon					Western Oregon University					System Total				
	Left employmt		Continuing		Total	Left employmt		Continuing		Total	Left employmt		Continuing		Total	Left employmt		Continuing		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	N	%	N	%	N	N	%	N	%	N	N	%	N	%	N
1993-94	4	3.5	109	96.5	113	23	3.7	602	96.3	625	10	7.6	121	92.4	131	105	4.7	2,152	95.3	2,257
1994-95	4	3.7	104	96.3	108	31	5.0	587	95.0	618	14	10.4	120	89.6	134	111	4.9	2,132	95.1	2,243
1995-96	1	1.0	100	99.0	101	22	3.5	614	96.5	636	14	10.8	116	89.2	130	89	4.0	2,159	96.0	2,248
1996-97	6	6.2	91	93.8	97	22	3.4	620	96.6	642	14	11.0	113	89.0	127	132	5.9	2,088	94.1	2,220
1997-98 <sup>1</sup>	6	4.0	145	96.0	151	22	3.6	587	96.4	609	5	4.0	120	96.0	125	104	4.7	2,109	95.3	2,213
1998-99	8	6.1	124	93.9	132	28	4.8	557	95.2	585	6	4.8	119	95.2	125	94	4.3	2,072	95.7	2,166
1999-00	2	1.7	119	98.3	121	30	5.6	510	94.4	540	14	10.8	116	89.2	130	81	4.1	1,886	95.9	1,967
2000-01	11	8.1	125	91.9	136	28	5.0	530	95.0	558	3	2.3	128	97.7	131	80	4.0	1,925	96.0	2,005
2001-02	15	9.4	144	90.6	159	24	4.2	550	95.8	574	10	7.3	127	92.7	137	113	5.4	1,970	94.6	2,083
2002-03	11	6.5	159	93.5	170	45	7.8	535	92.2	580	14	10.3	122	89.7	136	190	8.9	1,933	91.1	2,123
2003-04	2	1.3	153	98.7	155	16	2.8	550	97.2	566	5	3.7	129	96.3	134	67	3.3	1,956	96.7	2,023
11-year avg.	6.4	4.9	124.8	95.1	131.2	26.5	4.5	567.5	95.5	593.9	9.9	7.6	121.0	92.4	130.9	106.0	5.0	2,035	95.0	2,141

Includes tenured or tenure-track faculty (part- or full-time), lecturer - professor, who are homed in an instructional department and have instructional FTE.

<sup>1</sup>In 1997, SOU began distinguishing tenure-track faculty from fixed-term, non-tenure-track faculty; this accounts for the apparent large increase in continuing faculty.

Source: OUS Institutional Research, file run from end-of-October payroll, 1993-94 to 2003-04

**Table 3**  
**Regular Rank Faculty Leaving Employment, by Years of Service & Tenure Status**  
**1999-00 through 2003-04 (Combined)**

Years of Service	Professor	Assoc Prof	Asst Prof*	Instructor	Total
1 to 3	5	14	82	1	102
4 to 6	1	14	38	0	53
7 to 9	4	16	7	0	27
10 to 14	16	11	6	1	34
15 to 19	23	15	4	0	42
20 or more	223	44	1	5	273
Total	272	114	138	7	531
% leaving within first 6 years	2%	25%	87%	14%	29%
% leaving after 20 or more years	82%	39%	1%	71%	51%

\* Some of the tenure-track assistant professors have been employed longer than the normal seven-year maximum because they were either employed previously at the institution in a non-tenure-track position or had been granted an extension on the time to tenure review for family, medical, or other personal reasons.

Source: OUS Institutional Research.

**Table 4**  
**Part-Time and Adjunct Faculty, Fall 2004**

Institution	Headcount	% of Total	FTE	% of Total
Eastern Oregon University	43	32%	18	16%
Oregon Institute of Technology	84	40%	37	21%
Oregon State University	317	33%	210	30%
Portland State University	589	52%	148	21%
Southern Oregon University	118	38%	43	19%
University of Oregon	359	32%	233	26%
Western Oregon University	158	53%	82	37%
Total	1,668	40%	771	25%

Source: OUS university provosts and OUS Institutional Research.