

## Oregon State University

### 2025 RNL Priorities Survey of Online Learners (PSOL) Report

#### Executive Summary

In August of 2025, OSU Ecampus facilitated the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Priorities Survey of Online Learners (PSOL) with a targeted group of newly matriculated students. The PSOL is used specifically to benchmark nationally with other institutions who are serving online learners and that facilitate this assessment. In total 3,905 Ecampus students whose first enrollment was in AY25 – Summer 2024, Fall 2024, Winter 2025, and Spring 2025 – were invited to participate in the PSOL. This year we received 252 completed surveys, generating a response rate of 6.4%. This report covers key findings, along with respondent demographics, strengths and challenges, campus items, and recommendations.

#### Key findings

- **High satisfaction:** 75% of OSU online students reported being satisfied or very satisfied, above the national benchmark of 73%.
- **Strong likelihood to reenroll:** 83% would probably or definitely choose OSU again, well above the 75% national average.
- **Top enrollment factors:** Convenience, flexible pacing, and institutional reputation are the leading motivators for choosing OSU.
- **Areas of strength:** Availability of various supports and assistance, clear assessment and evaluation in coursework, and faculty office hour offerings.
- **Areas of improvement:** Speed of transcript articulation, faculty feedback within coursework, and availability of financial aid and value proposition for tuition paid.

#### Respondent Demographics

The majority of respondents fall within the age range of 25 – 44 (62%), but a surprising number reported being in the age range of 19 – 24 (21%). As is typical with online education, the respondent population trends female (62%) with just under a third identifying as male (31%). Students learning full-time (51%) and part-time (49%) are nearly split which demonstrates a trend we're seeing in a growing number of students striving to enroll at a full-time level. By and large, nearly all respondents indicated their plans are to complete their online degree program (94%), with a few planning to finish their degree on campus (4%). Just over half indicated they are employed full-time (53%), with the remaining either employed part-time (19%) or not currently employed (28%). Finally, the respondent pool is largely homogenous with over two-thirds identifying as White (71%) and only a few identifying as Hispanic (7%), Asian or Pacific Islander (5%), Black/African American (4%), and American Indian or Alaskan Native (2%).

Convenience and flexible pacing are especially critical to respondents. This underscores the importance of maintaining adaptable online structures and student-centered course scheduling. OSU's strong reputation remains a differentiator, but flexibility is the most decisive factor, according to the top 5 factors to enroll at OSU Ecampus:

1. Convenience – 91%
2. Flexible pacing for completing a program – 90%
3. Reputation of institution – 84%
4. Work schedule compatibility – 84%
5. Ability to transfer credits – 83%

### **Strengths and Challenges**

The PSOL asks students to respond to several statements by indicating the importance of that item to their student experience and to what degree they are satisfied with that item at OSU. The combination of those scores creates a gap score that is used to identify strengths (satisfaction score is equal to or higher than the importance score) and challenges (satisfaction score is lower than the importance score). These are noted with varying degrees of statistical significance and RNL provides benchmarking data for this set of common items used by other clients facilitating this assessment.

#### *Strengths identified for OSU Ecampus:*

- Student assignments are clearly defined in the syllabus
- The institution responds quickly when information is requested
- Assessment and evaluation procedures are clear and reasonable
- Appropriate technical assistance is readily available
- Adequate online library resources are provided

#### *Challenges identified for OSU Ecampus:*

- The quality of online instruction is excellent
- Instructional materials are appropriate for program content
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment
- There are sufficient offerings within my program of study
- Program requirements are clear and reasonable
- Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress

The PSOL allows for 10 customized 'campus items' to be included in this gap score analysis. These scores are not included in benchmarking data as they vary between institutions.

#### *Campus item strengths:*

- I have access to mental health and wellness resources
- I have access to faculty hosted office hours
- I have access to OSU provided resources that support my online learning success

*Campus item challenges:*

- Transfer credits are articulated quickly
- I have access to resources to plan financially for my education
- I have made a connection with at least one person who helps me feel connected to the institution

Two additional campus items were included in a different section of the survey but pertain to the strengths and challenges presented here.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Maybe/Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
If I had access to additional financial aid, I would be able to enroll full time/more often	41.53%	12.10%	23.39%	14.52%	8.47%
My college provides opportunities for me to engage in activities and programming from a distance	30.08%	33.33%	26.02%	6.50%	4.07%

Finally, there are three summary questions that students answer that allow for benchmarking nationally. Those are presented below.

	Institution score	National norms score	Institution %	National norms %
So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?	5.27	5.28	65% better/quite better/much better	65% better/quite better/much better
Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far	5.88	5.84	75% satisfied/very satisfied	73% satisfied/very satisfied
All in all, if you had it to do over again, would you enroll here?	6.18	5.93	83% probably/definitely yes	75% probably/definitely yes

**Recommendations**

1. Enhance flexible program options and structures (accelerated pathways, self-paced options, modular courses) to align with the top enrollment drivers.
2. Highlight OSU's reputation and outcomes in marketing and advising to reinforce a key enrollment driver.
3. Tailor communications and community-building strategies to the demographics of the online student body, especially women and adult learners.