

February 2004

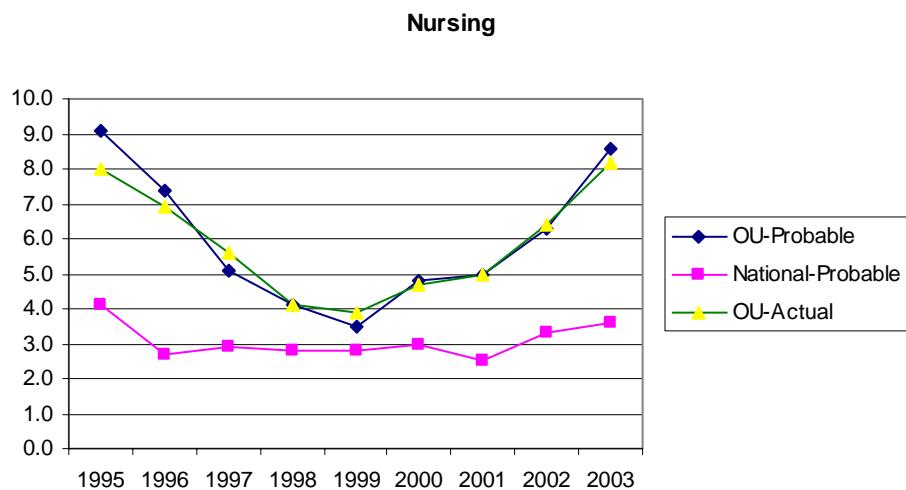
SPOTLIGHT ON OU

OU's School of Nursing Bucks National Trend

At orientation each year, Oakland University's new first year students answer the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey questions about their expectations for college, including their intended major. Over the years, trends in OU first-year students (FTIAC) majors have paralleled the national trends reported by HERI, which administers CIRP survey taken by students at 413 of the nation's baccalaureate colleges and universities. This report highlights some of the current trends in majors and compares the 2003 OU students' survey responses to the national data as well as the major in which they actually enrolled in fall 2003.

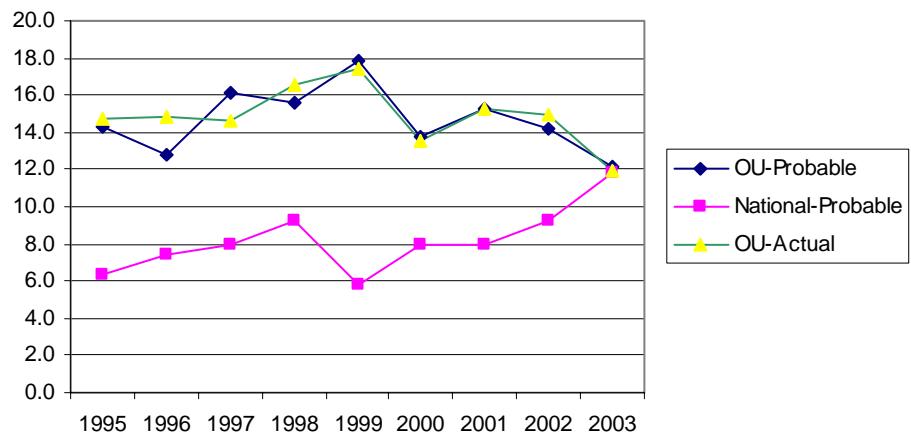
In general, OU students' major choices tend to follow to national trends, however in fall 2003, there were some exceptions.

In spite of the media coverage of a shortage of nurses, the national data shows only a slight increase in interest in nursing as a major among new first-year students. On the other hand, interest in nursing has increased dramatically at OU, from a low of 3.5% in 1999 to 9% this year, as high as it was in 1995.



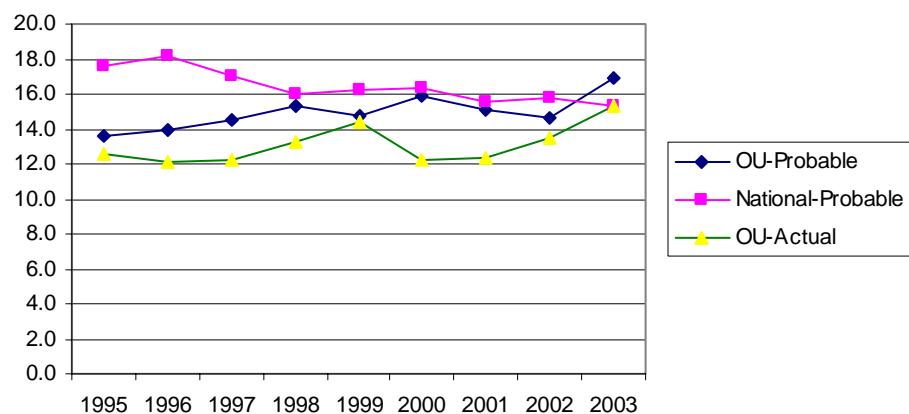
OU students have traditionally shown more interest in majoring in engineering and computer science than students nationally. However, since 1999 the gap between OU and the national data has become smaller as national interest increases and interest at OU declines. In 2003, the percentage of OU's first-year students expecting to major in engineering and computer science is the same as the national data.

Engineering & Computer Science

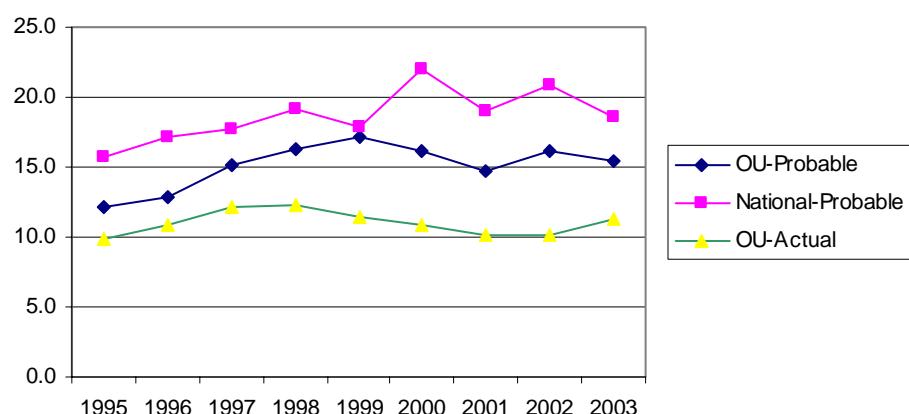


Business was the high interest major of the 80's at OU, peaking in 1988 at 27%. After dropping as low as 14% in 1995, OU students interest in business is now slightly higher than the national (17% vs. 15%), and 15% of first-year students were actually enrolled in business, the highest percent since 1995.

Business Administration



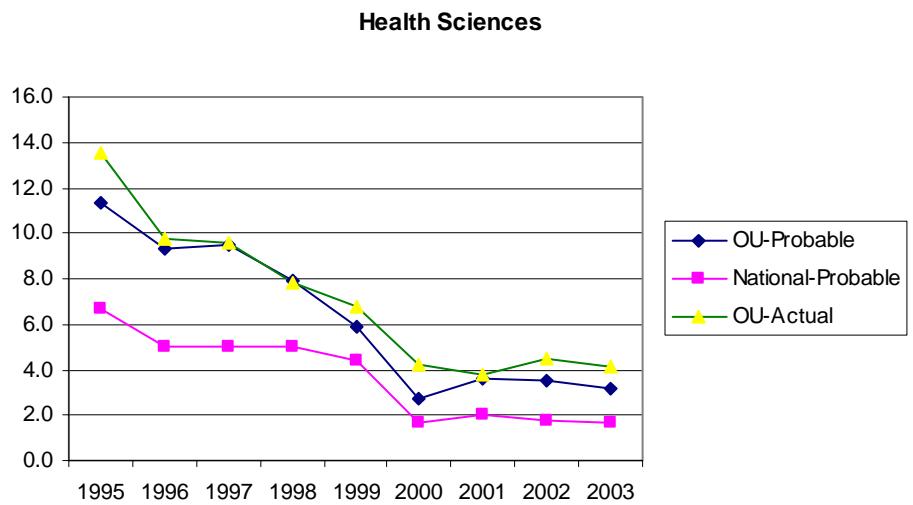
Education & Human Services



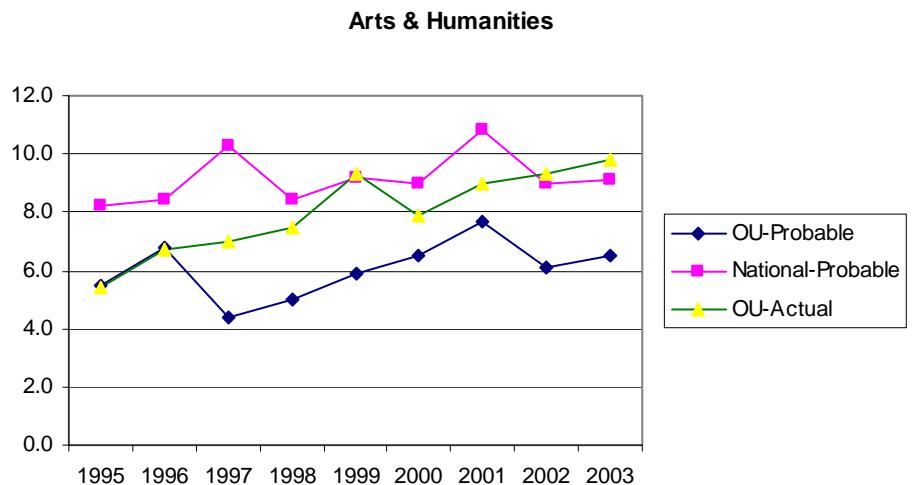
Interest in education has been steady, although at OU the numbers have generally been lower than the national data.

The number of OU FTIACs who expected to major in education increased steadily throughout the 1990's, peaking at 17% in 1999, then dropping to 15.5% in 2003. 11% of first-year students enrolled in the School of Education, with the balance enrolled as secondary education majors in the College of Arts and Sciences.

OU students were more interested in health science majors than the national group for a number of years, but the recent decline in interest here has brought it more in line with the national data. Interest in the health sciences went from a high of 11% in 1995 to about 4% in 2000, where it has remained. Actual enrollment in health sciences generally matches expectations.



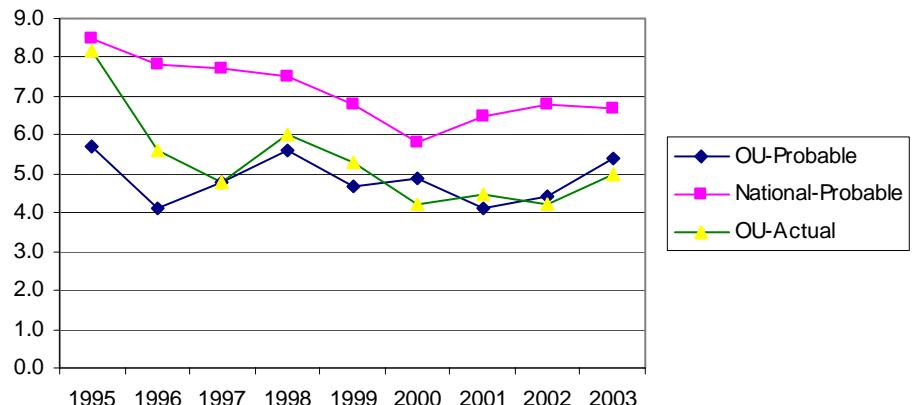
Nationally, interest in the arts & humanities¹ has been in the range of 8-11% of new students since 1995. For 2003, the percent who said they would probably major in one of these areas at OU was 6.5%, while 10% of first-year students were actually enrolled in these majors. The additional students are most likely secondary education majors who said their probable major was education when they responded to the survey.



¹ Art & Art History, English, History, International Studies, Linguistics, Modern Language, MTD, and Philosophy are included.

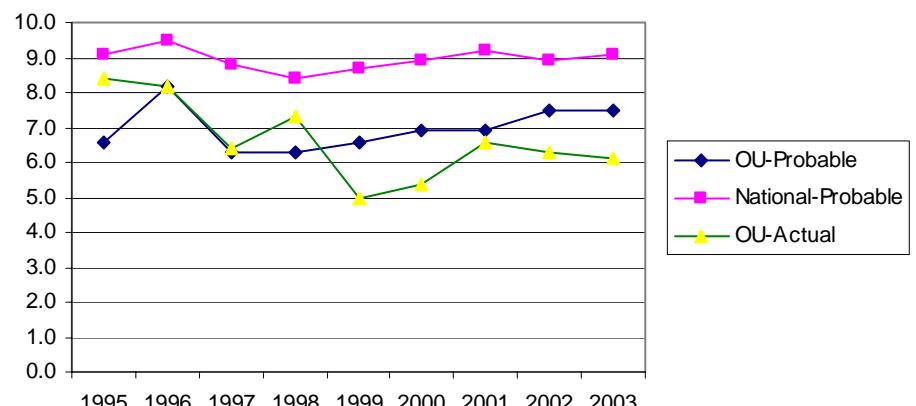
After several years of declining national interest, the sciences and mathematics² have leveled off between 6 and 7%. It appears more erratic at OU due to the small numbers, but the percent of FTIACs indicating an interest in these areas was up to over 5% in 2003.

Sciences & Mathematics



Social Sciences

Over the years, 6% to 8% of new OU FTIACs have indicated an interest in social science³ majors and at 7.5%, 2003 fits that pattern as well. Interest in social sciences majors at OU continues to be slightly lower than the national average of 9%. The numbers of students who enrolled in social sciences majors at OU tend not to parallel expectations consistently. Perhaps this is because students do not really understand much about the social science majors at the time of the survey.



For additional data and reports, visit the OIRA website:
<http://aisnt.ais.oakland.edu/oira/ir.html>

² Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics departments are included.

³ Political Science/Public Administration, Psychology, Anthropology/Sociology, and Women's Studies are included.