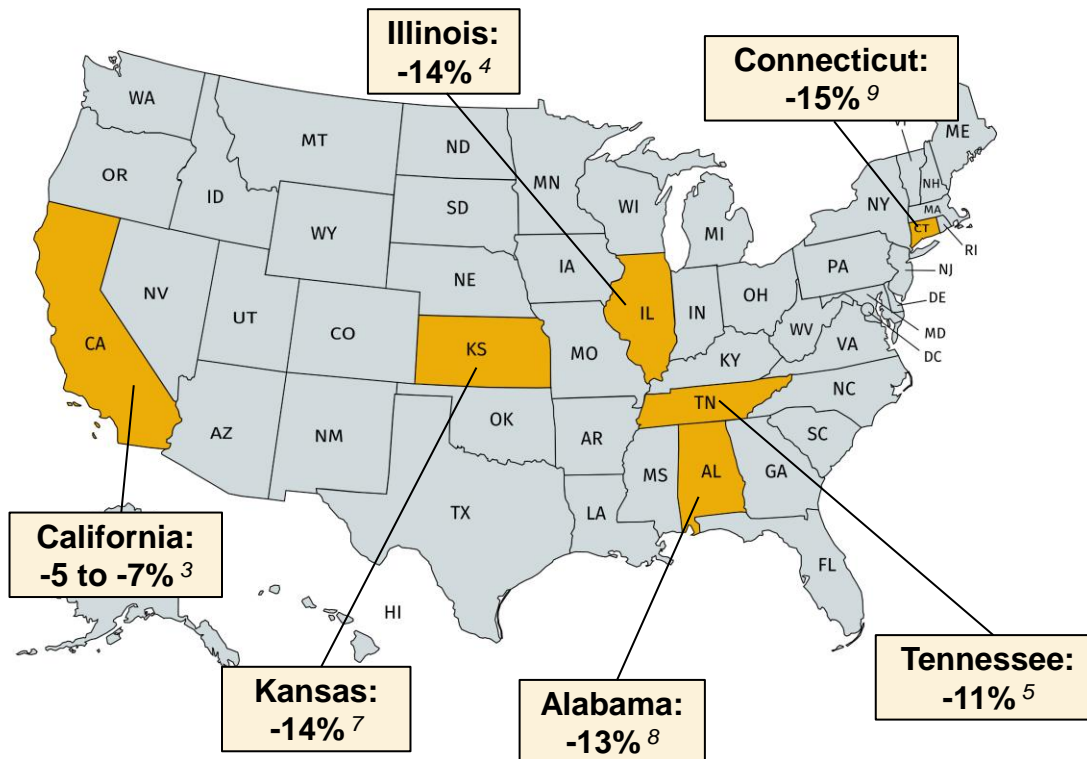


HURON COVID-19 INSIGHTS

FALL 2020 COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Huron is tracking Fall enrollment data for hundreds of U.S. institutions. This analysis highlights **steep enrollment declines at community colleges in Fall 2020 and the factors driving these declines.**

Decline in Total Community College Enrollment by State Six Select Examples



Created with mapchart.net

Across the country, community colleges are experiencing a **9.4% decline** in total Fall enrollment on average – compared to a roughly 1% decline over the past few years.²

Sources: Individual institution websites, national and local news, and National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

Institutional actions data current as of 09/24/20.

¹National Student Clearinghouse Research Center ²Inside Higher Ed ³Ed Source ⁴Chicago Tribune ⁵Knox News

⁶The Chronicle of Higher Ed ⁷Salina Post ⁸Alabama Commission on Higher Education ⁹Boston Globe

DRIVING THE DECLINE

Despite initial predictions that community college enrollment may increase during the COVID-19 pandemic, several factors have likely contributed to the steep decline:

ATYPICAL ECONOMIC TRENDS



Recessions have historically had a positive impact on enrollment, but the pandemic has not due to reasons like health concerns, childcare limitations, and the fast-paced nature of changes.

FRESHMAN STUDENT DECLINES



Across all states, first-time enrollment declined 22.7%¹, which – compared to total enrollment declines of 9.4% – suggests that the enrollment declines were concentrated in that population.

DISPARITY IN COVID-19 IMPACTS



The pandemic has disproportionately impacted populations that typically drive community college enrollment (e.g., 14.2% decline in black students, 12.7% decline in Hispanic students).

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY



Community colleges serve populations more likely to face challenges with access to the internet and technology that is required for remote learning.

IMPLICATIONS OF DECLINING ENROLLMENT

Across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic is straining institutional finances, operations, and student instruction. The examples below highlight that for community colleges, steep enrollment declines will have additional long-term impacts on transfer students, first-year students, accessibility, and equity.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Community colleges had hoped to see **enrollment gains from students transferring out of 4-year colleges**, but the opposite has occurred.

18.4% **decline** in reverse transfers⁶
(students moving from 4-years to 2-years)

2.6% **increase** in upward transfers⁶
(students moving from 2-years to 4-years)

The steep decline, especially in first-year community colleges students, will **impact future transfer populations for 4-year institutions**.

FRESHMAN STUDENTS

22.7% **decline** in freshman students¹

Community college leaders fear that the concentrated declines in freshman students may result in many **students who never enroll in community colleges or 4-year institutions**.

Many community college students have indicated that they prefer an **in-person learning environment**. As a result, many students are delaying their attendance.

GROWING INEQUITY

Community colleges enroll more **low-income students, students of color, and adult learners** – demographics that have been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Job losses and additional childcare responsibilities have forced many students to **delay their college plans indefinitely**.

Hundreds of thousands of students are **not receiving the education necessary to advance to higher-level degrees and jobs**.

LOOKING AHEAD: SPRING ENROLLMENT AND INCREASED FUNDING CHALLENGES

Moving into the Spring, many community colleges will face increasingly difficult financial decisions, potentially requiring layoffs or cuts to student services.



STATE APPROPRIATIONS

Based on reduced tax revenue and decreased enrollment, many community colleges are bracing for state funding cuts.



FEDERAL FUNDING

The CARES Act offered limited funding for community colleges compared to 4-year institutions, but additional funding is needed.



SPRING ENROLLMENT

Pandemic-related challenges impacting the community college student population will likely continue into the spring.

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