

ENROLLMENT MANAGER

SPECIAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDITION

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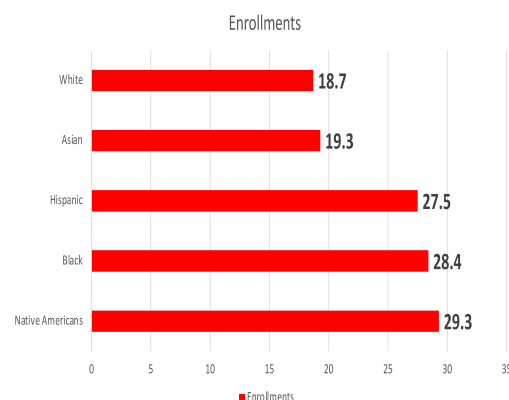
COMMUNITY COLLEGES MUST ENHANCE RECRUITMENT OPERATIONS: NOW MORE THAN EVER

John W. Dysart
President
The Dysart Group

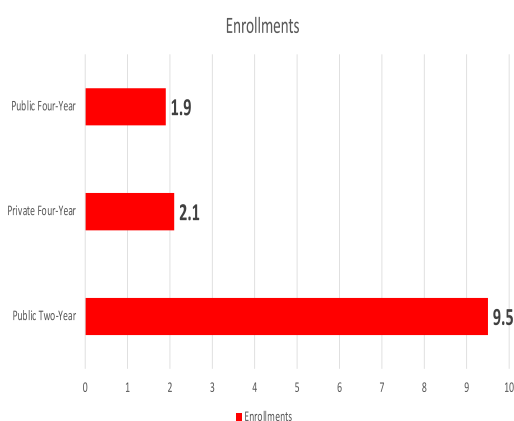
The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center recently published some alarming data regarding enrollment at community colleges. While most colleges and universities have been negatively affected by COVID-19, community colleges have suffered more than any other college type. A recent report indicated that applications for admission declined by 21% this year. Enrollments have dropped by nearly ten percent. Keep in mind that enrollment trends were challenging even before the pandemic.

- Enrollment patterns for adult students have been impacted to a greater degree than traditional-aged students and community colleges are the primary destinations for this population as well.

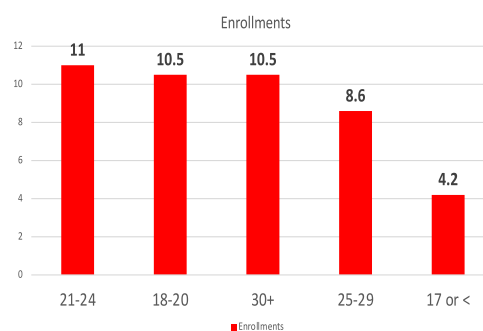
Freshmen Enrollment Declines as a Function of Ethnicity
Fall 2019 versus Fall 2020



Enrollment Declines as a Function of Institution Type
Fall 2019 versus Fall 2020



Freshmen Enrollment Declines as a Function of Age
Fall 2019 versus Fall 2020



- Enrollment outcomes during the pandemic have varied as a function of ethnicity and community colleges have historically served minority populations.

Too many community colleges have relied on historical enrollment trends to fill their classes. State subsidies and low tuition costs have made enrollment at a community

college an attractive option for many. Despite these advantages, enrollments have consistently declined. The pandemic has made a bad situation worse. It is time for community colleges to fully implement enrollment management models.

- Community colleges must implement recruitment models that are data-driven. While many institutions track the basic admission metrics, the outcomes often do not inform strategies and tactics.
- Low tuition rates are not enough. Community colleges must design specific financial aid packaging models that support recruitment and retention goals. Traditional financial aid approaches created in a vacuum by financial aid professionals are insufficient.
- Community colleges will need to better communicate a value proposition that goes beyond low tuition rates. The emphasis must be on career outcomes and transfer preparation to four-year colleges.
- Do more to educate prospective students on the opportunity for less student loan debt.
- Install a multi-layered communication plan for prospective students that includes systematic telephone outreach, email, text messages, direct mail and personal interaction. Each communication mechanism should be tracked, and admission professionals must be held accountable for achieving contact rate goals.
- Assign specific recruitment goals to every admission professional and track progress toward meeting the goal every week throughout the cycle.
- Target more prospective students directly out of high school.
- Introduce a merit scholarship to increase visibility and encourage students to enroll. As a part of this process, ensure that your endowed funds are specifically targeted as part of a recruitment plan.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of your web- site. Its primary function should be the recruitment of prospective students. Include short videos from

successful graduates, currently enrolled students and employers with a history of hiring your graduates.

- Actively encourage more students to apply for financial aid. Hold the Financial Aid Office accountable for financial aid application rates for both currently enrolled students and admission applicants. The majority of students at community colleges demonstrate financial need, and the institution must take primary responsibility for successfully encouraging all students to apply for financial aid.
- Review your financial aid process with an eye toward simplification. Many colleges and universities make the financial aid process more cumbersome than necessary.
- Initiate a much more aggressive retention plan using professional, academic advisors. Track academic success, student account outstanding balances, social integration and preregistrations so that your professionals can actively intervene to support retention and graduation. Increased retention and graduation rates are powerful tools to facilitate new student enrollments.

These are difficult times for many colleges and universities. Institutions of all types are experiencing enrollment challenges. Community colleges, however, are at the greatest risk.

It is time to move away from blaming demographics, insufficient funding and the economy for disappointing enrollment outcomes. The institutions that continue to be successful are those that have taken a proactive approach to admissions, financial aid and retention. You are unlikely to realize better results by continuing the same, outdated policies, procedures, strategies and tactics. This is the perfect time to take bold action to adopt a data-driven plan that emphasizes accountability.

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