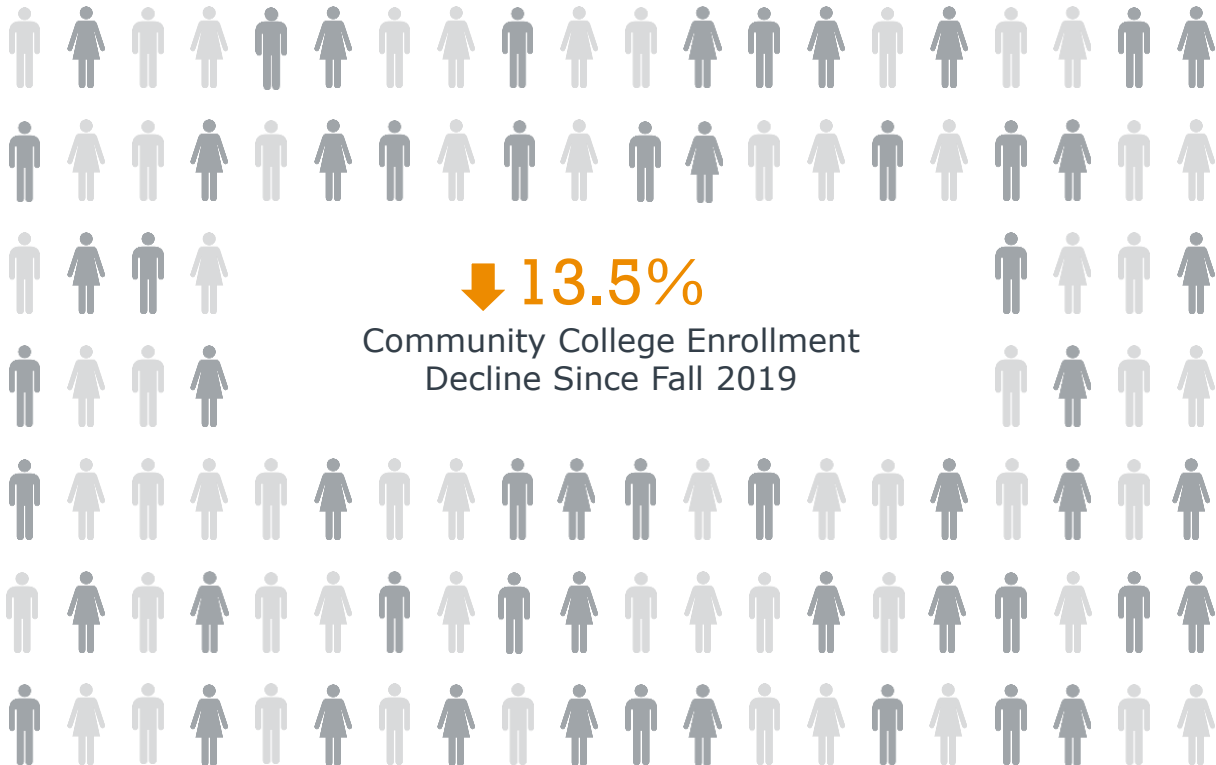




Conquering the Enrollment Challenges of Rural Community Colleges

Community College Executive Forum

Enrollment Declines Continue in Fall 2021



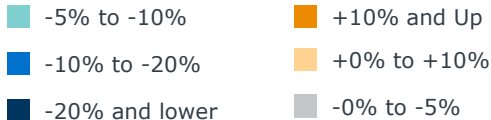
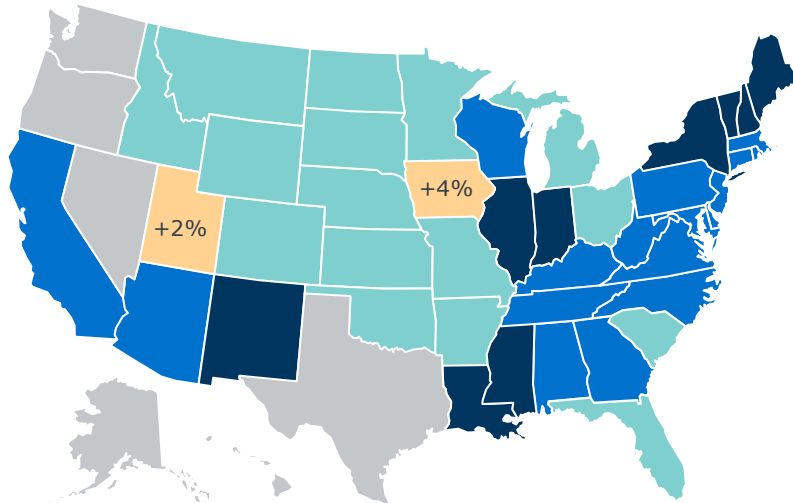
Source: <https://nscresearchcenter.org/current-term-enrollment-estimates/> ;
<https://www.acct.org/files/Strengthening%20Rural%20Community%20Colleges%202021.pdf>

A Nearly-Universal Population Cliff



Falling Birthrates Will Hit Institutions Across the US

Percent Change in the Population of 18-Year-Olds, 2025-2035



Less Selective Institutions Bear the Brunt

Change in demand, 2025-2035

- 1%** *'Elite'*
Top 50¹ research universities & liberal arts colleges
- 5%** *National*
Top 50-100¹ research universities & liberal arts colleges
- 10%** *Regional*
Ranked¹ outside of Top 100
- 14%** *Two-Year*

1) Based on US News and World Report
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Sources: Grawe, Nathan D., *The Agile College: How Institutions Successfully Navigate Demographic Changes, 2021*; EAB analysis.

Today's Topics

Driving Enrollment by Addressing Rural Student Needs



Meeting Unmet Financial Needs



Addressing Transportation Issues



Providing Access to Job Skills



Providing Flexibility

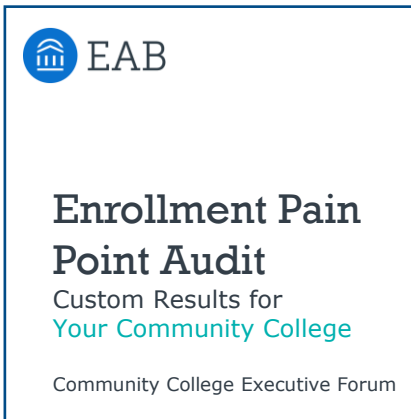




What Are Your New Students Experiencing?

EAB Has a “Secret Shopper” Enrollment Pain Point Audit – Now VIRTUAL

Custom Evaluation Includes Quick Wins, Proven Practices, Researcher Support



- 15-30 page report detailing researcher’s findings
- Deep dive follow-up conversation with researcher
- Implementation support and best practice recommendations

Sample Admissions Findings and Quick Win

- ✓ **Student ID Number Provision Immediate:** The admission staff hands students a note with the student’s ID number moments after processing the student’s application. This enabled the EAB researcher to seek placement, advising, and registration in one visit to campus.
- ✗ **No Follow Up:** The EAB researcher did not receive any follow up communication by mail or personal e-mail following any step in the admission process within 10 days except for RSVP for orientation.

Quick Win

Provide Review of Onboarding To-Do List:

New applicants at **South Puget Sound Community College** are provided with an enrollment checklist at the time they submit an application to the institution. In follow-up, student-facing staff at the college carefully review the checklist with students in-person, to ensure they understand each upcoming step in the process.

Final Thoughts: Facing Enrollment Challenges in Rural Communities



- 1 Partner with your community-based organizations to address holistic needs
- 2 Build and leverage close relationships with business and industry
- 3 Invest strategically now to prepare for increased turbulence ahead

*There is **no "new normal."**
It's time for us to **build** our **preferred normal.***



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