



February 13 Update

Snapshot

The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana

PAR Snapshot

Louisiana's Declining College Enrollment

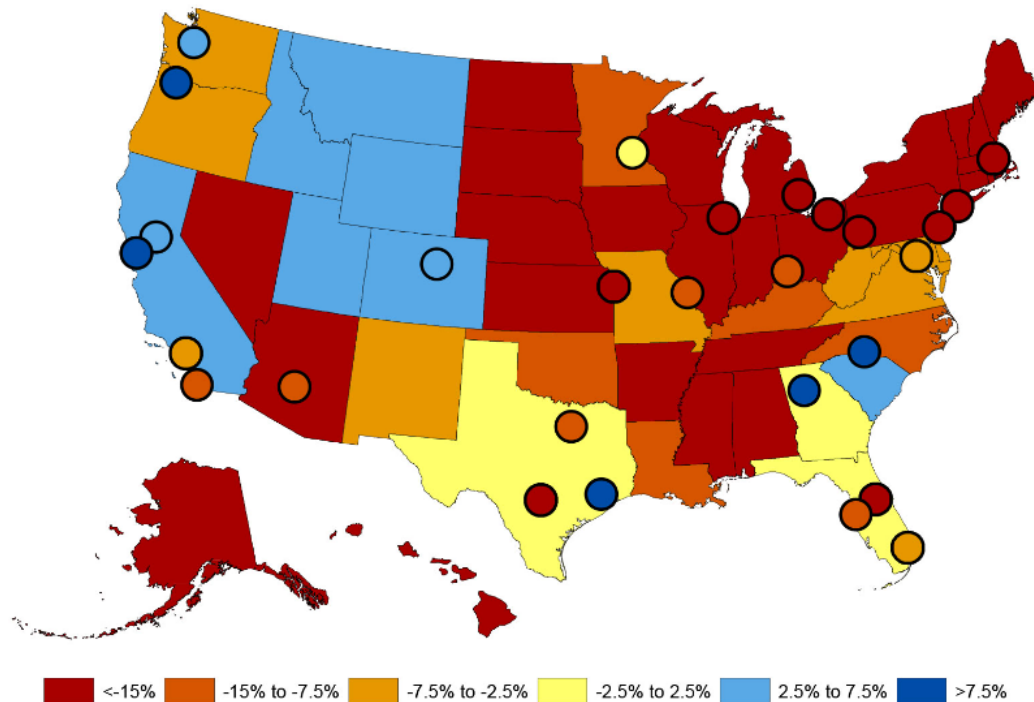
Higher Education Enrollment Falls Below 202,000 Students

Louisiana is heading towards a higher education enrollment cliff as experts predict a rapid drop in college-age individuals beginning in 2025.

The cliff is a result of a decline in U.S. birthrates that started during the Great Recession when parents struggling financially had fewer children. The pandemic worsened the problem by lowering birth rates even more and deterring students from returning to college for the fall 2020 term. Southern Regional Board of Education data show total student enrollment is already decreasing nationwide and in 13 of the 16 SREB states. From fall 2014 to fall 2019, enrollment nationally decreased by more than 620,000 students.

While the enrollment cliff will impact the entire country, not every college and university will see a decline. Economists expect regional bachelor's institutions will be hit the hardest, whereas elite institutions may see enrollment increases. Since colleges are highly dependent on tuition for funding, this presents a fiscal crunch for higher education in Louisiana.

Forecasted growth and decline in college-going students, 2012-2029



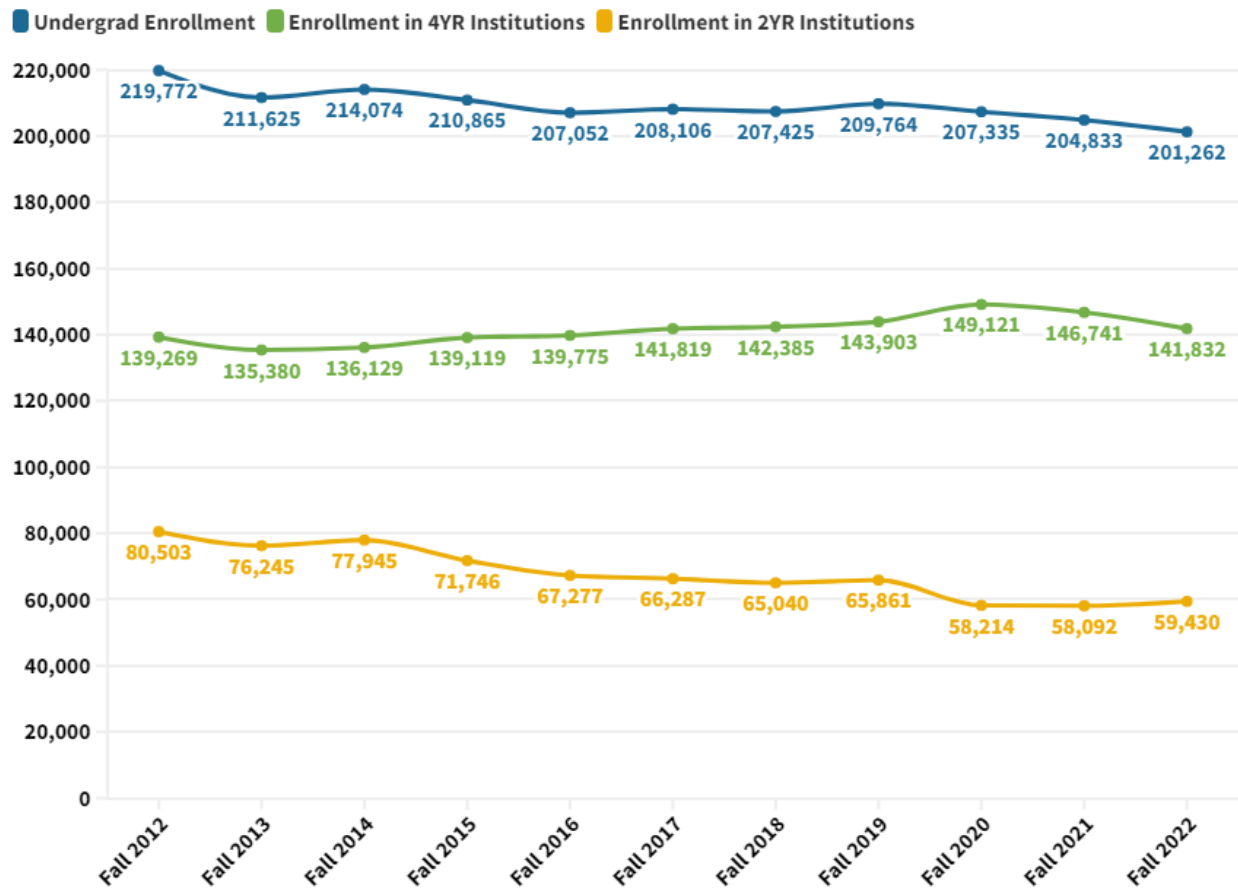
Source: Nathan D Grawe, Carleton College.pdf

According to the map created by Carleton College professor Nathan Grawe, Louisiana is projected to experience a 15 to 7.5% decline in college-going students by 2029. Regionally, the Northeast is expected to see the largest decline of more than 15%, while the West is predicted to increase in enrollment by an estimated 2.5 to 7.5%.

Louisiana's current enrollment in public higher education is 201,262 students, according to the [Board of Regents](#). Enrollment numbers have steadily declined since 2014 and took a further nosedive at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between fall 2019 to fall 2022 enrollment dropped by about 8,500 students.

Despite declining enrollment, Louisiana's graduate student ranks had one of the highest increases of all SREB states. The number of students seeking graduate degrees increased by almost 5,000 from 2014 to 2019, according to the SREB.

Louisiana's Enrollment Trends, 2012-2022



Source: Louisiana Board of Regents: Higher Education State Fact Book

When looking at enrollment changes by the type of campus, Louisiana's four-year institutions continue to have higher enrollment numbers than its two-year colleges.

Enrollment in Louisiana's four-year universities had fallen to 141,832 students by fall 2022 -- roughly the same as fall 2017, with 141,819 students.

According to enrollment data compiled by the Board of Regents, enrollment in two-year colleges has declined for the last nine years dropping by a total of roughly 18,500 students.

Louisiana was not alone in falling two-year college enrollment. From fall 2014 to fall 2019, the latest SREB data available, all Southern states except Texas saw enrollment in two-year colleges decrease.

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