

2021 Undergrad Enrollment Falls, Graduate Enrollment Climbs

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Initial data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center indicates that national undergraduate enrollment in spring 2021 has experienced its largest decline since the onset of the pandemic, while graduate enrollment continued to increase across the nation.

Undergraduate Enrollment:

Overall, undergraduate enrollment declined 5.9% in spring 2021 compared to spring 2020. According to the Clearinghouse, private for-profit institutions fared the best, experiencing a 0.1% decline, while public and private nonprofit four-year institutions experienced a decline of 2.9% and 3.0%, respectively. Community colleges were hit the hardest again with an 11.3% decline in enrollment.

According to the Clearinghouse, enrollment in undergraduate certificates declined 7.4%, while associate degree enrollment declined

> The difference in undergraduate and graduate student enrollment is cause for concern, as lower-skilled workers experienced higher rates of unemployment in 2020.

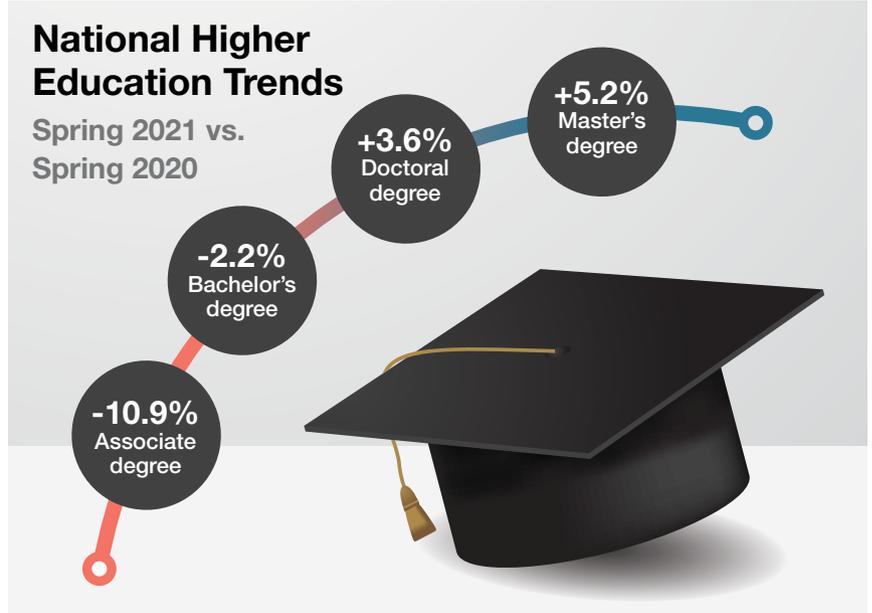
10.9%. Bachelor's degrees experienced the smallest decline in enrollment at 2.2%.

Changes in Undergraduate Majors:

According to the Clearinghouse, "enrollment in health professions fared the best this spring

National Higher Education Trends

Spring 2021 vs. Spring 2020



among the top five most common fields for those pursuing an associate degree or undergraduate certificate." At the certificate level, majors in mechanic and repair technologies/technicians experienced the largest drop in enrollment. Security and protective services experienced the largest decline at the associate level.

For those seeking a bachelor's degree, students majoring in psychology and computer/information sciences/support services increased by 3.7% and 3.4%, respectively. Education majors increased by 1% and health profession majors increased by 0.4%. Enrollment in liberal arts and sciences/general studies/humanities decreased by 6.6%.

Graduate Enrollment: Graduate enrollment increased by 4.4% in spring 2021. Public four-year institutions had the largest increase in enrollment at 6%, which is quadruple

their growth from last spring (1.5%). Private for-profit and nonprofit institutions experienced a 3.8% and 2.5% increase, respectively.

Enrollment in graduate certificates and master's degrees increased by 10% and 5.2% respectively. And while enrollment in professional degrees declined by 0.4%, enrollment in doctoral degrees increased by 3.6% in spring 2021.

Changes in Graduate Majors:

At the graduate level, there has been a significant increase in individuals majoring in business/management/marketing, health professions, education, and computer/information sciences/support services.

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