

October 28, 2020 | BRIEF NO. 20-1

# **Preliminary Fall 2020 Enrollment**

## Challenges from spring carry forward to fall quarter

Washington’s 34 community and technical colleges (CTCs) offer a broad range of programs, from basic education and high school curricula to certificates, associate degrees and applied baccalaureate degrees. These include apprenticeships, professional-technical training, and academic transfer.

The diverse nature of CTC students and offerings is important to consider when examining fall preliminary (10th day) enrollment. Not all student enrollments are included in 10th day counts, and what we see in preliminary data is likely to change by the end of the quarter. In fact, some colleges see as much as a 38 percent uptick in full-time equivalent (FTE) counts between preliminary and final fall data.

So, given these limitations, what can fall preliminary enrollment data tell us? So far, it tells us the COVID-19 related challenges first experienced in spring 2020 — from a sudden shift to remote learning to significant uncertainty — continue to weigh on Washington’s CTCs.

FTE enrollments dropped by 12.1 percent from spring 2019 to spring 2020. Preliminary data from fall 2020 shows a 13.5 percent decrease in FTE compared to preliminary data from fall 2019.

Running Start and Bachelor of Applied Science programs continue to see increasing FTE enrollment in both spring final and fall preliminary counts. Headcount for Running Start was flat in fall preliminary comparison, suggesting that students are increasing their credit load. These programs are less likely to see significant enrollment swings because the shift from in-person to online instruction is less disruptive than for programs that require a hands-on component.

### Table 1. Spring actual and fall preliminary year-over-year FTE percent change

| **Fund Source/Selected Programs** | **Spring 2020 Actual FTE YoY % Change** | **Fall 2020 Prelim FTE YoY % Change** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Total – All Funds** | -12.1% | -13.5% |
| **State-Funded** | -12.1% | -15.3% |
| **Contract-Funded** | -7.8% | -9.2% |
| **Self-Funded** | -72.4% | -7.5% |
| **BAS** | 18.1% | 7.8% |
| **Running Start** | 3.3% | 2.4% |

### Table 2. Spring actual and fall preliminary year-over-year headcount percent change

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Fund Source/Selected Programs** | **Spring 2020 Actual Headcount YoY % Change** | **Fall 2020 Prelim Headcount YoY % Change** |
| **Total – All Funds** | -18.7% | -17.1% |
| **State-Funded** | -14.2% | -15.4% |
| **Contract-Funded** | -10.1% | -6.8% |
| **Self-Funded** | -76.5% | -43.9% |
| **BAS** | 18.1% | 9.2% |
| **Running Start** | 0% | -.6% |

As with the spring quarter, students’ age continues to be a factor in enrollment swings. A comparison of preliminary headcount data from fall 2019 to fall 2020 shows a 27 percent decline in students 30 and older, compared to 12 percent for those under 30.

### Table 3. Fall preliminary headcounts by age group: All Funds

| **Age Group** | **Fall Quarter 10th Day in Academic Year...** | **10th Day Headcount** | **% Change from Prior Year** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Under 30** | 2018-19 | 139,659 |   |
| 2019-20 | 138,089 | -1.1% |
| 2020-21 | 121,368 | -12.1% |
| **Over 30** | 2018-19 | 69,014 |   |
| 2019-20 | 67,409 | -2.3% |
| 2020-21 | 48,930 | -27.4% |

Despite extensive efforts by colleges and State Board staff to deliver instruction safely, mission areas relying more on in-person instruction continue to see FTE declines, at least based on 10th day data. Final fall quarter data and, more significantly, year-end data will provide a more complete picture once it is available.

### Table 4. Fall preliminary FTE – Transfer-Prof/Tech comparison: All Funds

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Transfer-Prof/Tech Comparison** | **Fall Quarter 10th Day in Academic Year...** | **10th Day FTE** | **% Change from Prior Year** |
| **Transfer** | 2018-19 | 68,104 |   |
| 2019-20 | 65,873 | -3.3% |
| 2020-21 | 61,088 | -7.3% |
| **Prof/Tech** | 2018-19 | 59,806 |   |
| 2019-20 | 60,711 | 1.5% |
| 2020-21 | 50,281 | -17.2% |

### Table 5. Fall preliminary headcount – Transfer-Prof/Tech comparison: All Funds

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Transfer-Prof/Tech Comparison** | **Fall Quarter 10th Day in Academic Year...** | **10th Day Headcount** | **% Change from Prior Year** |
| **Transfer** | 2018-19 | 83,619 |   |
| 2019-20 | 80,500 | -3.7% |
| 2020-21 | 74,759 | -7.1% |
| **Prof/Tech** | 2018-19 | 80,117 |   |
| 2019-20 | 80,620 | 0.6% |
| 2020-21 | 66,000 | -18.1% |

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