

# Enrollments Continue to Slide at For-Profits and Community Colleges



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National college enrollments have continued their [multiyear](#) decline, with most of the dip occurring among older undergraduates at for-profit institutions and community colleges.

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, which tracks 97 percent of students at federal aid-eligible institutions, found an overall national [decline](#) of 1.5 percent for this spring semester compared to a year ago. (Last year's decline was 1.3 percent.) That means 272,000 fewer students were enrolled, with 244,000 fewer over the age of 24. Undergraduate enrollments were down by roughly 300,000 students, the center found, with graduate and professional student enrollments up by 27,000.

For-profit colleges were hit the hardest, with a 10.1 percent decline, following a dip of 9.3 percent last year. The center found a drop of 2.5 percent at community colleges, which was slightly less than the 2.8 percent decline last year. Enrollments were largely flat at four-year public institutions (up 0.2 percent) and four-year private institutions (down 0.2 percent).

**Table 1:** Estimated National Enrollment by Sector (Title IV, Degree-Granting Institutions)

Sector	SPRING 2017		SPRING 2016		SPRING 2015	
	Enrollment	% Change from Prior Year	Enrollment	% Change from Prior Year	Enrollment	% Change from Prior Year
Total Enrollment, All Sectors	18,071,004	-1.5%	18,343,655	-1.3%	18,592,605	-1.9%
Four-Year Public	7,677,659	0.2%	7,660,065	1.0%	7,586,223	0.9%
Four-Year Private Nonprofit	3,703,320	-0.2%	3,710,663	0.7%	3,685,554	-0.2%
Four-Year For-Profit	993,169	-10.1%	1,104,587	-9.3%	1,217,358	-4.9%
Two-Year Public	5,399,145	-2.5%	5,537,822	-3.3%	5,729,111	-4.8%
Unduplicated Student Headcount (All Sectors)	17,740,912	-1.5%	18,003,354	-1.4%	18,267,143	-1.7%