

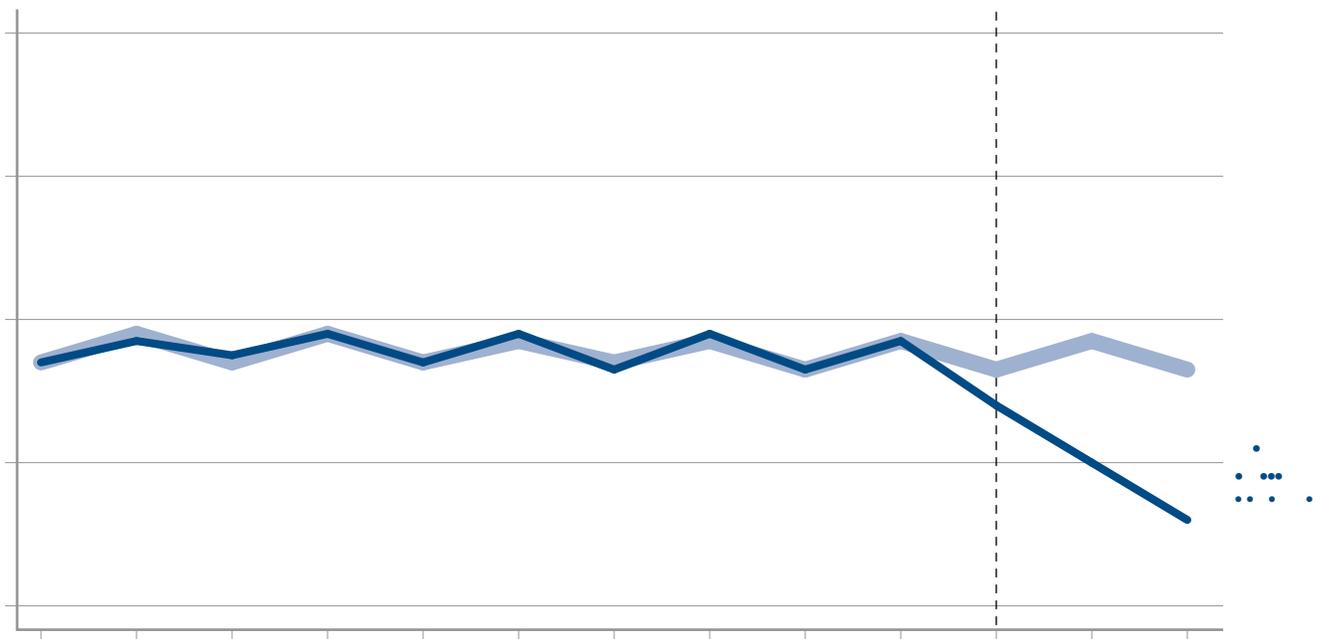
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This infographic builds upon earlier California analyses to illustrate changes in enrollment patterns across the CCCs. Our analysis estimates deviations from enrollment levels that would have been expected in the absence of the pandemic — in aggregate, by gender, race, age and first-time status, and by college campus and state region. It also presents findings on changes in student persistence along similar margins.

Enrollment Changes

Systemwide Enrollment: Predicted vs. Actual

For five years prior to the onset of the pandemic, CCC enrollment followed a largely predictable pattern. By spring 2021, however, systemwide enrollment had fallen 14% below what would have been expected in the absence of COVID-19. Despite colleges' shift to online course formats, roughly 211,000 fewer students than expected were enrolled.

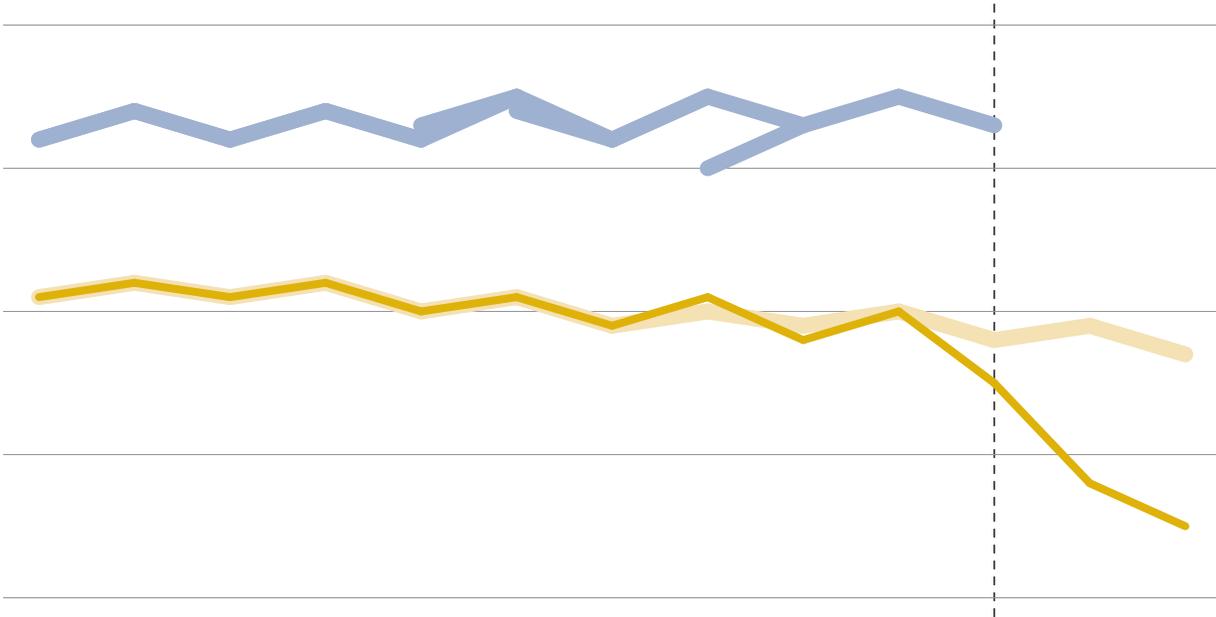


A Note on Methodology

Enrollment is estimated as the number of students who attempt at least one course in a given term. A student may be counted more than once if they enroll in multiple colleges in the same term. The sample includes 110 colleges; Six colleges were dropped because they were not operational for the full analytical period, operate on a quarter-based schedule, or offer exclusively online education. Predicted enrollment levels are generated by regressing actual enrollment onto a year trend and a spring/fall indicator in the four-year period that preceded COVID-19. Regression coefficients are used to predict enrollment levels in each term. This prediction represents counterfactual enrollment levels, or expected enrollment levels in the absence of the pandemic.

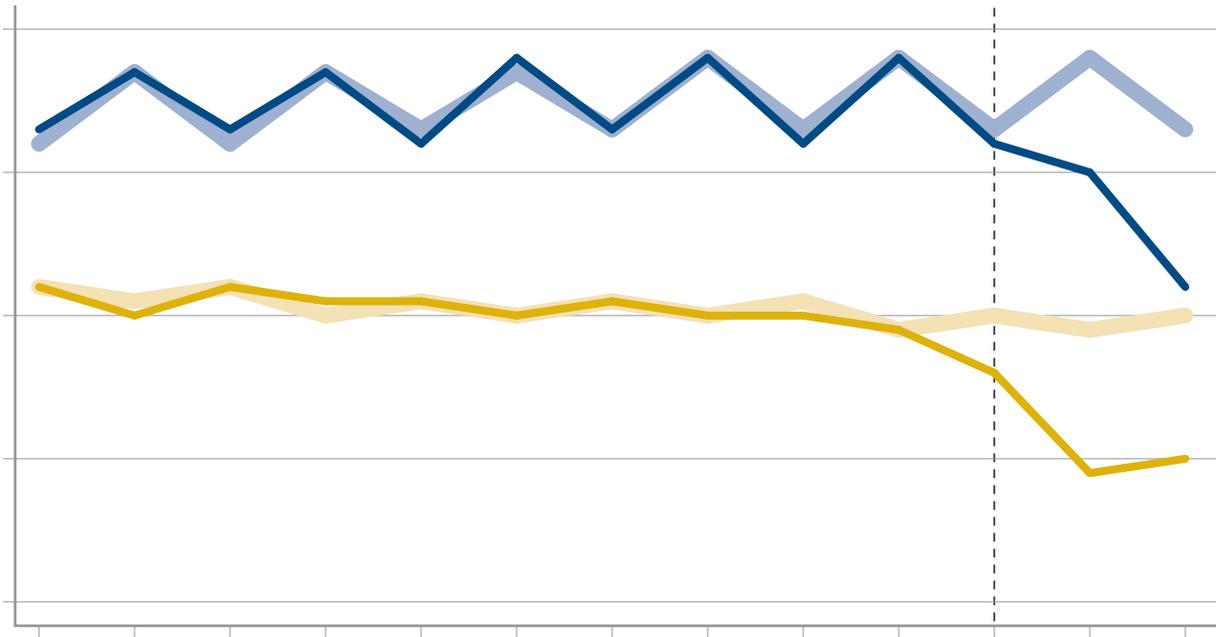
Systemwide Enrollment by Gender and Race: Predicted vs. Actual

Pandemic-period enrollment declines varied substantially by gender, with male enrollment falling by 18% and female enrollment falling by 10%. Declines also varied substantially by race. Hispanic/Latinx enrollment dropped 17%, followed by Asian enrollment,⁵ down 11%, Black/African American enrollment, down 10%, and White enrollment, down 8%.⁶



Enrollment by Age and First-Time/Continuing Status: Predicted vs. Actual

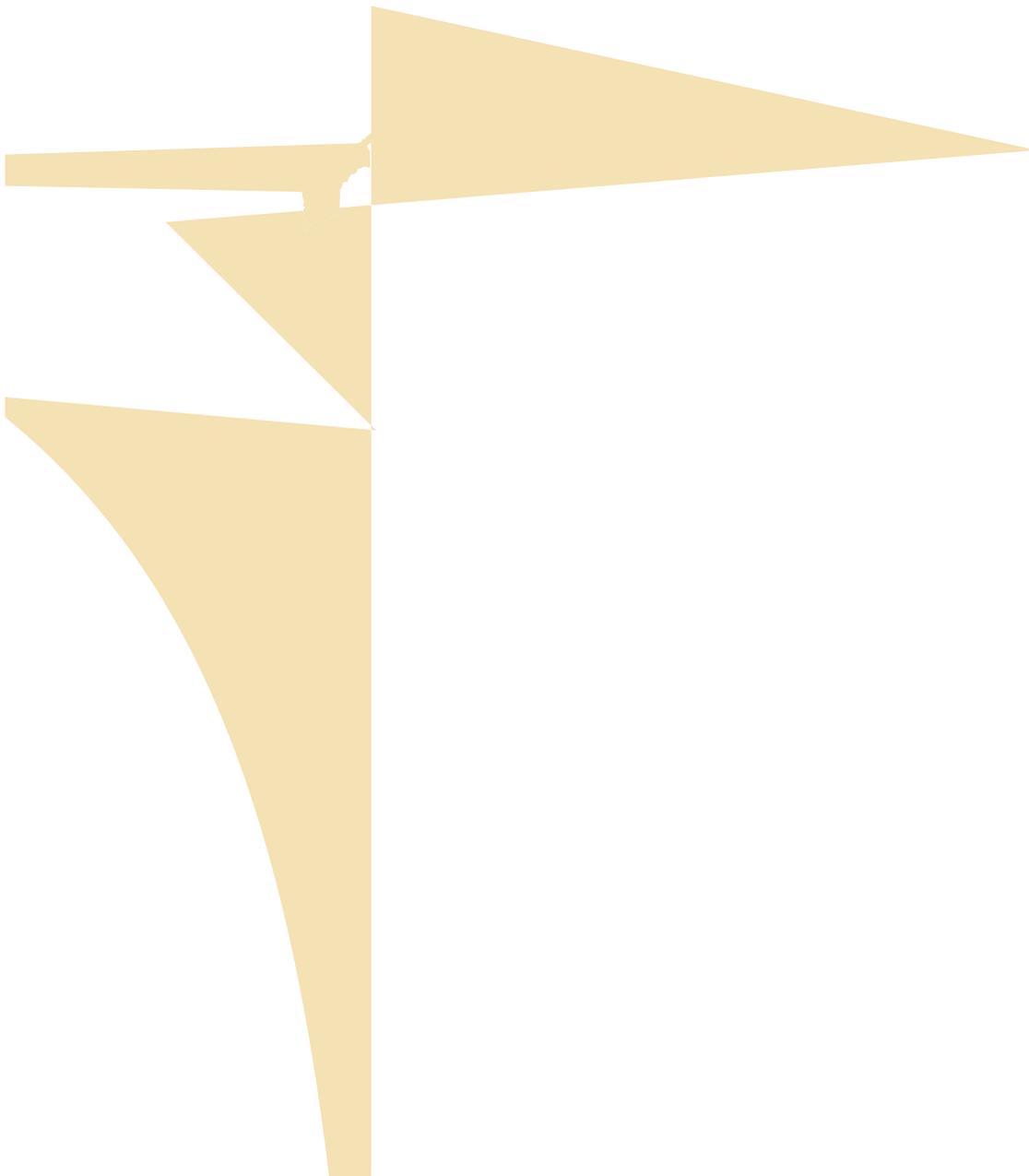
CCC enrollment among all age groups fell after pandemic onset, with enrollment by students under age 24 falling by 14%, or 115,000 students. Enrollment by students age 24 and older declined by 15%, or 95,000 students. From fall 2020 through spring 2021, enrollment losses among older students appeared to level off, while the decline among younger students continued. Enrollment among first-time students fell by a dramatic 37% for 42,000 students, while enrollment among continuing students fell by 13%, or 181,000 students.



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Enrollment declines varied significantly by campus, with some campuses (represented by dark blue dots) losing more than 20% of their pre-pandemic enrollment.^{8,9} Other campuses (light blue dots) lost fewer than 10% and still others (green dots) gained enrollment over what would have been predicted in the absence of the pandemic. Dot size represents a college's total enrollment in fall and spring 2019, with larger dots indicating higher college enrollment.



Persistence Changes

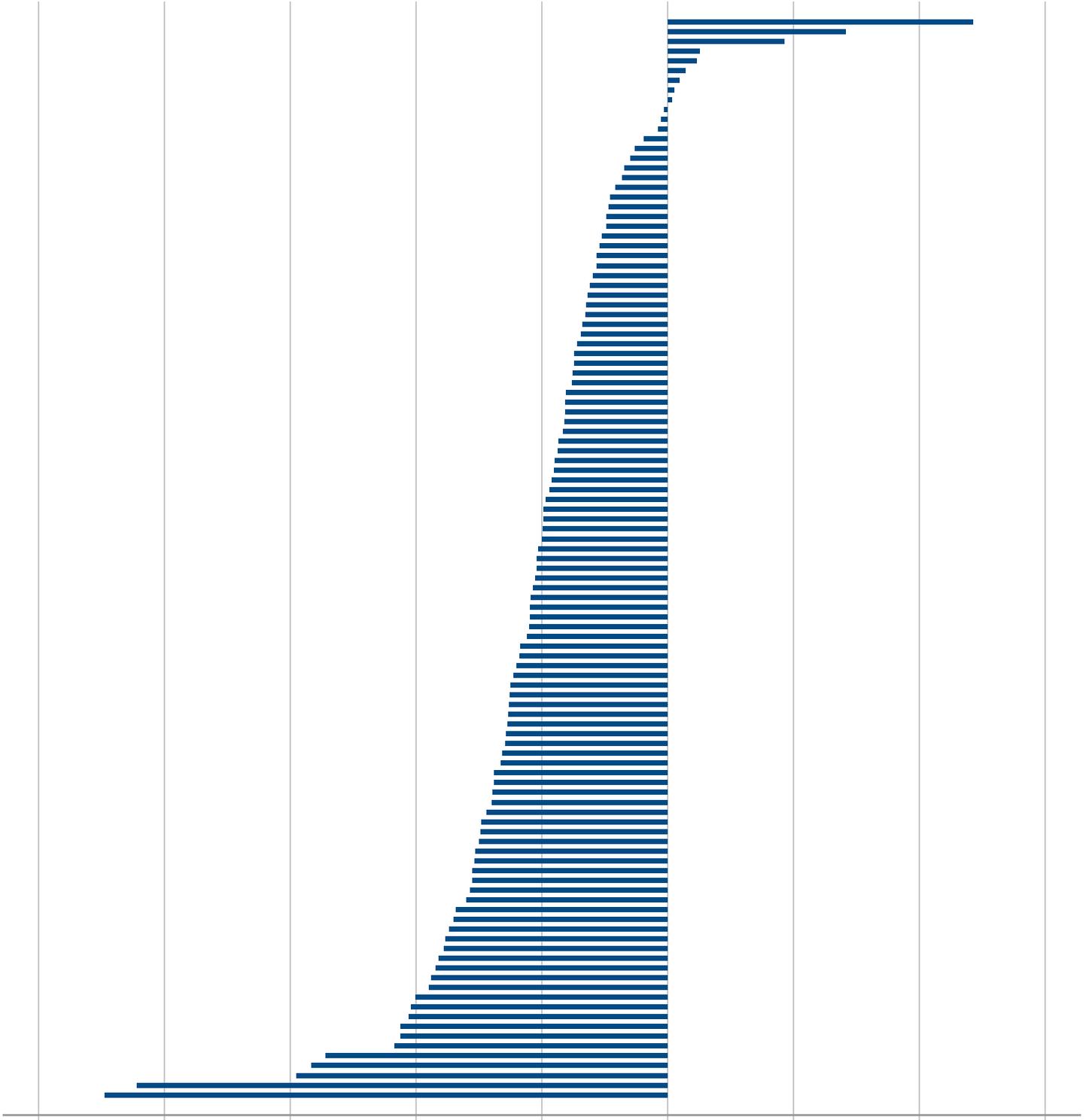
The next set of figures focuses on continuing students, who make up a majority of students who did not return to the system after the first 18 months of the pandemic.

Persistence Changes by Sex, Age, and Race

Post-March 2020, two- and three-term student persistence each declined in the CCC system by roughly 5%. Comparing rates across subgroups using the two-term measure, male persistence declined more (down 9%) than female persistence (down 2%). Persistence rates declined more for younger students (down 6%) than older students (down 4%). Persistence rates declined more for students of color than for White students. Specifically,

Changes in Persistence by Campus

There was substantial variation in two-term persistence across colleges after pandemic onset.¹¹ Several colleges showed persistence declines that exceeded 10%, while a handful of other colleges showed increases in student persistence.¹²



Author Biographies and Acknowledgements

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Endnotes

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