

Enrollment Trends and Strategic Planning

Introduction

As a higher education institution, St. Philip's College (SPC) must remain up to date with the development of national and state-level education guidelines and goals. These guidelines, goals, and plans presented to the college must drive our focus and shape how we examine data.

Recently, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) published changes to their Strategic Plan. In their publication, "Building a Talent Strong Texas," THECB outlined an expansion of the 60x30TX goals. THECB has presented the three following goals for their 2022-2030 Strategic Plan.

- **Attainment of certificates and degrees** so at least 60% of Texans ages 25-64 have a postsecondary credential of value by 2030.
- **Postsecondary credentials of value** aligned with workforce demands that will raise incomes for individual Texans while reducing debt.
- **Research, development, and innovation** that drives discovery, improves lives, broadens education, and creates new jobs. (THECB 2022)

As a result, St. Philip's College must contribute to these goals. The purpose of this report is to examine our enrollment trends for the prescribed age group from the THECB new 2022-2030 Strategic Plan.

Methods

As a department, SPC IPRE maintains plethora of data sources where we can examine trends of student achievement and enrollment. For this research brief, we utilized THECB's CBM001 data set which is collected, reported to, and certified by IRES at DSO. The CBM001 reports demographic and enrollment information for all students enrolled at SPC in credit courses as of the official census date each academic term. We examined all student data from Fall 2011 to Summer 2021 (AY 12 – AY 21). CBM001 is a certified data source. Once IPRE manipulates certified data like the CBM001, the data are no longer considered certified. We must assume these reports can only be used for internal reporting and strategic planning. (Please see the [THECB glossary](#) for any terms from these reports that you may need clarifications on.)

To present the most accurate counts on individual student demographics, we unduplicate students based on their individual identification numbers (PIDM and Banner ID). We unduplicate by academic year, keeping only the first appearance of a student. Each total enrollment is a total of unique cases of students based on individual identification numbers. This effects a few key data points.

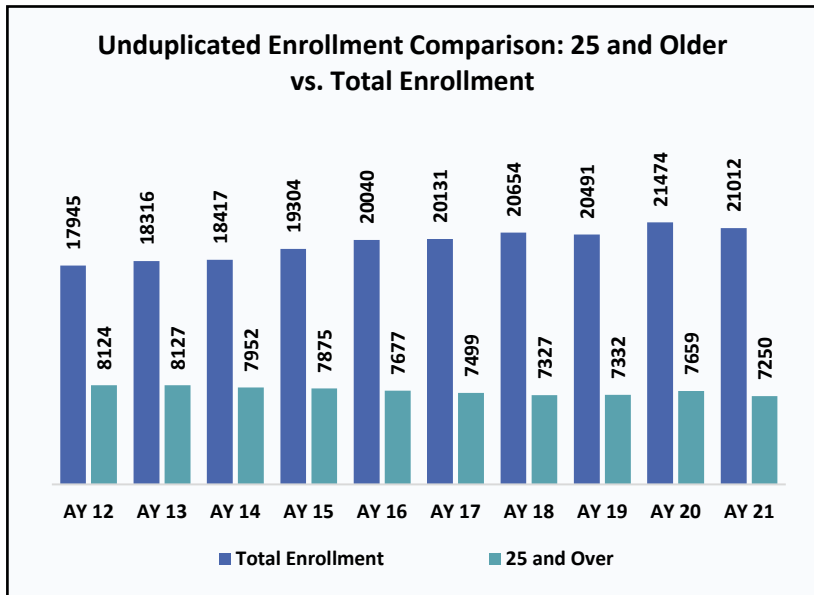
All students who appear in the fall term are selected, and if the same student appears in subsequent terms, he or she is only counted based on the fall term information. For instance, if a student was present in fall 2020 as a full-time, 19 year old student, and in spring 2021 as a 20 year old, part-time student, then we would only count that student as fall 2020, 19 and full-time.

If a student was first enrolled that year in spring 2021, then we would count this appearance as the unique case; if the student also was enrolled in the subsequent summer 2021, then we would not count the summer appearance towards the unduplicated enrollment count.

IPRE chose to examine several identifying markers for a student’s educational journey including full-time/part-time status and gender. The reason for selecting these markers was to understand the historic trends of the age group identified by THECB as areas of concern and focus. Non-traditional students are often overlooked in educational analysis, so we want to understand what that student demographic profile looks like. We can utilize this student demographic profile to explore THECB’s goal of educating members of this group.

IPRE used a 10 year data trend analysis in order to gain a picture of how this group has been represented over time. This analysis is a high level examination of overall trends across a 10-year span. We conducted a simple count comparison, so there is no way to determine causal relationships, or determine “why” these trends exist. An analysis of this sort is best used to frame further research questions and determine areas of concern related to our selected demographics.

Overall Enrollment Trends



The chart titled, “Unduplicated Enrollment Comparison 25 and Older vs. Total Enrollment” illustrates the number of students who were 25 and over compared to the total enrollment of students at SPC. From academic year (AY) 2012 to academic year (AY) 2021, the total enrollment at SPC grew 17.09% (17,945 to 21,012). While we have had variation of growth and contraction over the last 10 years, enrollment has grown overall.

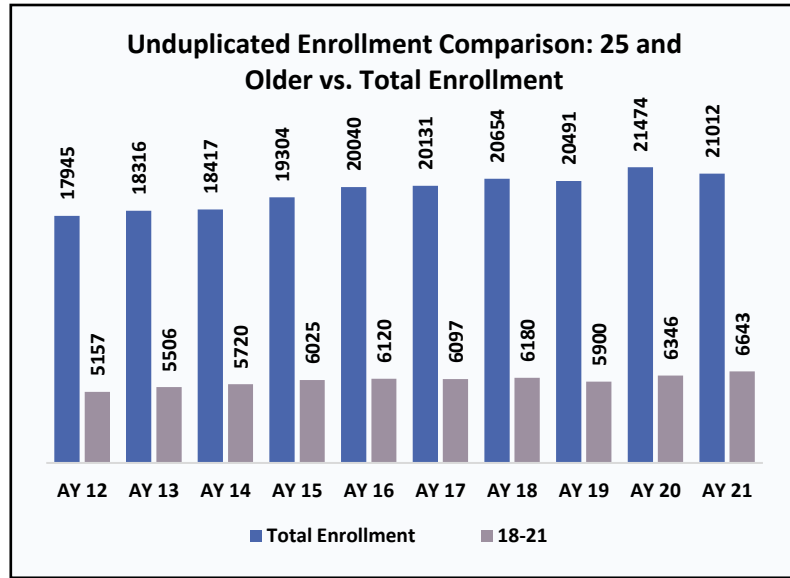
On the other hand, the enrollment of 25 or over demographic has decreased by -10.76%. Given the decrease in 25 and over individuals, we can see most of SPC’s growth since 2012 has resulted from 24 or younger enrollment.

We had marginal losses from AY 20 in both total enrollment (-2.15%) and 25 and over demographic (-5.3%). We lost 462 students in total enrollment, and 409 of those came from the 25 and over group. Such a finding should be an area of concern. In AY 21, 25 and older make up 34.5% of the total enrollment. However, in AY 12, the 25 and over student demographic was 45.27% of the total enrollment. What we see is a -10.77% enrollment drop for the 25 and over demographic between AY 12 and AY 21.

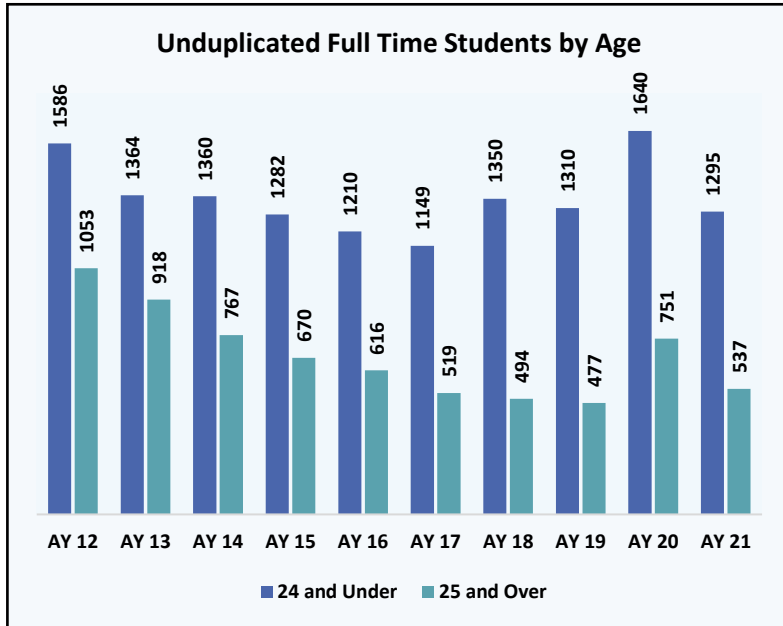
According to SA 2020, our local educational and development strategic plan, from 2012 to 2020 the percentage of graduating seniors enrolling in college from the city of San Antonio has decreased from 48% to 47% of graduating seniors (SA 2020, 2022). In comparison to city data, SPC grew enrollment of traditionally aged students. This increase does not mean our enrollment of recent high school graduates

increased, but there is a correlation between increased enrollment of the 18-21 demographic and possible increase enrollment of recent high school graduates because they are represented in this age group.

In the chart, “Unduplicated Enrollment Comparison: 18-21 vs. Total Enrollment,” we observe a 32.6% increase in enrollment of traditional aged college students from AY 12 to AY 21. Even through Covid-19 SPC saw an enrollment increase of 4.6% in 18-21 students. In AY 21, 18 to 21 year old made up 31.6% of total enrollment for the entire academic year. Although this age group represents fewer students than 25 and older, the 18-21 age group comprises only 4 years of individuals’ ages. The 25 and older age demographic represents about 3% more of the total enrollment, yet spans a much larger age range.

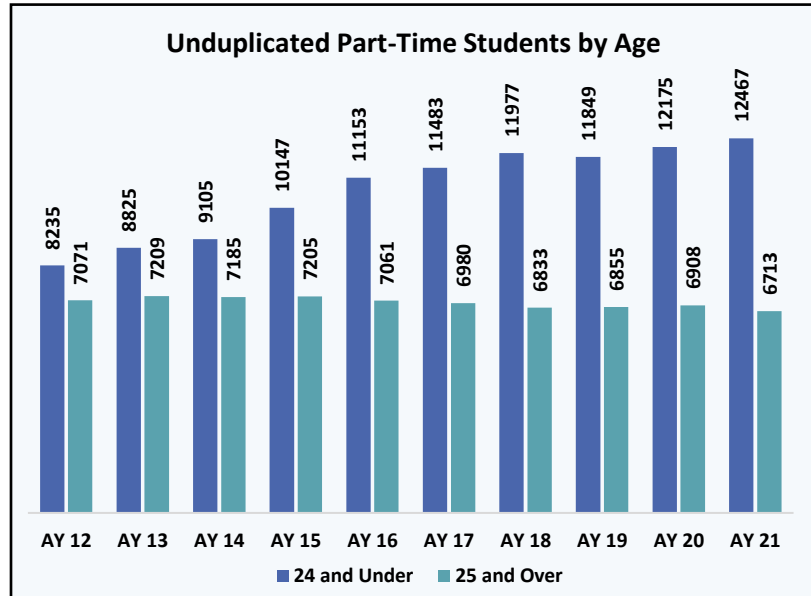


Enrollment Trends by Status



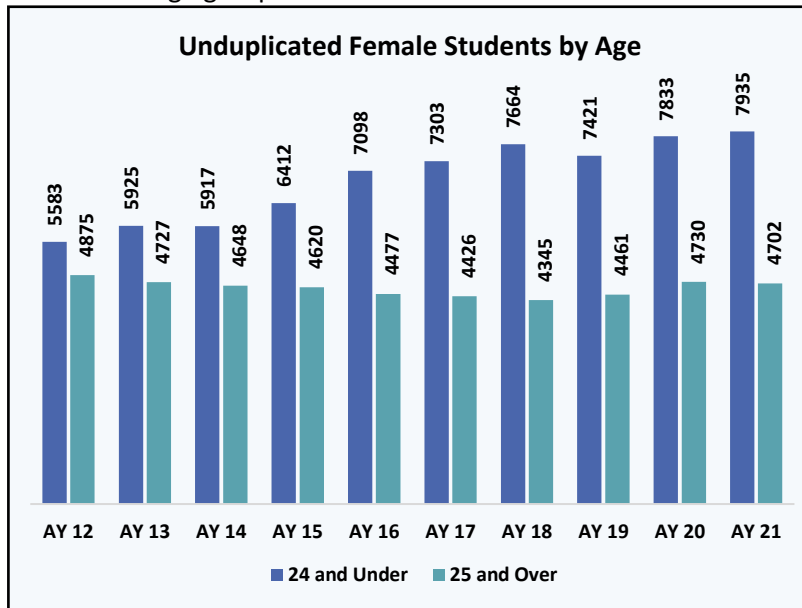
The chart, “Unduplicated Full-Time Students by Age,” indicates SPC had a decrease in full-time students who are 25 and over (-49.20%) from AY 12 to AY 21. During the pre-pandemic period, SPC saw a strong increase in full-time students who were 25 and older from AY 19 to AY 20 (57.44%). From AY 12 to AY 21, overall SPC saw a decrease of -18.7% in full time students who were 24 and under. The 25 and over demographic rises and falls over the same 10 year period. In AY 21, 25 and over students made up 29.31% of SPC’s full-time students, or approximately one-third of the population.

In comparison, part-time enrollment for 25 and over has remained relatively consistent. The chart, “Unduplicated Part-Time Students by Age,” reflects a decrease in enrollment of part-time, 25 years or over students (-1.93%). Part-time students who are 24 or younger increased by 55.95% from AY 12 to AY 21. From AY 20 to AY 21, 24 and under, part-time enrollment increased by 2.32%. However, in AY 21, enrollments for students 25 and over are at their lowest point.



Enrollment Trends by Gender

THECB assigns either “male” or “female” to each student. We will use the THECB categories to compare the student age group of 25 and older to those who are 24 and under. The chart below reflects the

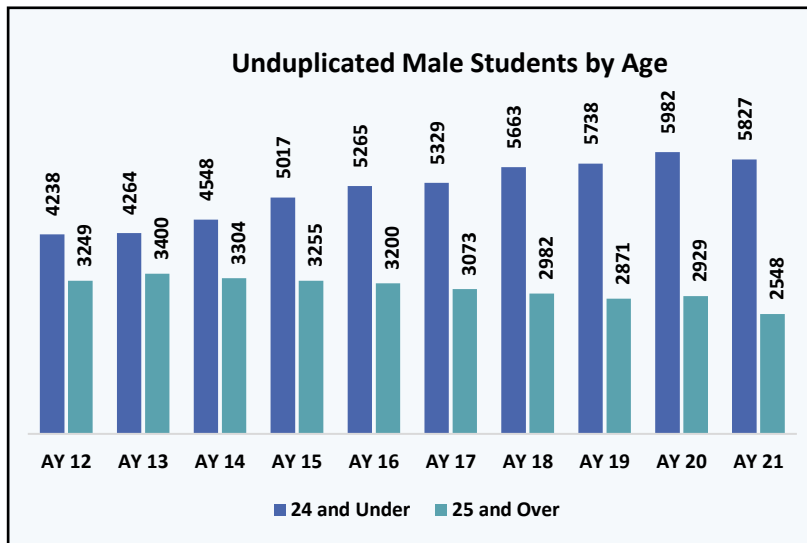


differences in female students. There is a difference of -3.55% between AY 12 and AY 21. Even though we saw a decrease in female, 25 and over students during the academic years of AY13 and AY18, we have recovered most of those losses since AY 19. On the other hand, we have seen a large increase in female students who are 24 and under (an increase of 42.10%). Overall this growth has been constant other than a -3.17% decrease from AY 18 to AY 19.

We see similar increases in part-time male students from AY 12 to AY

21 (37.49%). The 25 and over group of male students did not remain as consistent as female students. While “Unduplicated Male Students by Age” reflected a -21.58% decrease in male, 25 and older students, “Unduplicated Female Students by Age” illustrated a -3.55% decrease.

The challenge of keeping male students enrolled is a pattern occurring across the nation (Field, 2021). From AY 20 to AY 21 we saw only a slight decrease in male students who are 24 and under (-2.59%). Through the pandemic, St. Philip’s College has remained strong in enrollment for male students age 24 and under.



Conclusions

To best meet the goals of the THECB, we examined data for students who are 25 and over. We utilized certified data sources to understand aspects of the 25 and older student profile compared to others. While overall enrollment at SPC has increased since AY 12, enrollment of 25 and over students has decreased. Specific groups are of concern, including male 25 and over students and full-time students of all ages. We have seen the most losses in these groups since AY 21. The group with the most drastic decline in the last 5 years has been full-time students who are 25 years or older. Based on the THECB’s “Building a Talent Strong Texas,” SPC needs to be mindful in developing enrollment plans to reach adult and male prospective students. While IPRE cannot make any hypotheses as to why these decreases have happened, there are further questions to dive into after reviewing these data sets. IPRE will continue to study these data sets through forthcoming research briefs that address a set of future questions. The future questions include:

1. Why are we seeing a reduction in 25 years and older students?
2. Why are we seeing a decline in full-time students?
3. Why are we seeing a decrease in full-time, 25 years and older students compared to 24 and younger students?
4. What impact does dual credit have on the total number of students in the 24 and younger group?
5. What programs or self-declared majors have the highest number of students in the 25 and demographic?
6. How can SPC increase enrollment in programs that reach the 25 and over demographic, so these adult learners can earn some college credential to meet the next stage of 60x30 Texas?

References

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