

Highlights of Fall 2011

- Nearly a quarter of a million students enrolled in the community and technical colleges in fall 2011 (247,117) with most of those students – 189,522 – enrolled in state-supported courses. The students served are very diverse: 27 percent are parents; 43 percent work while 28 percent are unemployed (one percent higher than in 2010; 3 percent higher than 2009); the median age of students is older than traditional college students at 26 years of age; approximately half attend part-time (50 percent taking less than 12 credits); 56 percent of students are female; and students are more racially and ethnically diverse than Washington State – 37 percent are students of color (state – 24 percent people of color).
- In fall 2011, the colleges enrolled 171,436 FTES (all funds), decreasing by 9,709 FTES compared to the previous fall.
- State-supported FTES represent 80 percent of total FTES. In fall 2011, colleges enrolled 137,201 state-supported FTES, projected to be 154,000 students by year-end. This represents 11 percent over enrollment from the state-funded target of 139,000 FTES.
- The decline in total FTES is evidence that colleges' state-supported over-enrollments peaked in fall 2010. In fall 2011 they fell by nearly 5 percent, ending a three year growth rate of nearly 15 percent.
- Colleges enrolled 9,873 state-supported Worker Retraining FTES, a decline of 1,865 FTES, or 16 percent from fall 2010. This decline was a result of the discontinuation of special funding for the program. In response to the reduced capacity, colleges served fewer students despite continuing demand.
- While colleges were able to increase overall instruction for workforce-oriented students throughout the recession, in fall 2011 the total (64,310) FTES generated by students attending for workforce education decreased from fall 2010 approximately 6 percent. This decrease may be due, in part, to a substantial decline in Worker Retraining FTES.
- Colleges enrolled 55,897 FTES for students attending for transfer purposes. Transfer intent students decreased by 1,052 FTES, or 2 percent lower than fall 2010. State-supported FTES decreased in pre-college course areas as well, which are taken primarily by students that are enrolled for academic transfer.
- For the third straight year, colleges consolidated basic skills courses. In fall 2011, they enrolled 17,192 FTES – decreasing enrollments by 1,886 FTES which is nearly 10 percent less than fall 2010 and 13 percent less than fall 2009.
- I-BEST FTES continue to decline for the second continuous fall quarter. Colleges enrolled 1,449 FTES, a decrease of 43 FTES or 3 percent less than fall 2010.
- Opportunity Grants, a financial aid program that started in Academic Year 2006-07, served 3,056 students, or 2,952 FTES in fall 2011.
- Colleges enrolled 25,522 state-supported eLearning FTES, a decrease of 186 from fall 2010. This drop ends five years of growth from fall 2007 to fall 2010. For all funds, eLearning FTES increased less than 1 percent to 31,684.
- Colleges enrolled 29,735 contract-funded FTES, a decrease of 10 percent from fall 2009.
- Contract-funded dual enrollment program Running Start, the largest contract program, enrolled 13,086 FTES, which was about the same as the prior fall. FTES for College in the High School decreased substantially (over 90 percent), due to coding changes, closure of some programs, and changes in the reporting schedule.
- In fall 2011, 6,935 full-time equivalent faculty (FTE-F) taught students in state-supported courses. Total FTE-F in state-supported courses decreased by 2 percent in fall 2011 from the previous fall, similar to the overall observed decrease in student FTE. These congruent decreases are likely due to continuing budget cuts at the colleges, indicating that limits are being reached in increasing class size to keep up with student demand. All other staffing categories apart from faculty decreased in fall 2011.

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Introduction

The Report

The *Fall Enrollment and Staffing Report 2011* provides a snapshot of enrollments in community and technical colleges during fall quarter 2011. The report addresses the questions most commonly raised regarding the community and technical colleges in Washington.

The primary source of information for this document is the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' (SBCTC) data warehouse, which is derived from the common management information systems used by all community and technical colleges in the state.

The Washington Community and Technical College System

Washington's Community and Technical College Act of 1991 provides for a state system of community and technical colleges separate from both the public secondary schools and four-year institutions. The act requires that the colleges "offer an open door to every citizen, regardless of his or her academic background or experiences, at a cost normally within his or her economic means." ([RCW 28B.50.020\(1\)](#))

Each college district is required to "offer thoroughly comprehensive educational, training and service programs to meet the needs of both the communities and students served by combining, with equal emphasis, high standards of excellence in academic transfer courses; realistic and practical courses in occupational education, both graded and ungraded; community services of an educational, cultural and recreational nature; and adult education." ([RCW 28B.50.020\(2\)](#)) Technical colleges are exempted from the requirement to offer academic transfer courses. Each college is governed by a board of five trustees appointed to five-year terms by the Governor with the consent of the Senate.

Washington's first junior college was started in 1915 in Everett when 42 students began a one-year college program on the top floor of Everett High School. It was closed in 1923 for lack of students. Centralia College, the state's oldest continuously operating community college, opened in 1925. It was followed by Skagit Valley College in 1926, Yakima Valley College in 1928, and Grays Harbor College in 1930. Between 1933 and 1941 four additional community colleges began operation in Washington: Clark College in 1933, Lower Columbia in 1934, Wenatchee Valley in 1939, and Everett in 1941, all locally administered and locally funded. Combined enrollment was approximately 1,000.

Meanwhile, in 1930 the Seattle School District opened Edison Vocational School, the first true public vocational school in the state. The Spokane School District followed suit in 1939 by establishing the Spokane Trade School. Both schools eventually became community colleges. The oldest existing vocational technical institute, Tacoma's Bates VTI, opened in 1940. Subsequently, VTIs opened in Lakewood (Clover Park), Pasco, Renton, Vancouver, Kirkland (Lake Washington), Olympia, and Bellingham. The VTIs in Pasco, Vancouver, and Olympia eventually became community colleges. The VTIs in Tacoma, Lakewood, Renton, Kirkland, and Bellingham eventually became technical colleges.

Between 1925 and 1941, there were three attempts to provide state support for junior colleges. State support was provided for the first time by the 1941 Legislature. However, that act restricted the number and location of junior colleges, prohibiting their establishment in counties having either a public or private four-year institution. In 1945, junior colleges were made a part of their local school districts and supported through their funding, as was the case with vocational technical institutes until 1991.

In 1961, the restrictions against expansion of community colleges were removed by the Legislature and junior colleges were designated as "community" colleges.

The financing of community colleges was separated from that of local school districts in 1963, and in 1965 the Legislature declared that it intended to establish a separate, independent community college system. Based on the recommendations of the Arthur D. Little Company, the 1967 Legislature adopted the Community College Act of 1967, which was signed on April 3 of that year.

The structure of the community college system remained largely unchanged until 1991 when, as part of the Workforce Training and Education Act, the Legislature amended the Community College Act of 1967 and redesignated it as the Community and Technical College Act of 1991.

The state's five remaining public vocational technical institutes were designated as "technical colleges," removed from the jurisdiction of their local school districts, and merged with the community college system. Each technical college was provided with its own college district and a board of trustees. Each technical college district overlaps the districts of neighboring community colleges. The State Board for Community College Education was renamed the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges by the 1991 act.

The Community and Technical College Act of 1991 also brought the Seattle Vocational Institute (SVI) into the Seattle Community College District. It had been the Washington Institute of Applied Technology since 1987 when it was established by the Legislature in a facility previously occupied by the Seattle Occupational Industrialization Center before it closed. SVI serves economically disadvantaged people in Seattle's Central district, providing job-related training for adults and contract training for local businesses.

In 1994, the Legislature approved the establishment of the 30th college district, Cascadia Community College. The new district began enrolling state-supported students in the fall of 2000.

Pierce College Puyallup became the system's 34th college when the State Board granted it college status as part of the Pierce District in June 1999.

In 2005, the Legislature gave the State Board authority to offer applied baccalaureate programs in a pilot program at selected community and technical colleges. The 2010 Legislature removed the pilot status and gave the State Board authority to approve community and technical college applied baccalaureate degree programs.

In 2009, the Legislature allowed the five technical colleges to offer transfer degrees that prepare students for professional bachelor's degrees in addition to offering technical degrees.

Washington Community and Technical Colleges

