

**A Closer Look at Students who Declined to  
Enroll after their Acceptance to William Paterson**

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**Summary of Findings**

- First-time applicants were slightly overrepresented in the non-enrolled population, likely due to the finding that first-time college applicants apply to more colleges than ever before, according to a 2011 NACAC study<sup>1</sup>.
- Roughly three-quarters of respondents who decided not to attend William Paterson have plans to attend another institution and 20 percent have no plans to attend another institution.
- The top three institutions of choice of survey respondents are Kean University (12 percent), Montclair State University (11 percent) and Rutgers University (9 percent).
- Almost half of respondents who do not currently have plans to attend an institution in the fall 2017 semester, stated they are delaying enrollment, but have plans to attend WP in the future.
- Forty-two percent of respondents cited personal reasons for not attending WP this semester, 37 percent said it was both personal and institutional reasons, and 21 percent said it was institutional reasons.
- When asked what would have persuaded them to attend WP, most respondents said more financial breaks, in the form of scholarships, financial aid, and cheaper tuition.
- Eighty-five percent of those who chose not to enroll at William Paterson enrolled elsewhere, the top five institutions being Montclair State, Kean, Rutgers – Newark, Ramapo College, and Rowan.
- The majority (80 percent) of those who subsequently enrolled elsewhere do so within New Jersey. Of those who remained in NJ, 80 percent enrolled in 4-year institutions.
- Nine out of ten students chose to attend their current institutions full-time and 78 percent are pursuing Bachelor's degrees.
- Students who remained in the state were more likely to attend public institutions (77 percent) and those who are attending out-of-state are more likely to attend private institutions (58 percent).

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2011/10/20/study-more-students-apply-to-more-colleges>

## Introduction and Methodology

The Subsequent Enrollment of Accepted Students (SEAS) Survey examines the reasons why students who applied and were accepted to William Paterson University declined to enroll. The survey was administered to 6,950 undergraduate students who were accepted to William Paterson, but did not enroll as of the first day of classes. For brevity, these students will be referred to as Non-Enrolled in this report. One hundred nine respondents participated in the survey, yielding a 1.5% response rate.

### *Characteristics of Those who Declined to Enroll*

To give the students who did not enroll a larger context, they were compared to the characteristics of all newly accepted undergraduate students in fall 2017, regardless of whether or not they enrolled.

**Gender:** Females are represented in the population of non-enrolled students; roughly 64 percent of non-enrolled students were female compared to the percentage of females who were accepted in fall 2017 (61 percent).

**Race/Ethnicity:** The highest percentage of the non-enrolled population are White students (34 percent), followed by Hispanic students (32 percent) and African American students (22 percent). These figures are all representative of the race/ethnicities of the accepted population.

Table 1. Racial Ethnic Distribution of Non-Enrolled and All Accepted Students, Fall 2017

Race/Ethnicity	Non-Enrolled Fall 2017		All Accepted Fall 2017	
	N	%	N	%
African American	1,573	22.0	2,096	21.0
Asian	514	7.2	695	7.0
Hispanic (all races)	2,308	32.3	3,279	32.8
Multi-racial	217	3.0	298	3.0
Native American	9	0.1	11	0.1
Non-resident alien	46	0.6	70	0.7
Other/unknown	70	1.0	194	1.9
White	2,399	33.6	3,350	33.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,136</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9,993</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Majors:** Shown in Table 2, the majority of non-enrolled students had an Undeclared major (25 percent) which is only a slightly higher percentage than those who were accepted in fall 2017 (22 percent). The second most popular major among those who did not enroll are Criminology and Criminal Justice (7 percent); and tied for the third most popular major are Nursing, Psychology, and Biology (all roughly 6 percent). The enrollment in each of these majors is fairly representative of the fall 2017 accepted population.

Table 2. Distribution of First Majors with 100 or More Non-enrolled Students

First Major	Non-Enrolled Fall 2017		All Accepted Fall 2017	
	N	%	N	%
Undeclared	1,807	25.3	2,202	22.0
Criminology and Criminal Justice (B.A.)	467	6.5	681	6.8
Nursing (B.S.)	459	6.4	561	5.6
Psychology (B.A.)	439	6.2	619	6.2
Biology (B.S.)	430	6.0	608	6.1
Communication (B.A.)	327	4.6	497	5.0
Accounting (B.S.)	299	4.2	416	4.2
Computer Science (B.S.)	281	3.9	379	3.8
Management (B.S.)	260	3.6	372	3.7
Early Childhood (B.A.)	216	3.0	326	3.3
Elementary Education (B.A.)	175	2.5	255	2.6
Marketing (B.S.)	164	2.3	248	2.5
Art (B.A.)	137	1.9	192	1.9
Sociology (B.A.)	130	1.8	203	2.0
Finance (B.S.)	122	1.7	182	1.8
Athletic Training (B.S.)	118	1.7	165	1.7
Sport Management (B.A.)	110	1.5	158	1.6
Exercise Science (B.S.)	101	1.4	169	1.7
<i>Other</i>	<i>1,070</i>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>1,756</i>	<i>17.6</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,136</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9,989</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Combined SAT Scores:** Students who chose not to enroll at WP had only a slightly higher average combined SAT (CSAT) score than all who were accepted in fall 2017. Students who declined admission had an average CSAT score of 1020 and those who were accepted had an average CSAT score of 1014.

**Application Level:** First-time student applicants were overrepresented in the non-enrolled population (84 percent) compared to the accepted population (73 percent), whereas transfer students were underrepresented in the non-enrolled sample (13 percent) compared to the accepted population (20 percent). It would appear that transfer students are more likely to enroll than first-time students. This is possibly because first-time students are applying to more schools than transfer students.

Table 3. Application Level

Application Level	Non-Enrolled, Fall 2017		All Accepted, Fall 2017	
	N	%	N	%
First-Time	5,955	83.5	7,331	73.4
Transfer	897	12.6	1947	19.5
Second Degree	157	2.2	231	2.3
Readmit	114	1.6	341	3.4
Non-Degree	13	0.2	143	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,136</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9,993</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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**PART II—FINDINGS FROM THE SUBSEQUENT ENROLLMENT OF ACCEPTED STUDENTS SURVEY**


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Seventy-nine percent of respondents stated they have plans to enroll elsewhere and 18 percent of respondents stated they have no current plans to enroll at any institution (Table 4).

Table 4. Do you have plans to enroll elsewhere this fall semester?

	N	%
Yes	80	79.2
No	18	17.8
Have not decided	3	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of the 83 respondents who stated they had plans to enroll elsewhere, 79 indicated the specific institution. Sixty-seven percent chose to attend 4-year institutions, and 12 percent decided to attend 2-year institutions. Shown in Table 5, the most popular institution of choice was Kean University (13 percent), followed by Montclair State University (12 percent) and Rutgers University (9 percent).

Table 5. Where do you plan to enroll/where have you enrolled this fall?

	N	%
Kean University	10	12.7
Montclair State University	9	11.4
Rutgers University	7	8.9
Bergen Community College	4	5.1
Fairleigh Dickinson University	4	5.1
Rowan University	4	5.1
Saint Peter's University	3	3.8
Bloomfield College	2	2.5
County College of Morris	2	2.5
Mercer County Community College	2	2.5
New Jersey City University	2	2.5
Ramapo College	2	2.5
Rider University	2	2.5
Other Institutions*	38	32.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* *Institutions in which one respondent indicated enrollment*

If survey participants indicated that they did not have plans to enroll elsewhere in the fall 2017 semester, they were asked what their future plans were. Over half of those who answered this question stated that they are delaying enrollment, but considering attending William Paterson at a later time (Table 6).

Table 6. What are your future plans?

	N	%
Delay enrollment, but considering WP	10	55.6
Delay enrollment, considering another college	1	5.6
Entering workforce	1	5.6
Other	6	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Six respondents stated that they do not have plans to attend college or enter the workforce this semester, but provided other plans (Table 7). Two of the respondents stated that they are already enrolled at other institutions and three plan to attend WP in the future (one as a graduate student).

Table 7. If other, what are your future plans?

Complete my degree at WP and re-enter the workforce
Currently attending Rutgers
Enrolling at WP in the Spring 2018
Enrollment in graduate school at WPU
Plan on attendin NJCU for two years and then transfer to William Patterson to complete my education in Nursing
Stay at MSU

Roughly 42 percent indicated personal reasons for not attending WP this semester, 21 percent cited institutional reasons, and 37 percent said it was a combination of both personal and institutional reasons to not attend WP this semester (Table 8).

Table 8. What types of reasons led to your decision not to enroll at WP?

	N	%
Personal reason(s)	37	41.6
Institutional reason(s)	19	21.3
Both personal and institutional reasons	33	37.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Nineteen respondents who responded to the question “What would have persuaded you to enroll at WP?” said that some form of financial help would have persuaded them. Four said that acceptance into the Nursing program would have persuaded them, and three stated that they would have attended if the program they wanted to enroll in was offered (Table 9).

Table 9. What, if anything, would have persuaded you to enroll at WP?

Comments (Verbatim)
A scholarship.
An acceptance to your program
Better financial aid package
Better surrounding town, Montclair feels a lot safer
Cheaper tuition and further away from home
Cheaper, online, the ability to finish within a year.
Financial Aid help
Great nursing program!
I am going to WP this semester for the fall.
I am looking forward to attend to William Paterson University in the near future, for several personal reasons, I cannot attend this Fall (2017) and would like to enroll for the spring semester
I am persuaded I want to go to WP I am just not able to pay the enrollment fee for this fall semester.
I decided to apply to William Paterson for the spring semester in 2018, because I am interested in the nursing program. I have not enrolled yet at William Paterson, because I am still waiting to be accepted.
I did not get accosted into the nursing program, but I plan to reapply.
I did not get into your nursing program. I got into 5 of the 7 nursing schools I applied to not sure why I wasn't accepted at WPC.
I have enrolled at WP and am currently taking classes.
I love the school and would have enrolled if I had not received a better offer from another school. I plan on applying for a graduate degree.
i Love WP. it felt like home once i stepped my foot inside; I'm just not financially ready to attend this fall.
I Plan on attending WPU
I plan to enroll next fall semester
I waited for 8 months for your decision whether I would be attending William Paterson, and three weeks before school is to start, you finally send me an acceptance letter. Old Dominion University notified me weeks after I applied. In order to attend William Paterson, I would have to find a place to live, make arrangements for financial aid, and of course, see an adviser. ODU had everything ready for me within a month of acceptance. So, why would you think that procrastination on the part of the administration at WPU would have me make the drive to Wayne and get settled in.
I was first rejected. Then they wanted to send a letter saying I got accepted yet I had already finished my stuff for CCM. Honestly I wouldn't even waste my breath going to William Paterson
I was not accepted from William Patterson when I first replied but about 2/3 months later i was finally accepted but I was already in another school by then. If I was accepted by William Patterson the first time I would have indeed enrolled.
I was not admitted to your university
I was told by William Paterson that I wasn't accepted into the school. When I found this out, I accepted New Jersey City university's offer. A week before my move in day, at the end of August I received an acceptance letter from William Paterson, which really confused me. If William Paterson sent the acceptance letter beforehand I wouldn't have started taking out loans for NJCU and I would've enrolled at WP.
If i drove and had more money I would have attended William Patterson
If i had gotten accepted

If I had the money to afford it or it being closer to where I live.
If I like the environment more than the other universities I have visited.
If I was accepted into the nursing program
if I was enrolled in the nursing program
If WP had a glass blowing and neon studio.
If WP would have had a network engineering major then I would had gladly went there.
If you had a decent classical music program
It was convenient for me to go to William Paterson since it's close to my home.
Making the nursing program more friendly to the working population, unfortunately i was unable to find classes that fit my schedule. They did not offer a variety of times, for diff classes most where scheduled for the same time on the same days. I would have to travel the 40 minute to the school almost three times a week just for one class per day.
More financial aid
More financial aid or assistance.
More scholarship money, and an acceptance into your nursing program! (I am contemplating transferring to WPU)
More scholarship money.
More scholarships and financial aid. I was awarded more at Saint Peter's to cover my tuition then at William Paterson.
More scholarships/financial aid; proximity to my house; more availability for returning/second degree students with full time jobs and other obligations!
Receiving a notable scholarship
Receiving an loan approval letter in order to attend school.
Scholarship money
There is an animation program. My mother got her Masters there.
This would be a very long discussion; I would be happy to have a phone conversation with you at your convenience.
Too close to home
Very high scholarship money.
was going to work and delay 1 or 2 semesters of College
WP wait listed me and I had to make a decision.

### PART III—SUBSEQUENT ENROLLMENT DATA FROM THE NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE

Of the 6,950 students who were accepted to William Paterson University but declined to enroll, 5,893 (85 percent) enrolled elsewhere (Table 10).

Table 10. Subsequent Enrollment

	N	%
Did not Enroll	1,057	15.2
Enrolled Elsewhere	5,893	84.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,950</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 11 shows the top institutions that students who declined to enroll at WP chose. The top five of which were Montclair State University, Kean University, Rutgers Newark, Ramapo College, and Rowan University.

Table 11. Institutions

	N	%
Montclair State University	824	14.0
Kean University	381	6.5
Rutgers - Newark	278	4.7
Ramapo College Of New Jersey	273	4.6
Rowan University	232	3.9
Bergen Community College	214	3.6
New Jersey City University	191	3.2
Rutgers - New Brunswick	188	3.2
Passaic County Community College	144	2.4
Fairleigh Dickinson University - Teaneck	142	2.4
Seton Hall University	136	2.3
Stockton University	132	2.2
Fairleigh Dickinson University - Madison	120	2.0
Saint Peter's University	114	1.9
Felician University	105	1.8
Rider University	100	1.7
<i>Other</i>	<i>2,319</i>	<i>39.4</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,893</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Shown in Table 12, the majority (80 percent) of students who chose not to attend WP, but selected another institution stayed within the state of New Jersey. Of those who remained in the state, 80 percent of these students attended four-year institutions. For those who selected out-of-state institutions, 96 percent of those students attended four-year institutions.

Table 12. Institution State and Type

State	Type	N	%
In-State	Four Year	3,785	80.3%
	Two Year	927	19.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,712</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Out-of-State	Four Year	1,134	96.0%
	Two Year	47	4.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,181</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Ninety percent of the students subsequently enrolled full-time at their current institutions, 4 percent enrolled less than full-time, 8 students have already withdrawn and there was no data for 325 students (Table 13).

Table 13. Enrollment Status

	N	%
Full-time	5,315	90.2
Less than Full-Time	245	4.2
Withdrawn	8	0.1
N/A	325	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,893</b>	<b>100</b>

Seven percent of those who chose to enroll elsewhere went on to pursue an Associate's degree, 78 percent chose to pursue a Bachelor's degree, and only one student went on to pursue graduate studies (Table 14).

Table 14. Class Level

	N	%
Associate's	407	6.9
Bachelor's (Undergraduate)	4,571	77.6
First Professional (Graduate)	1	0.0
N/A	914	15.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,893</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of the students who remained in the state, the majority (77 percent) attended a public institution whereas the 58 percent of those who left the state attended private institutions (Table 15).

Table 15. Institution State and Control

State	Control	N	%
In-State	Private	1,098	23.3%
	Public	3,614	76.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,712</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Out-of-State	Private	686	58.1%
	Public	495	41.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,181</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The 5,893 students who attended other institutions enrolled in various majors at their current institutions. Shown in table 16, most of the students (25 percent) have not decided on a major yet which is typical for new first-time traditional students. The most popular majors in which students enrolled in their current institutions were Undeclared (7 percent), Biology (7 percent), Nursing (6 percent), Psychology (5 percent), and Business Administration (4 percent).

Table 16. Current Majors

	N	%
Undecided or No Major Reported	1,473	25.0
Undeclared	426	7.2
Biology	386	6.6
Nursing	348	5.9
Psychology	270	4.6
Business Administration	244	4.1
Criminology/Criminal Justice	225	3.8
Computer Science	151	2.6
Accounting	130	2.2
Communications	121	2.1
Health Science	100	1.7
<i>Other Majors</i>	<i>2,019</i>	<i>32.6</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,893</b>	<b>100.0</b>