

# WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

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## OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

### **2019 Subsequent Enrollment of Accepted Students (SEAS) Study**

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

February 11, 2020

## Introduction

The Subsequent Enrollment of Accepted Students Study is conducted annually by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The purpose of the study is to take a closer look at students who were accepted to William Paterson, but declined to enroll. The report is organized into three sections.

- **Section I.** addresses the question *“Which students are declining to enroll?”* by analyzing data from our institutional database. This section examines the demographic and academic profiles of Fall 2019 admitted students who declined to enroll and compares them to students who were admitted and enrolled to see which students we are losing based on these characteristics.
- **Section II.** addresses the question *“Where are those who declined going?”* by analyzing data queried from the National Student Clearinghouse. This section breaks down those who declined into two distinct groups: students who opted to enroll elsewhere and those who are not attending college at this time. Both groups are analyzed with a special focus on the enrollment behavior of those who enrolled elsewhere.
- **Section III.** addresses the question *“Why did these students decline to enroll?”* by analyzing survey data from our annual SEAS Survey. The instrument asks those who declined about their future plans, whether their reasons for not attending William Paterson were institutional or personal, and what would have persuaded them to enroll at William Paterson University.

## Methodology

The annual study uses admissions data to define its population. The study looks at new degree-seeking students who were admitted to William Paterson University, but declined to enroll in Fall 2019. This population is compared to the population of students who were accepted and enrolled at William Paterson in Fall 2019.

Undergraduates admitted to William Paterson University and enrolled:	<b>2,344</b>	<b>23.3%</b>
Undergraduates admitted to William Paterson University and declined to enroll:	<b>7,728</b>	<b>76.7%</b>
Total Undergraduates admitted to William Paterson University:	<b>10,072</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Section I. – Which students are declining to enroll?

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

**Gender:** Although more females enrolled at William Paterson University than males in Fall 2019, a higher percentage of admitted males enrolled (27 percent) compared to female admits who enrolled (21 percent).

Table 1. Enrollment Decision by Gender

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	1,027	26.8%	2,807	73.2%	<b>3,834</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Female	1,317	21.1%	4,918	78.9%	<b>6,235</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Unknown	0	0.0%	3	100.0%	<b>3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Race/Ethnicity:** The majority of admitted students to William Paterson in Fall 2019 were Hispanic (36 percent), and Native American students enrolled at the highest rate (29 percent), though the total number of admits was low (N=14).

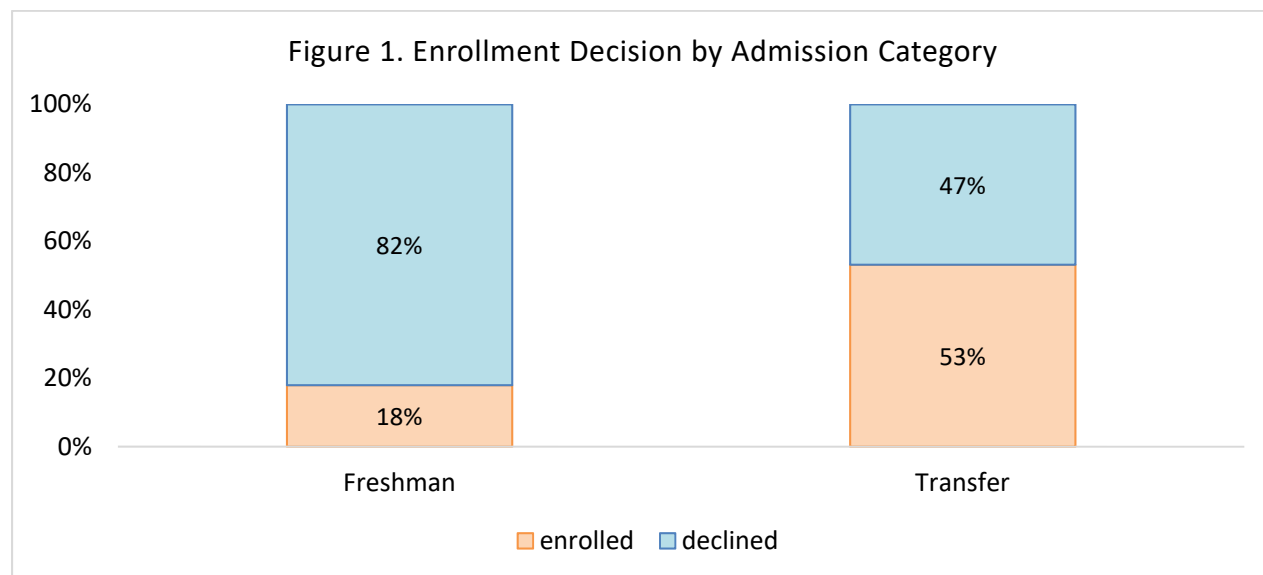
Table 2. Enrollment Decision by Race/Ethnicity

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hispanic (all races)	821	22.7%	2,788	77.3%	<b>3,609</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
White	704	24.7%	2,144	75.3%	<b>2,848</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
African American	551	22.4%	1,913	77.6%	<b>2,464</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Asian	148	23.2%	490	76.8%	<b>638</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Multi-racial	76	24.9%	229	75.1%	<b>305</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Other/unknown	20	16.4%	102	83.6%	<b>122</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Non-resident alien	20	27.8%	52	72.2%	<b>72</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Native American	4	28.6%	10	71.4%	<b>14</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Age:** An analysis of age showed that the mean age of those who declined was slightly younger (19 years of age) than those who enrolled (21 years of age).

**ACADEMIC PROFILE**

**Admission Category:** The percentage of Freshmen who were admitted to William Paterson and enrolled (18 percent) was substantially lower than the percentage of transfers who were admitted and enrolled (53 percent).

***A Closer Look at the Non-Enrolled Who Entered WP as Transfers***

**Class Level at time of Admission:** Students at higher class levels (with more earned and accepted credits) enrolled at a higher rate.

Table 3. Enrollment Decision by Transfer Class Level

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Freshman	157	37.6%	261	62.4%	<b>418</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Sophomore	296	49.3%	304	50.7%	<b>600</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Junior	349	70.8%	144	29.2%	<b>493</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Senior	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	<b>7</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Major:** When looking at majors with ten or more students admitted in Fall 2019, majors with the lowest decline rates were Music (B.A.), Art (B.F.A.), Music (B.M.), Liberal Studies (B.A.), and Communication Disorders (B.A.). Majors with the highest decline rates were Actuarial Science (BS.), Integrated Math and Science (B.A.), Health Studies (B.S.), Political Science (B.A.), and Mathematics (B.S.).

Table 4. Top 10 Majors<sup>1</sup> with the Lowest Decline Rates

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Music - BA	32	66.7%	16	33.3%	<b>48</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Art - BFA	18	64.3%	10	35.7%	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Music - BM	50	43.9%	64	56.1%	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Liberal Studies - BA	29	39.7%	44	60.3%	<b>73</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Communication Disorders - BA	25	37.3%	42	62.7%	<b>67</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 5. Majors<sup>1</sup> with Highest Decline Rates

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Actuarial Science (B.S.)	1	7.1%	13	92.9%	14	<b>100.0%</b>
Integrated Math & Science (B.A.)	1	7.1%	13	92.9%	14	<b>100.0%</b>
Health Studies (B.S.)	10	8.6%	106	91.4%	116	<b>100.0%</b>
Political Science (B.A.)	16	14.7%	93	85.3%	109	<b>100.0%</b>
Mathematics (B.S.)	5	14.7%	29	85.3%	34	<b>100.0%</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Includes majors that had 10 or more accepted students in Fall 2019.

## Section II. – Where are those who declined going?

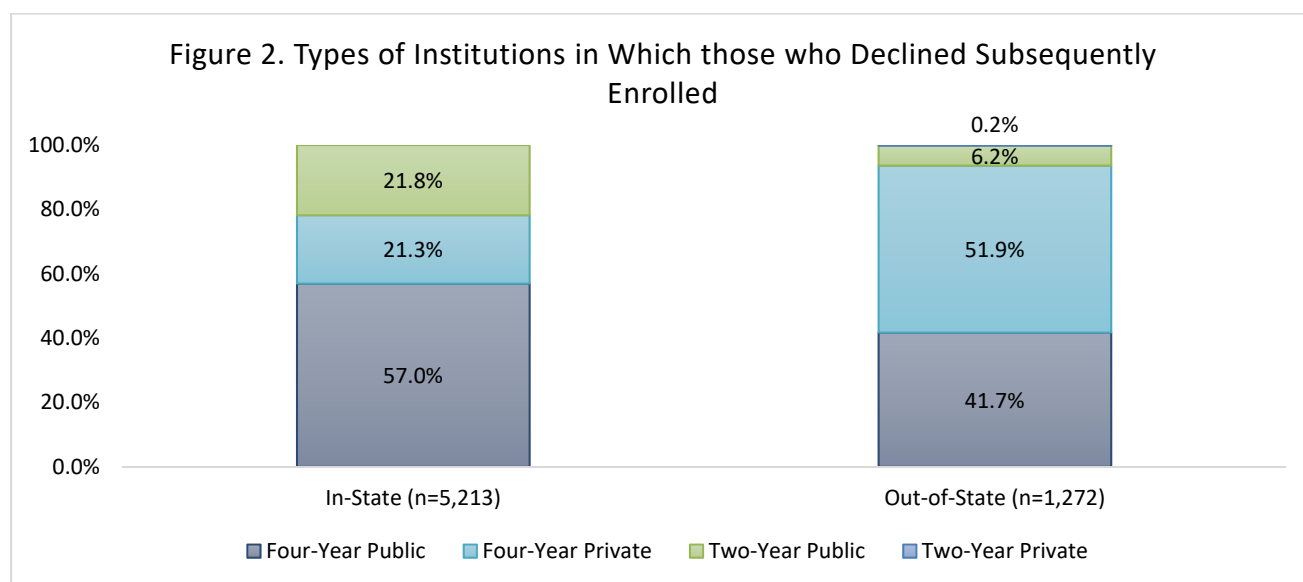
To determine the subsequent enrollment activity of those who declined to enroll, this subset of 7,728 students was submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The National Student Clearinghouse is a non-profit organization created by the higher education community that maintains enrollment and graduation data for over 98 percent of U.S. college students from over 3,600 colleges and universities. The 'StudentTracker' service provided by the NSC allows colleges and universities to track the subsequent enrollment of their students.<sup>2</sup>

**Subsequent Enrollment:** The majority (84 percent) of admitted students who declined to attend William Paterson University in Fall 2019 subsequently enrolled at another institution. The rate of subsequent enrollment has remained roughly the same as prior fall semesters.

Table 6. Subsequent Enrollment Activity, Two-Year Trend

	Fall 2017		Fall 2018		Fall 2019	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No Enrollment Record	1,057	15%	1,022	15%	1,243	16%
Enrolled Elsewhere	5,893	85%	5,738	85%	6,485	84%

**Subsequent Institution Type:** Eighty percent of students who enrolled at another institution enrolled within the state of New Jersey. Fifty-seven percent of those who remained in New Jersey subsequently attended four-year public institutions. The majority (52 percent) of those who pursued their education outside of the state went to four-year private institutions.



<sup>2</sup> National Student Clearinghouse "About the Clearinghouse" (<https://studentclearinghouse.org/about/>)

**Institutions of Choice:** The top institutions where those who declined subsequently enrolled were Montclair State University, Kean University, Ramapo College, Rutgers University (Newark), Bergen Community College, Rowan University, and New Jersey City University.

Table 7. Top Institutions in Which Applicants Subsequently Enrolled

	N	%
Montclair State University	913	14.1%
Kean University	385	5.9%
Ramapo College Of New Jersey	329	5.1%
Rutgers University - Newark	329	5.1%
Bergen Community College	238	3.7%
Rowan University	214	3.3%
New Jersey City University	206	3.2%

**Major at 4-year Institution:** The top five majors students selected at their subsequent four-year institutions of choice were Unknown, Undeclared, or unspecified (27 percent); followed by Psychology, Nursing, and Biology (table 8).

Table 8. Majors of those who Declined and Enrolled in Four-Year Institutions

Current Major	N	%
Unknown	663	14.0%
Undeclared	321	6.8%
Unspecified (Matriculating)	291	6.1%
Psychology	272	5.7%
Nursing	250	5.3%
Biology	231	4.9%

**Major at 2-Year Institution:** The top five majors students selected at their subsequent two-year institutions of choice were Unknown, Business Administration, General Associates Professional Studies, Criminal Justice, Health Science, and Liberal Arts.

Table 9. Majors of those who Declined and Enrolled in Two-Year Institutions

Current Major	N	%
Unknown	102	8.9%
Business Administration	70	6.1%
General Associates Professional Studies	70	6.1%
Criminal Justice	68	5.9%
Health Science	47	4.1%
Liberal Arts	35	3.1%

### Section III. – Why did these students decline to enroll?

The Subsequent Enrollment of Accepted Students Survey was distributed to the 7,728 students who were admitted to William Paterson, but declined to enroll. These students received an initial survey invitation via email followed by two reminders asking them to participate in the web survey. One hundred fifty-four respondents (two percent) completed this brief 7-question survey.

**Future Academic Plans:** Respondents were asked what their future academic plans were. The majority (66 percent) of respondents stated that they would be enrolling at another institution and 16 percent planned to delay enrollment, but were still considering William Paterson University.

Table 10. Future Academic Plans

	N	%
Enroll elsewhere this fall semester	101	65.6%
Delay enrollment, but considering WP	24	15.6%
Delay enrollment, considering another college	6	3.9%
Entering workforce	3	1.9%
Other	20	13.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 11. Other Future Academic Plans

1	Am enrolled but not registered for fall classes
2	Completing my two years at a community college and transfer to a four year college.
3	Consider WP but part time
4	currently at another college
5	Doing Two Years At Bergen Community College then Transferring to WP
6	enrolled in other college
7	Frustrated
8	getting married, settling in to a new life in Gaston, NC
9	Going to WP
10	going to WP in Spring 2020
11	I want to enroll into classes but I wanted to obtain a secure job first
12	I will be completing my two years at Passaic County Community College and transfer to a four year college.
13	I will transfer spring semester 2019
14	I'm already in caldwell university
15	I'm in a college already
16	Military Basic Training
17	Study
18	Would enroll if tuition was covered without loans.

**Reasons for Leaving:** To better understand why these accepted students did not enroll at William Paterson, the survey asked whether their reasons for not attending were personal, institutional, or both. The majority of students (48 percent) cited both personal and institutional reasons for not enrolling at William Paterson University.

Table 12. What Types of Reasons Led to Your Decision Not to Enroll at WP?

	N	%
Personal reason(s)	50	40.0%
Institutional reason(s)	15	12.0%
Both personal and institutional reasons	60	48.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**What would have persuaded you to enroll:** The survey asked, “What, if anything, would have persuaded them to enroll at William Paterson University?” The responses to this question are separated to show the responses of those who are not currently attending another institution (Table 13) and those who decided to enroll elsewhere (Table 14).

For those who did not attend another institution, 30 percent who responded to the question “What would have persuaded you to enroll at William Paterson University?” mentioned affordability or aid, and 20 percent cited program options.

*The below comments are for internal use only and for the purpose of improvement.*

Table 13. If *not currently enrolled*, what would have persuaded you to enroll at WP?

1	awarded scholarship and merit from other college
2	Do not want to enroll to WP because I didn't get the opportunity to be into the nursing program.
3	getting more money
4	Had all prerequisites done with all As. I'm graduating from Essex county college with a GPA of 4.0 in general science. What else did you guys want me to have before I can be accepted? It's my fate!
5	I am currently looking at other schools but still considering WP in the future.
6	I want to be a teacher
7	I was put on the waiting list for nursing and was advised to go in as undecided and enroll later. Which is a waste of time as my spot isn't guaranteed in the nursing program. Whereas another college took me in automatically as a nursing student.
8	I would love to attend William Patterson but was denied my student visa☹
9	If I didn't have any personal reasons.
10	Lack of additional financial aid available to out of state residents and out of state tuition plays a factor. I would have plenty support in my current state but makes following dreams very challenging when on SSI,when finances are so limited. I try my hardest but I have to take care of myself also. Hard to do when things are unbalanced in my own situation, trying to obtain a job and work. It's doable but I need accommodations so it often takes significantly longer. There will be no perfect solution though. It's a bit unfortunate though.
11	Location

12	More financial aid, if I was mentally ready to attend an out-of-state university
13	More live help with paperwork. I couldn't get any help with dealing with filling out/using the correct forms.
14	Not leaving the state of NJ. If I weren't moving, engaged, I likely would have continued with the enrollment proceedings.
15	Not registered for fall classes due to personal reasons but will review spring options
16	The best way of being able to transport for a low or no cost at all.
17	Tuition coverage.
18	Was considering WP Nursing, but might reconsider and choose Felician University. Nursing at WP seems difficult.
19	Yes I would had persuaded to enroll to William Paterson
20	You wouldn't give me money, I work two jobs. One full time and one part time. Give me money so I can finish my degree. I claim myself on my taxes and didn't fill out the fasfa because my parents are not paying for my school, I am. Don't be jerks about it next time

For those who decided to attend another institution, 18 percent who responded to the question “What would have persuaded you to enroll at William Paterson University?” stated scholarships would have persuaded them, 16 percent said receiving financial aid, and 14 percent mentioned they simply decided on another institution.

Table 14. If *currently enrolled elsewhere*, what would have persuaded you to enroll at WP?

1	A baseball Offer
2	A better scholarship offer.
3	a scholarship haha
4	Acceptance to nursing program, rigorous/well-recognized nursing program, less of a party school
5	Affordable and close to home
6	Better financial Aid
7	better financial aid offer
8	Better food, if it wasn't so close to home, dorm quality
9	Close to home Good education program?
10	Different location, more money, better nursing program
11	Free tuition.
12	Had neuroscience as a major
13	Having a major in nutrition and food science.
14	Having my major, interior design
15	Having the opportunity to play lacrosse
16	I may still sign up for winter intercession classes. I always wanted to attend a large public university.
17	I want to enroll but money and aid are not in My favor. so when I'm done with Pccc I'll come to William Paterson if the course catalog is right that will be in 2021 spring or fall semester.
18	if i did not get into Montclair State University
19	If I hadn't gotten into Penn state or Rutgers I would've considered going to WP
20	If I hadn't gotten the financial aid offer from Rider, and better food
21	If I was accepted into the nursing program.

22	if i was given more scholarships. since i would have live there, i was hoping for more scholarship money.
23	If the office of admissions hadn't lost part of my transcripts that I sent over early, I probably would have been accepted. WP was my top choice, and not knowing that part of my documentation was missing was probably what led to my ultimate rejection. It was disappointing, to say the least, and the admissions officer who helped me figure it out was not polite at all. After that experience, I may not have accepted an offer of admission anyway.
24	If they were ranked higher for my major
25	If William Paterson offers a Bachelor in Social Work
26	In group chats other accepted students engaged in behaviors that I dont and when I express that I no longer wanted to be apart of the social media, they became threatening and verbally abusive toward me and another student
27	It was a personal decision really, it had nothing to do with the institution so I don't think anything could have changed my mind.
28	Lower tuition and housing costs, not being undecided (personal reason)
29	Money
30	More available financial aid
31	More financial aid
32	More Financial Aid
33	More scholarship money
34	My financial situation is not the best right now but I do plan on applying there after I achieve my associates degree
35	My mother and grandfather both graduated from WPU. I would love to be apart of the nursing program and be a third-generation WPU graduate.
36	Not getting into the other schools
37	Not really, I loved the campus and the program but St. John's was really where my heart led me.
38	Not sure but really like the downtown area at Rowan.
39	nothing
40	Nothing, I really wanted to go to your school but I had to pay a lot of money out of pocket.
41	Nothing. Because it was so affordable it was my back up plan if funding for private college fell through.
42	Nothing. I was offered a full ride at the school I chose.
43	Receiving Scholarships would have definitely persuaded me to attend William Paterson University.
44	Rescinded my application until spring 2020
45	Scholarship
46	Scholarship money
47	Scholarship/Grant Money
48	Scholarships
49	William Paterson was my dream school but i couldn't afford the tution that is why i unenrolled myself. If i had the money i would've loved to be on campus.