

WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

2020 Subsequent Enrollment of Accepted Students (SEAS) Study

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

March 25, 2021

Introduction

The Subsequent Enrollment of Accepted Students (SEAS) 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 2020 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, personal, or due to COVID-19, 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 2020. This population is compared to the population of students who were accepted and enrolled at William Paterson in Fall 2020.

Undergraduates admitted to William Paterson University and enrolled:	1,943	19.7%
Undergraduates admitted to William Paterson University and declined to enroll:	7,943	80.3%
Total Undergraduates admitted to William Paterson University:	9,886	100.0%

Section I. – Which students are declining to enroll?

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender: Although more females enrolled at William Paterson University than males in Fall 2020, a higher percentage of admitted males enrolled (22 percent) compared to female admits who enrolled (18 percent).

Table 1. Enrollment Decision by Gender

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted
	N	%	N	%	N
Female	1,158	18.4%	5,152	81.6%	6,310
Male	785	22.0%	2,791	78.0%	3,576
Total	1,943	19.7%	7,943	80.3%	9,886

Race/Ethnicity: The majority of admitted students to William Paterson in Fall 2020 were Hispanic (37 percent), however White students enrolled at the highest rate (23 percent) followed by students of 'Other/Unknown' race/ethnicity (23 percent).

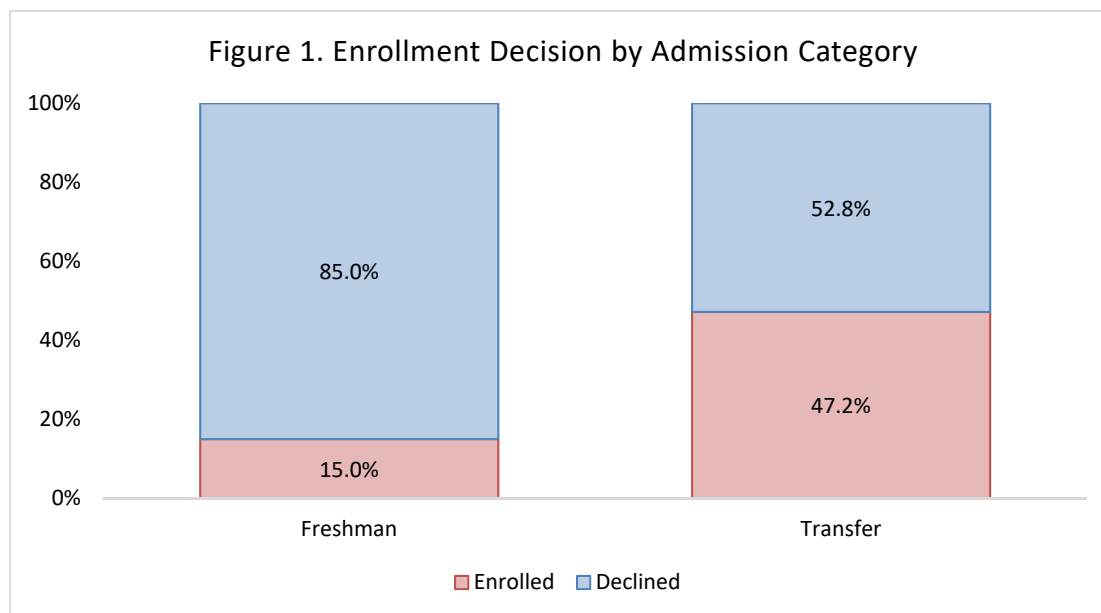
Table 2. Enrollment Decision by Race/Ethnicity

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted
	N	%	N	%	N
Hispanic (all races)	668	18.4%	2,959	81.6%	3,627
White	591	23.4%	1,940	76.6%	2,531
African American	423	17.6%	1,976	82.4%	2,399
Asian	141	20.0%	565	80.0%	706
Multi-racial	57	19.6%	234	80.4%	291
Non-resident alien	26	15.8%	139	84.2%	165
Other/unknown	37	23.0%	124	77.0%	161
Native American	0	0.0%	6	100.0%	6
Total	1,943	19.7%	7,943	80.3%	9,886

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 (22 years of age).

ACADEMIC PROFILE

Admission Category: The percentage of Freshmen who were admitted to William Paterson and enrolled (15 percent) was substantially lower than the percentage of transfers who were admitted and enrolled (47 percent).

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

Class Level at time of Admission: Students who applied as Juniors enrolled at the highest rate (66 percent), followed by Sophomores (47 percent), then Freshmen (27 percent).

Table 3. Enrollment Decision by Transfer Class Level

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted
	N	%	N	%	N
Freshman	114	27.0%	309	73.0%	423
Sophomore	253	46.9%	286	53.1%	539
Junior	313	65.5%	165	34.5%	478
Senior	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	2

Major: When looking at majors with ten or more students admitted in Fall 2020, majors with the highest enrollment rates were Asian Studies (B.A.), Music (B.A.), Communication Disorders (B.A.), Music (B.M.), and Nursing (B.S.). Majors with the highest decline rates were Actuarial Science (BS.), Chemistry (B.S.), Women's and Gender Studies (B.A.), Earth Science (B.A.), and Environmental Science (B.S.)

Table 4. Top 5 Majors¹ with the Highest Enrollment Rates

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted
	N	%	N	%	N
Asian Studies - BA	7	70%	3	30.0%	10
Music - BA	26	52%	24	48.0%	50
Communication Disorders - BA	25	34%	49	66.2%	74
Music - BM	38	33%	77	67.0%	115
Nursing - BS	196	33%	401	67.2%	597

Table 5. Top 5 Majors¹ with Highest Decline Rates

	Enrolled		Declined		Total Accepted
	N	%	N	%	N
Actuarial Science - BS	0	0%	13	100.0%	13
Chemistry - BS	2	5%	40	95.2%	42
Women's & Gender Studies - BA	1	9%	10	90.9%	11
Earth Science - BA	1	10%	9	90.0%	10
Environmental Science - BS	4	10%	35	89.7%	39

¹ Includes majors that had 10 or more accepted students in Fall 2020.

Section II. – Where are those who declined going?

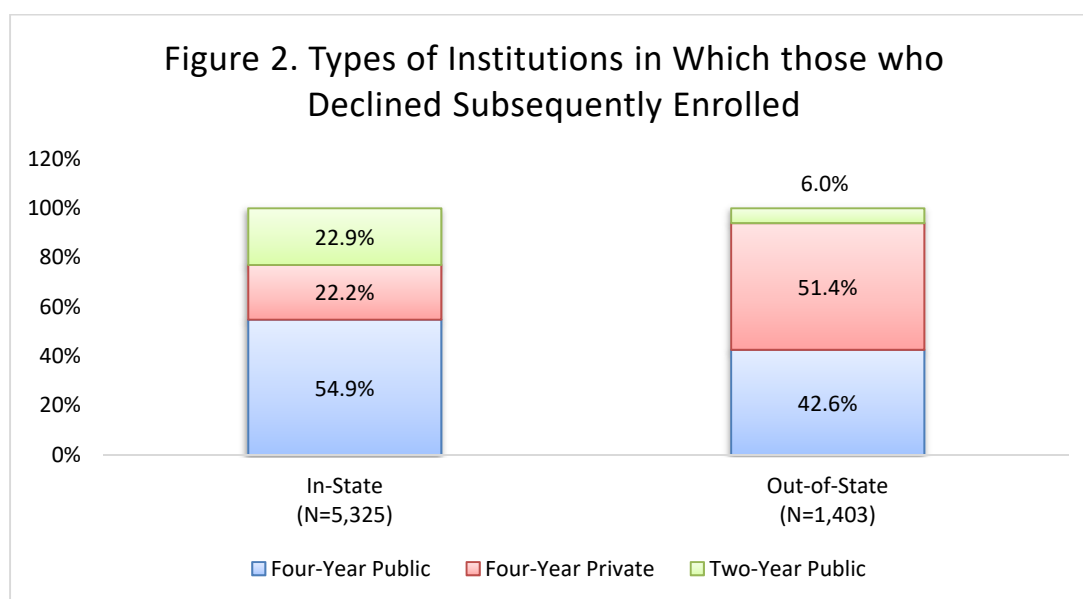
To determine the subsequent enrollment activity of those who declined to enroll, this subset of 7,943 students was submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The National Student Clearinghouse is a non-profit organization created by the higher education community that maintains enrollment 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.²

Subsequent Enrollment: The majority (85 percent) of admitted students who declined to attend William Paterson University in Fall 2020 subsequently enrolled at another institution. The rate of subsequent enrollment has remained roughly the same as prior fall semesters.

Table 6. Subsequent Enrollment Activity, Four-Year Trend

	Fall 2017		Fall 2018		Fall 2019		Fall 2020	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No Enrollment Record	1,057	15%	1,022	15%	1,243	16%	1,215	15%
Enrolled Elsewhere	5,893	85%	5,738	85%	6,485	84%	6,728	85%

Subsequent Institution Type: Seventy-nine percent of students who enrolled at another institution enrolled within the state of New Jersey. Fifty-five percent of those who remained in New Jersey subsequently attended four-year public institutions. The majority (51 percent) of those who pursued their education outside of the state went to four-year private institutions.



² 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, Rutgers University (Newark), Ramapo College, New Jersey City University, Bergen Community College, and Rutgers University (New Brunswick).

Table 7. Top Institutions in Which Applicants Subsequently Enrolled

Current Institution	N	%
Montclair State University	934	13.9%
Kean University	400	5.9%
Rutgers University - Newark	319	4.7%
Ramapo College of New Jersey	300	4.5%
New Jersey City University	257	3.8%
Bergen Community College	229	3.4%
Rutgers University - New Brunswick	214	3.2%

Major at 4-year Institution: The top five major categories (identified by CIP [Classification of Instructional Programs] codes) students selected at their subsequent four-year institutions of choice were unknown, undeclared, or unspecified (17 percent); followed by General Studies (10 percent), Liberal Arts & Sciences (7 percent), Psychology (7 percent), and Biology/Biological Sciences (7 percent).

Table 8. Top 5 Major Categories of those who Declined and Enrolled in Four-Year Institutions

Current Major	N	%
Unknown, Undeclared, or Unspecified	852	17.4%
General Studies	483	9.8%
Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other	342	7.0%
Psychology, General	334	6.8%
Biology/Biological Sciences, General	328	6.7%

Major at 2-Year Institution: The top five major categories students selected at their subsequent two-year institutions of choice were unknown, undeclared, or unspecified (40 percent); followed by Liberal Arts and Sciences (14 percent), Health Services (6 percent), Business Administration (4 percent), and Nursing (4 percent).

Table 9. Top 5 Major Categories of those who Declined and Enrolled in Two-Year Institutions

Current Major	N	%
Unknown, Undeclared, or Unspecified	490	39.9%
Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies	176	14.3%
Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General	67	5.5%
Business Administration and Management, General	48	3.9%
Nursing/Registered Nurse (RN, ASN, BSN, MSN)	46	3.7%

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

The Subsequent Enrollment of Accepted Students Survey was distributed to the 7,943 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 thirty-eight respondents (two percent) completed this brief 7-question survey.

Future Academic Plans: Respondents were asked what their future academic plans were. The majority (57 percent) of respondents stated that they would be enrolling at another institution, 26 percent planned to delay enrollment, but were still considering William Paterson University, and nine percent planned to delay enrollment and subsequently attend another institution.

Table 10. Future Academic Plans

	N	%
Enroll elsewhere this fall semester	79	57.2%
Delay enrollment, but considering WP	37	26.8%
Delay enrollment, considering another college	12	8.7%
Entering workforce	4	2.9%
Other	6	4.3%
Total	138	100.0%

Table 11. Other Future Academic Plans

1	Delay enrollment due to Covid-19 restrictions and effects in the travelling processes both in Ghana and the U.S.A
2	Delaying enrollment but intend on enrolling after Fall 2
3	I don't plan to transfer to another college until next year.
4	Spring semester

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 COVID-19-related. The majority of students (66 percent) cited personal reasons, 39 percent said it was due to institutional factors, and 21 percent cited COVID-19 as a reason.

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

	N Respondents	% of Respondents
Personal	80	65.6%
Institutional	48	39.3%
COVID-19	25	20.5%

**Note: Because respondents could select more than one answer option, percentages are not cumulative and should not be summed.*

What would have persuaded you to enroll: The survey asked, “What, if anything, would have persuaded you 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, one-third of those who responded to the question “What would have persuaded you to enroll at William Paterson University?” mentioned lack of affordability or aid, and 24 percent mentioned program-specific issues (e.g. not being accepted into their program of choice).

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	A chance to fulfill my passion of becoming a nurse.
2	Because of Covid-19 I was still deciding to apply or not so when I applied I did not realize the schools deadline.
3	cause the registration for nursing is only ones a year, so i will reapply in December to see if i can get into the program by September 2021. i am finishing my degree at Essex county college this semester. i will grad may 4 2021 from general science.
4	Evening Classes
5	Financially can't afford it right now
6	Full tuition scholarship for 4 years and acceptance to Honors Program
7	I really wanna attend to class because I'm for my bachelor, and I don't wanna waste my time. But I would like to take class for the spring, taking class presentia face-to-face.
8	I was excited to begin the bsn program but there are personal reasons that have delayed my enrollment. I will begin the semester immediately following Fall 2.
9	I was not accepted to Nursing program
10	If only the covid-19 travelling restrictions was lifted earlier in my home country(Ghana) and the U.S.A.
11	It has always been my #1 school and I finally had the chance to go.
12	Lower prices and quicker phone waits
13	More communication
14	Scholarship money
15	Scholarship money.
16	The cost, the tuition cost was to expensive for me to afford so I immediately lost interest in the school.
17	The physical education program
18	The resources I needed and If I would've found out information earlier and wouldn't feel the need that I had to rush into the process.
19	Unsustainable financial support from family caused why I couldn't attend Williams Paterson this semester and I wasn't considered for scholarship.
20	William Paterson offers an outstanding nursing program and I would be honored and excited to be apart of that growing organization. I have two siblings that attend/attended William Paterson and they both expressed how much they love this school.
21	Yes I will like to be there

For those who decided to attend another institution, 44 percent who responded to the question “What would have persuaded you to enroll at William Paterson University?” mentioned acceptance into their program of choice/availability of a particular major would have persuaded them, and 11 percent simply preferred another institution.

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

1	A more extensive fleshed out program for my major.
2	Acceptance into the music department
3	Athletics
4	Being closer to home and having a strength in STEM.
5	cheaper pricing due to covid 19. couldn't afford it
6	Closer campus
7	Family members had attended Rutgers & convinced me to go there.
8	Financial Grants
9	Giving a scholarship
10	I was planning on coming to WP for nursing but I got a spot in CCMs nursing program. I would have had to repeat classes that I have already done at CCM to be able to apply as a change of major to join WP nursing program.
11	I wasn't accepted.
12	I wasn't provided much about the Nursing program during video meetings with students enrolled at the program.
13	If I got accepted into their music program.
14	If I had not been accepted to my top schools I may have enrolled at WP.
15	If I was actually offered scholarships to come there. I know my worth and worked hard, only for people I know, who hardly tried at all, to get scholarships instead.
16	If they had more information on pre-vet program
17	More financial aid
18	My mother not pressuring me to pick her preference.
19	No foreign language requirements. Lower gpa 3.0 instead of 3.3 to maintain scholarships. the honors curriculum and sequence was not clear and seemed too demanding.
20	None, the open house was disorganized and they didn't have my major I wanted
21	Nursing program
22	Obtaining a visa
23	Playing hockey
24	Scholarships and economic reasons.
25	the nursing's program reputation
26	Ultimately, it was a matter of getting accepted into the program.
27	WP went back to in-seat classes unlike Ramapo. Also WP doesn't offer a BSW.