



Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness

# Fall 2021 Enrollment Highlights and Analysis

This report provides a summary of trends on headcount and bill hours.

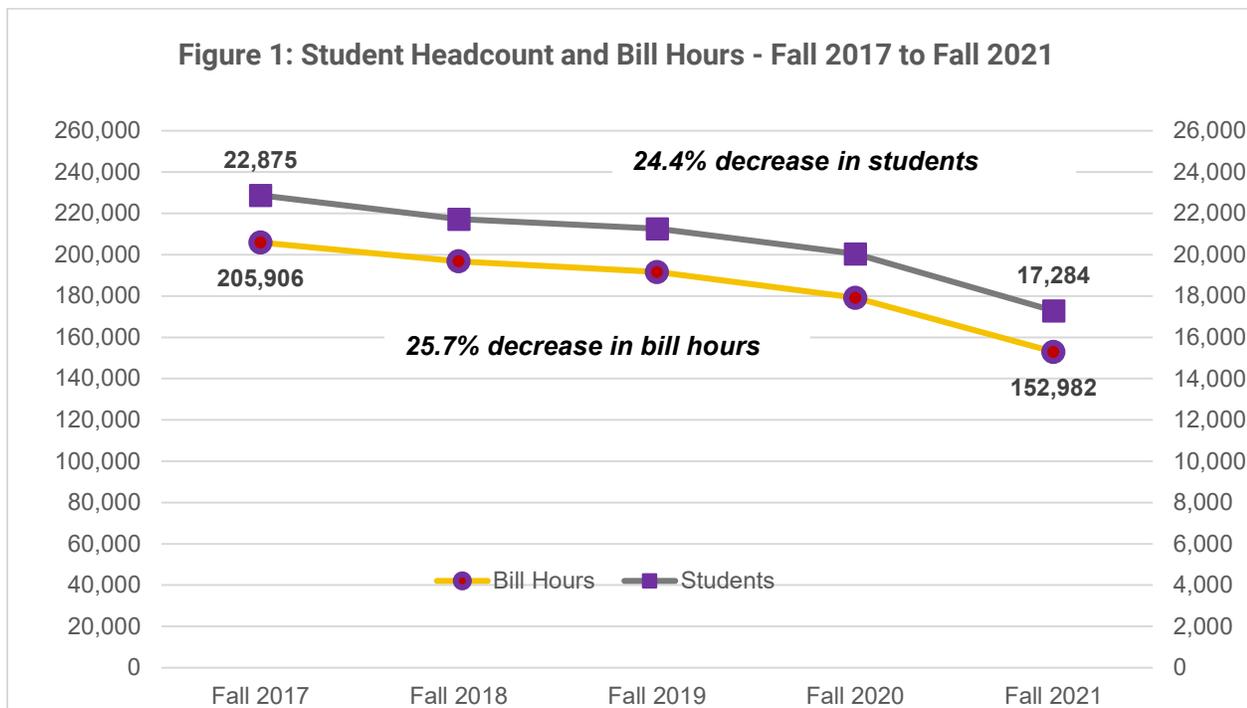
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## Fall 2021 Official Credit Enrollment Summary

Montgomery College's official enrollment in credit courses for fall 2021 was recorded on Wednesday, September 22, 2021. This narrative represents a snapshot of enrollment at the end of the third week period and is reported to the Maryland Higher Education Commission as the fall semester's official enrollment. By the third-week of enrollment, the majority of students are pretty much settled in their scheduled classes and are most likely to complete the semester. This report communicates a summary of Montgomery College's fall 2021 student enrollment in credit classes.

**Headcount and Bill Hours:** 17,284 individual students enrolled in credit courses and programs in fall 2021 and they generated 152,982 bill hours. Headcount and bill hours have been on a steady decline for several years – and enrollment and bill hours in fall 2021 is the steepest decline over four years as shown in Figure 1. Compared to fall 2020, the number of individual students is down 13.7 percent and bill hours are down 14.6 percent. From fall 2017 to fall 2021, the number of students and bill hours have dropped 24.4 percent and 25.7 percent, respectively.



The College did not achieve the level of enrollment as anticipated but realized 90 percent of the projection in student headcount and 88 percent of projected bill hours. Declining enrollment has been forecasted for several years during the budget process. However, the projection model did not anticipate the intersection of the COVID-19 pandemic as an enrollment factor—and that most classes would be remote. Nevertheless, the data indicate a continuing negative impact the pandemic and related factors are having on current enrollment.

Table 1 shows declining bill hours at each campus location over four years. A double-digit decline in bill hours in fall 2021 is shown at each campus location compared to fall 2020. Bill hours in distance learning shows a lower level of decline of 5.4 percent in fall 2021– this is the first decline in distance learning bill hours after several years of steady growth. From fall 2017 to fall 2021 the campuses have generated 24.3 percent (RV) to 36.3 percent (TPSS) fewer bill hours, while bill hours in the area of distance learning is actually 24 percent higher.

	<b>GT</b>	<b>RV</b>	<b>TPSS</b>	<b>DL</b>	<b>CW</b>
2017	35,279	100,932	44,009	25,686	205,906
2018	33,438	95,947	40,849	26,566	196,800
2019	31,827	92,353	39,155	28,275	191,610
2020	30,096	80,697	34,671	33,685	179,149
<b>2021</b>	<b>26,723</b>	<b>66,384</b>	<b>28,015</b>	<b>31,860</b>	<b>152,982</b>
<b>1-Year Change</b>	<b>-11.2%</b>	<b>-17.7%</b>	<b>-19.2%</b>	<b>-5.4%</b>	<b>-14.6%</b>
<b>5-Year Change</b>	<b>-24.3%</b>	<b>-34.2%</b>	<b>-36.3%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>-25.7%</b>

Unduplicated enrollment in fall 2021 is down by 2,753 students or 13.7 percent compared to the previous fall semester (Table 2). The decline in enrollment by campus ranges from 637 (TPSS) to 1,375 (RV). The percentage of decline in student enrollment by campus (8.4 percent to 9.7 percent) and distance learning (9.4 percent) is smaller than the overall decline in student enrollment because many students are enrolled in courses across multiple campus locations and are counted accordingly. As a consequence of the pandemic and the use of remote teaching, the majority of students are not physically on campus, which removes campus location as a barrier. As such, courses/classes are more accessible and convenient to students who live in different parts of the county and service area. Even though remote teaching and learning increase accessibility, overall student headcount is still down nearly 14 percent, most likely due to a variety of factors, including the pandemic and the lack of face-to-face classes and services

	<b>GT</b>	<b>RV</b>	<b>TPSS</b>	<b>DL</b>	<b>CW</b>
2017	6,801	15,053	7,165	5,820	22,875
2018	6,394	14,409	6,715	5,984	21,720
2019	6,509	13,941	6,491	6,314	21,260
2020	7,762	14,227	7,561	7,402	20,037
<b>2021</b>	<b>7,110</b>	<b>12,852</b>	<b>6,924</b>	<b>6,708</b>	<b>17,284</b>
<b>1-Year Change</b>	<b>-8.4%</b>	<b>-9.7%</b>	<b>-8.4%</b>	<b>-9.4%</b>	<b>-13.7%</b>
<b>5-Year Change</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>-14.6%</b>	<b>-3.4%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>-24.4%</b>

Compared to fall 2017, the number of students enrolled at the Germantown Campus and in distance learning, is 4.5 percent and 15.3 percent higher, respectively. So, even though there is a decrease in the number of students from fall 2020 to fall 2021 at the Germantown Campus and in distance learning, there are still net gains in students compared to the enrollment in fall 2017. Conversely, the number of students enrolled at the Rockville Campus is 14.6 percent lower than in fall 2017 and Takoma Park Campus is 3.4 percent lower.

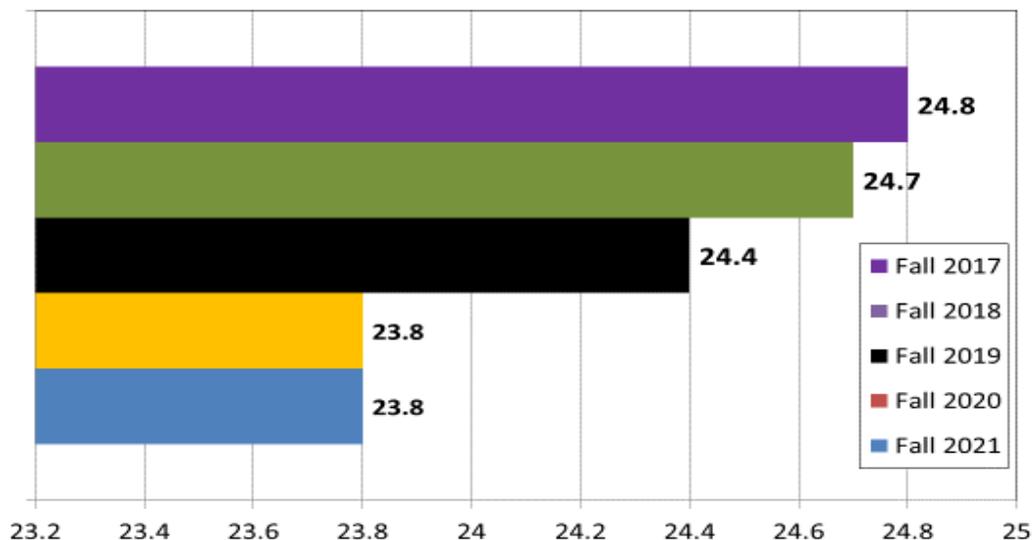
**Part of Term:** Data by part of term show that student enrollment in the traditional 15-week format increased in fall 2019, then declined the next two fall semesters (Table 3). Enrollment in the traditional 15-week format in fall 2021 is nearly 21 percent below the headcount in fall 2020 and is 29 percent below the enrollment in fall 2018.

Enrollment in the shorter 7-week format is encouraging. The number of students who opted to enroll in 7-week courses during the first half of the semester has nearly tripled in three years, while enrollment in late-start courses declines. In fall 2021, student enrollment in late-start courses is more than 27 percent below enrollment in fall 2020 and 34.4 percent below the enrollment in fall 2018. Data for the second half of the semester is not included because it has not started.

	15-Week	First 7-Week	Late Start	Unduplicated Headcount
<b>Fall 2018</b>	18,721	1,392	8,305	21,720
<b>Fall 2019</b>	19,089	1,441	7,098	21,260
<b>Fall 2020</b>	16,814	1,508	7,474	20,037
<b>Fall 2021</b>	13,298	4,174	5,444	17,284
<b>1-Year % Change</b>	<b>-20.9%</b>	<b>176.8%</b>	<b>-27.2%</b>	<b>-13.7%</b>
<b>4-Year % Change</b>	<b>-29.0%</b>	<b>199.9%</b>	<b>-34.4%</b>	<b>-20.4%</b>

**Students Demographics:** The average age of Montgomery College students gradually declined by one year: from 24.8 in fall 2017 to 23.8 in fall 2021 (Figure 2).

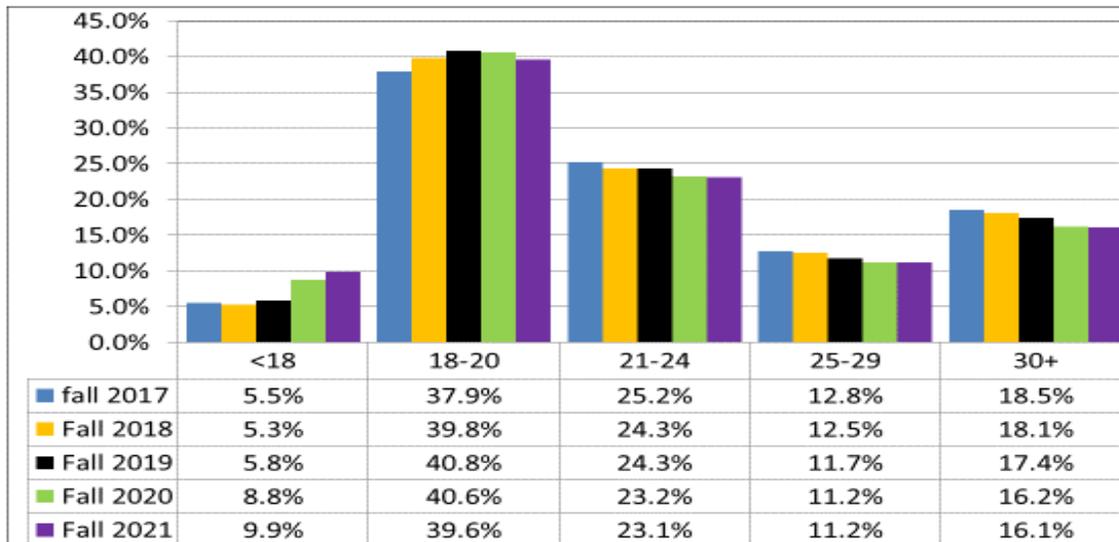
Figure 2: Average Age of Montgomery College Students



Data by specific age groups (Figure 3) clearly show that the proportion of enrollment attributed to students below the age of 18 continues to increase, possibly due to dual enrollment students and other partnerships that the College has with Montgomery County Public Schools. Students in the 18 to 20-year age group are currently 39.6 percent of the student body and

have decreased one percentage point compared to fall 2020. The percentage of students in the other three age groups held steady in fall 2021 compared to the previous fall semester. Note, however, that the percentage of students who are 30 years of age and older declined over two percentage points since fall 2017.

**Figure 3: Percentage of enrollment by age groups**



Female students have generally outnumbered male students (Figure 4). In fall 2021, the proportion of female students declined nearly two percentage points compared to the previous fall semester after several years of increases, while the proportion of male students increased.

**Figure 4: Enrollment by Gender – Fall 2017 to Fall 2021**

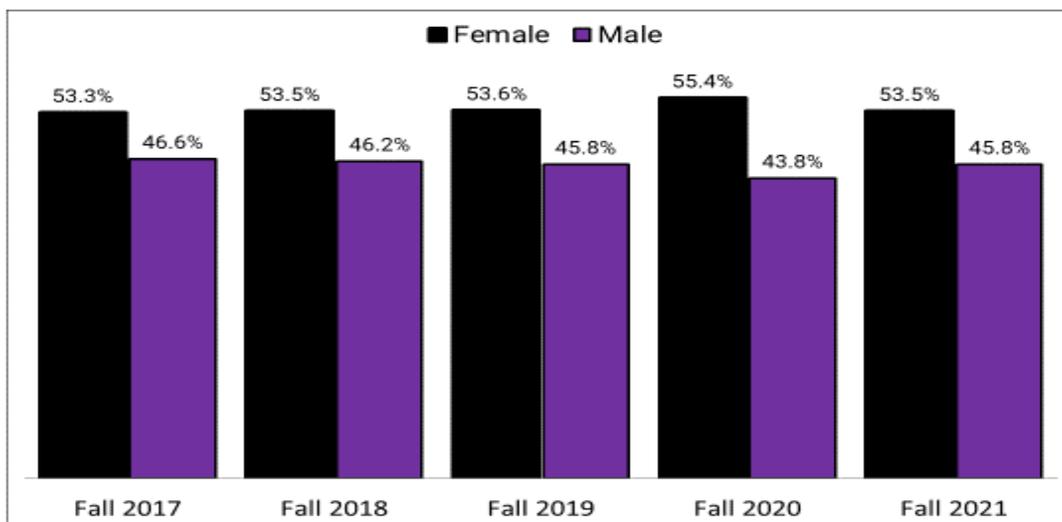
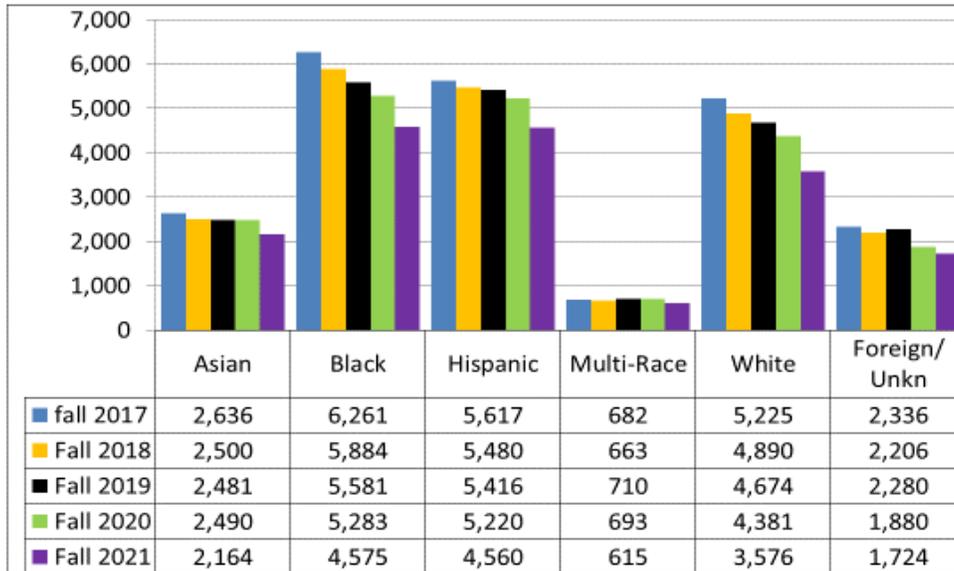


Figure 5 provides a 5-year look at unduplicated enrollment by race/ethnicity. The general decline in enrollment in fall 2021 is seen across race/ethnicity. Examination of the data reveals that the sharpest one-year decline in unduplicated enrollment is among White (-805 or -18.4 percent), Black (-708 or -13.4 percent), and Hispanic (-660 or -12.6 percent) students. Current

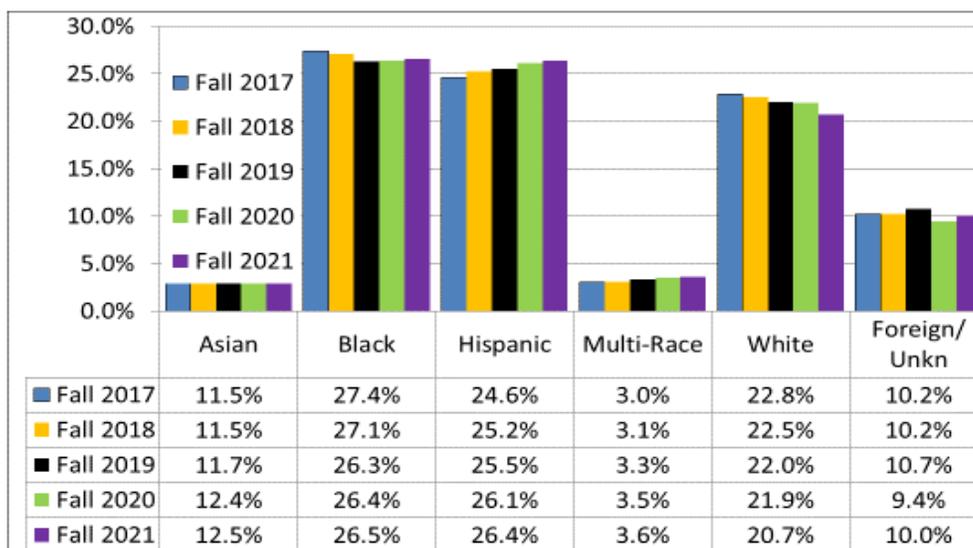
enrollment shows that there are 1,686 or 26.9 percent fewer Black students and 1,649 or 31.6 percent fewer White students in fall 2021 compared to fall 2017 – which are the single largest declines in enrollment among race/ethnic groups in four years.

Figure 5: A steep decline in the number of Black, Hispanic and White students in fall 2021 compared to the previous fall semester



In general, however, the percentage of students in each race/ethnicity category remains relatively stable (Figure 6). The only real notable difference is that the percent of white students declined by 1.2 percentage points.

Figure 6: Student representation by race/ethnicity is relatively stable, with the exception of white students, whose proportion declined 1.2 points compared to previous fall semester.



## Key Takeaways:

- Montgomery College experienced a significant decrease in students and bill hours in fall 2021 – and enrollment has been on the decline and forecasted to decline for several years. These declines in enrollment have potential financial consequences for the College’s programs and budget.
- The student body looks very similar to previous years: they are slightly younger (1-year) and more female. However, the percentage of students 30 years of age and older is steadily decreasing, which suggests the College is losing its market share of potential students in this age bracket.
- The percent of students in the 18-20 age bracket is also declining, which might also indicate that the College’s market share of recent high school graduates is declining as well.
- Raw enrollment numbers show that the decreases in enrollment are occurring across race/ethnicity – and most significantly among Black, Hispanic and White students. In addition, the number of first-time students has declined 30% since fall 2017. Dual enrollment will not be enough to bridge the gap in the enrollment decline.
- Economic downturns in the past have typically translated into increased enrollment at the College. But that is not happening now. There are many other factors to consider: mode of instruction, fear of possible exposure to the pandemic, access to digital technology, finances/employment, child care, lack of face-to-face interaction (some students probably need that interaction), basic needs insecurity, etc. These and other factors might have steepened the decline in enrollment.
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