



# ACCESS TO COLLEGE

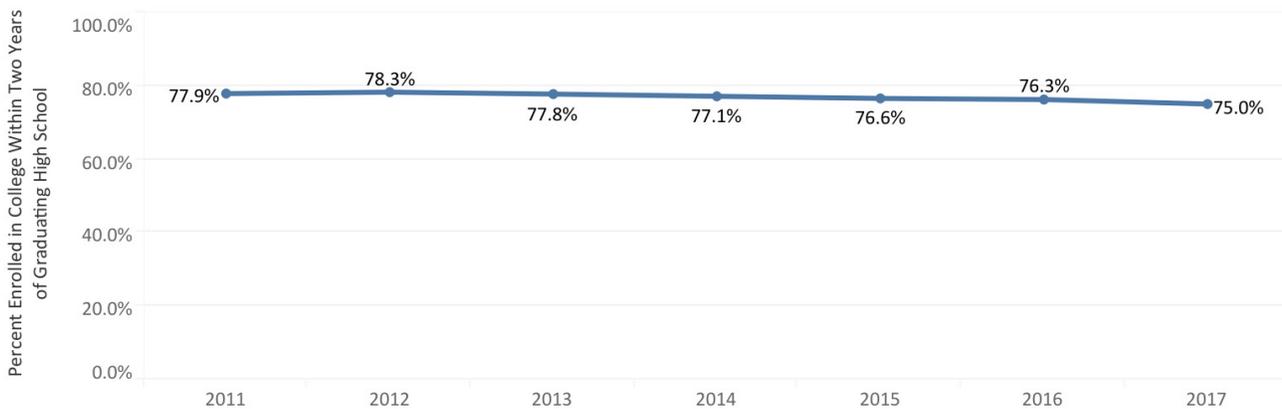
A 2020 MINNESOTA MEASURES REPORT

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## PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGE

**Key:** Minnesota maintains strong college enrollment rates, but equity gaps persist.

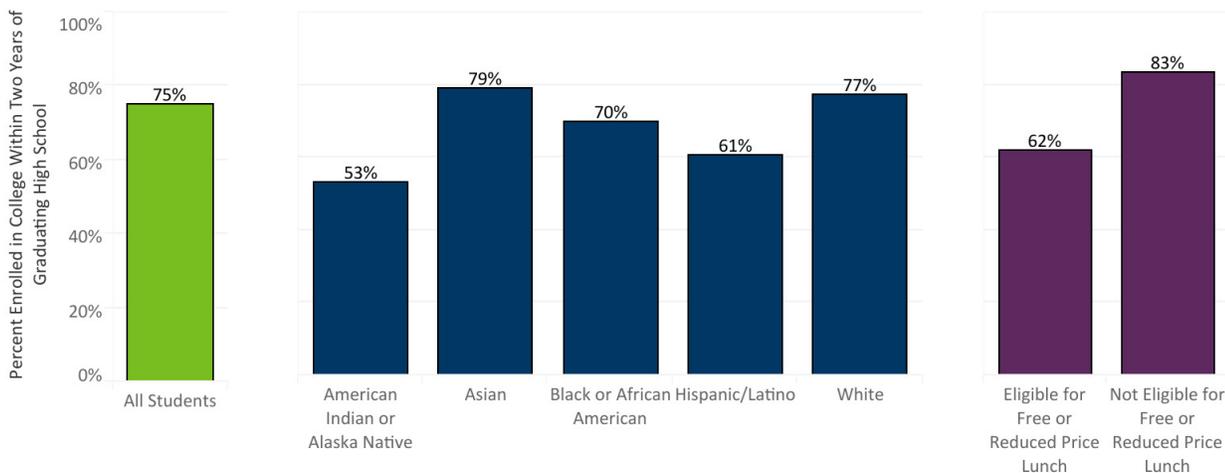
**Figure 1:** College enrollment rates have stayed largely steady in recent years



Source: Minnesota Office of Higher Education analysis Minnesota SLEDS data (Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System)

Minnesota's college participation rates remains strong, with 75% of public high school graduates enrolling in college within two years of high school graduation, as of the class of 2017. This rate has remained largely steady in recent years, ranging from 75% to 78.3% of public high school graduates enrolling in college within two years of high school graduation.

**Figure 2:** Significant equity gaps in college enrollment exist for students of color, indigenous students, and students eligible for free and reduced price lunch

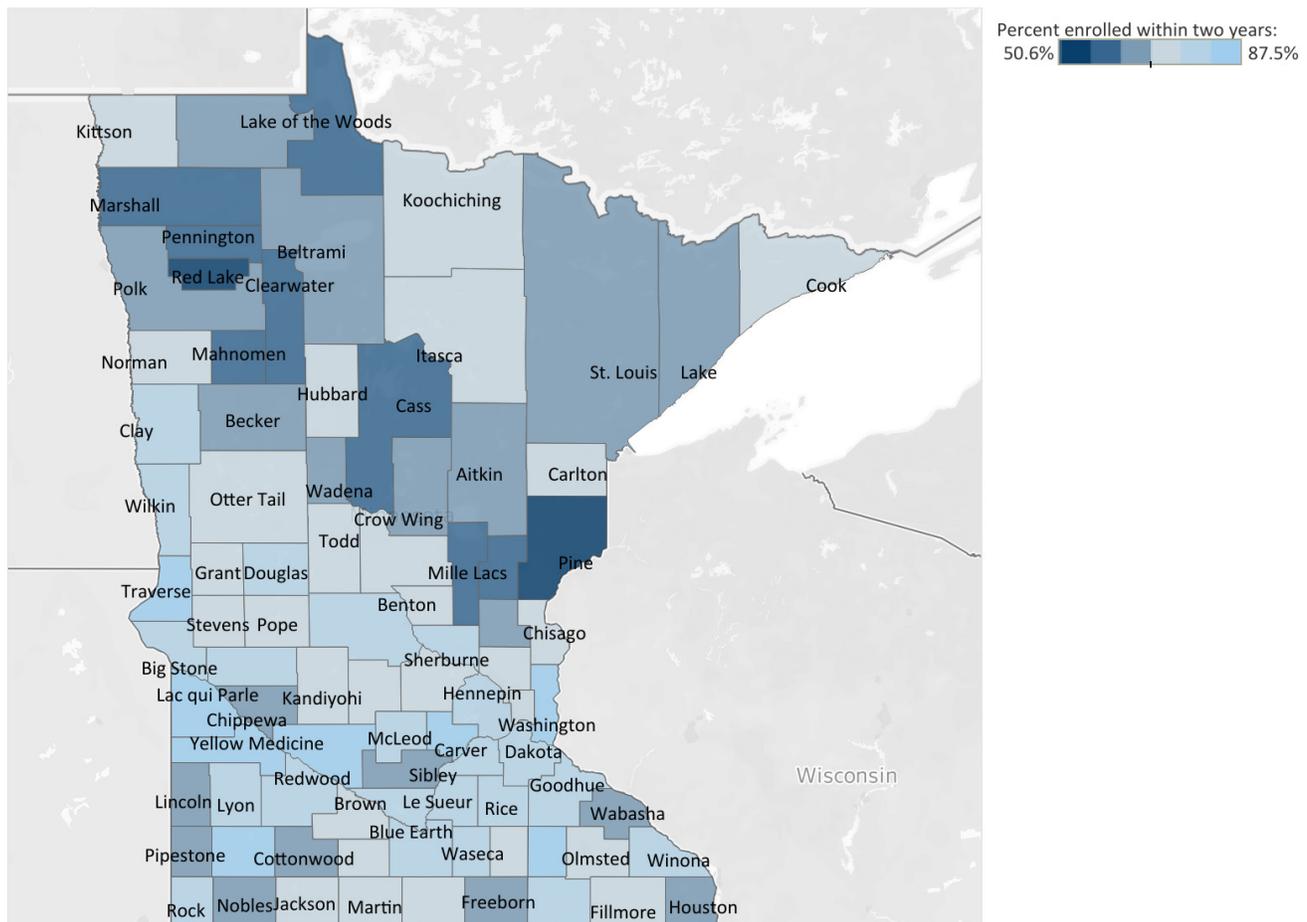


Source: Minnesota Office of Higher Education analysis Minnesota SLEDS data (Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System)

Despite strong college participation rates, significant gaps persist within student groups, based both on race/ethnicity and on eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price lunch. College enrollment rates for public high school graduates in the class of 2017 showed the largest gap for indigenous students, with American Indian or Alaska Native students enrolling in college at rates 25

percentage points lower than White students, and 27 percentage points lower than Asian students. Enrollment rates for Black or African American students and Hispanic or Latino students were also lower than White and Asian students. Students eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch enrolled in college at rates 21 percentage points lower than ineligible students.

**Figure 3:** Disparities in college enrollment rates also exist by geography (percent of public high school graduates enrolling in college within two years of graduating high school – class of 2017)



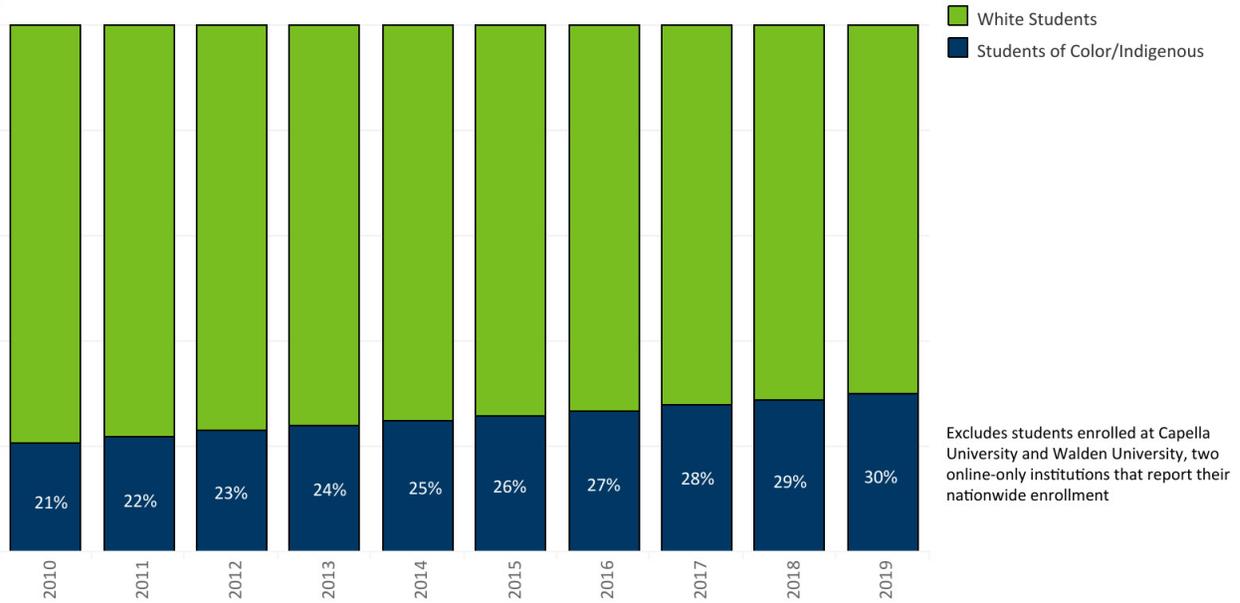
Examining college enrollment rates of public high school graduates by the county of the students' high schools reveals disparities in enrollment rates by geography. For the class of 2017, enrollment rates ranged from as low as 50.6% in Pine County to as high as 87.5% in Murray County. However, counties with smaller numbers of high school graduates appear to have college enrollment rates that fluctuate more over time – making it hard to draw clear conclusions from a single year. Within counties that graduated more than 1,000 students in 2017, college enrollment rates ranged from 67.9% in Saint Louis County to 82.4% in Carver County.

**Counties with smaller numbers of high school graduates appear to have college enrollment rates that fluctuate more over time.**

# STUDENT ENROLLMENT DISPARITIES

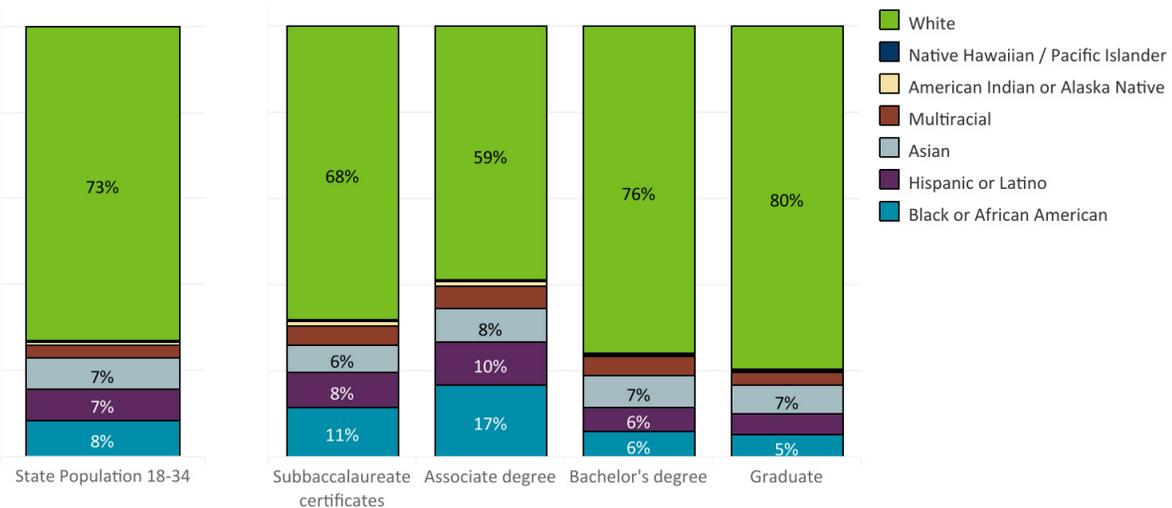
Although college enrollment is becoming more diverse, students of color and indigenous students remain underrepresented in bachelor's and graduate programs.

**Figure 4:** Students of color and indigenous students make up a growing share of Minnesota undergraduate students



The percent of Minnesota undergraduates who were students of color or indigenous students has increased in the past 10 years, from 21% in the fall of 2010 to 30% in the fall of 2019. This trend largely mirrors trends in the overall population.

**Figure 5:** Enrollment disparities exist by credential type for students of color, indigenous students (fall 2019) (Race and ethnicity of Minnesota resident students ages 18-34 by credential type, as compared to the state population of 18-34 year-olds. Students ages 18-34 make up 89% of Minnesota postsecondary students).



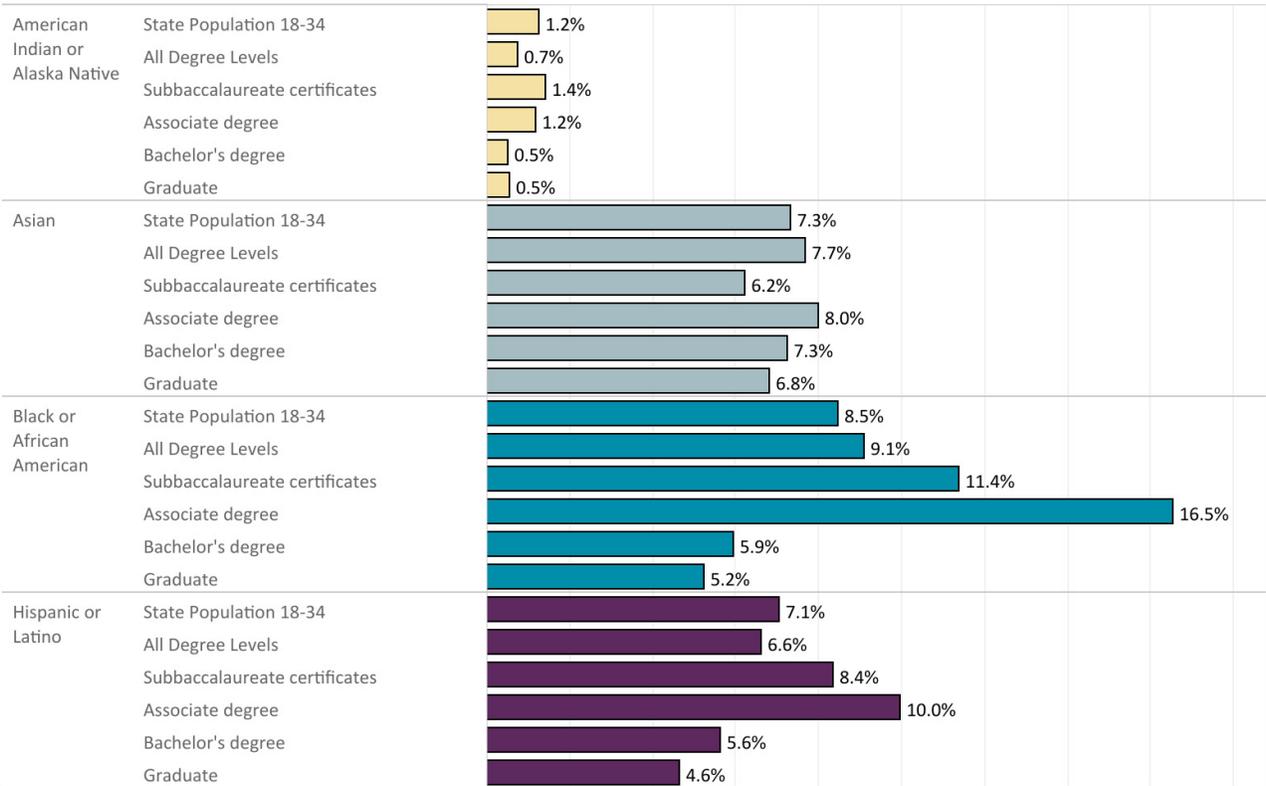
Sources: US Census Annual Estimates of the Resident Population, 2019; Minnesota Office of Higher Education Student Enrollment Database.

A comparison of the racial and ethnic makeup of students by different credential types, as compared to the makeup of Minnesota’s state population aged 18-34, highlights enrollment disparities by credential type. Students of color and indigenous students make up disproportionately high percentages of subbaccalaureate certificate and associate degree students (32% and 41%, respectively, in the fall of 2019) compared to 27% of Minnesota’s population aged 18-34 in the year 2019. Meanwhile, students of color and indigenous students make up disproportionately low percentages of bachelor’s degree and graduate students (24% and 20%, respectively).

**Students of color and indigenous students make up disproportionately high percentages of subbaccalaureate certificate and associate degree students.**

**Figure 6:** Explore representation of racial and ethnic groups by credential type

Multiple values

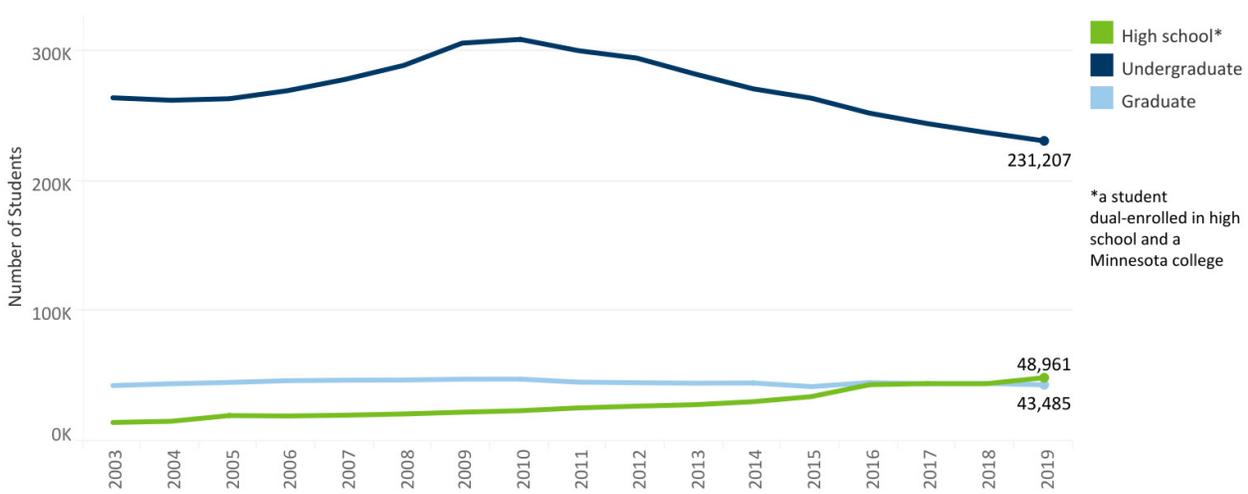


A closer look within each racial and ethnic category highlights the significance of these enrollment disparities. For example, while Black or African American residents make up 8.5% of Minnesota’s 18-34 year-old population, these residents only represent 5.9% of the state’s bachelor’s degree enrollment – a 30% difference in representation. Similarly, American Indian

or Alaska Native students make up less than half the amount of bachelor’s degree students (0.5%) versus what would be seen if the bachelor’s degree-seeking population mirrored the state’s population as a whole (1.2%). Hispanic or Latino students made up 5.6% of bachelor’s enrollment – 21% lower than their makeup of the state population age 18-34 (8.5%).

# EXAMINING ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure 7:** College enrollment is at a 20-year low, but more high school students are dual-enrolling in college



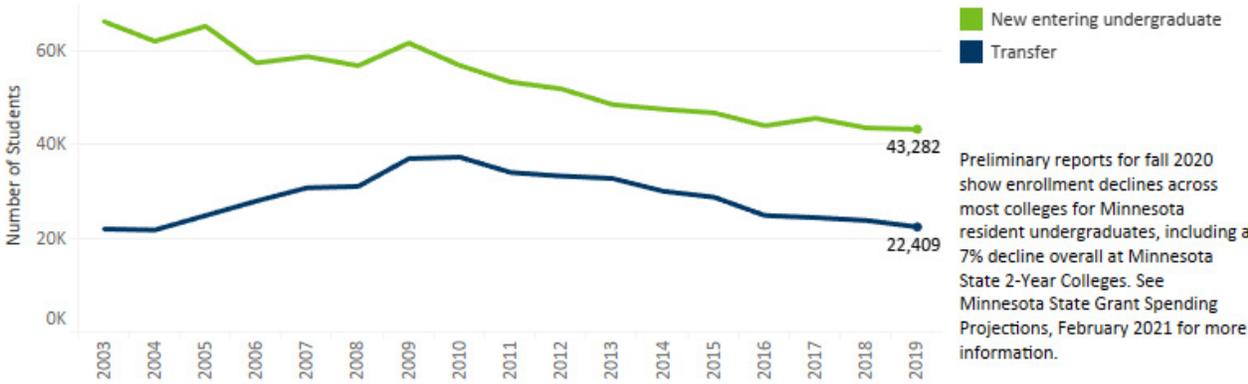
\*a student dual-enrolled in high school and a Minnesota college

Note: Students enrolled at two online-only institutions that report their nationwide enrollment, Capella University and Walden University, are excluded.

Undergraduate enrollment reached its peak in 2010 at the height of the Great Recession and has declined since. Economic trends tend to impact college enrollment, with increases generally seen during economic downturns as unemployed workers pursue additional education. As of 2019, postsecondary enrollment in Minnesota was at a low not seen since the early 2000s.

**College enrollment generally increases during economic downturns as unemployed workers pursue additional education.**

**Figure 8:** New student enrollments flattened in the last five years, but early data show declines in fall 2020

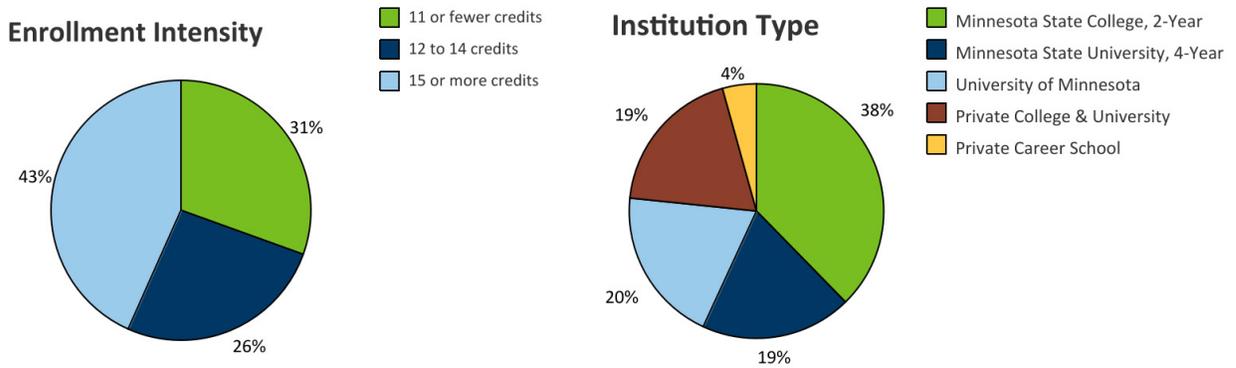


Preliminary reports for fall 2020 show enrollment declines across most colleges for Minnesota resident undergraduates, including a 7% decline overall at Minnesota State 2-Year Colleges. See Minnesota State Grant Spending Projections, February 2021 for more information.

Note: Students enrolled at two online-only institutions that report their nationwide enrollment, Capella University and Walden University, are excluded.

New entering undergraduate enrollment decreased from 2003 to 2019 despite a temporary increase seen during the great recession. In recent years this decline flattened at roughly 43,000 new entering undergraduates each year (down from over 60,000 in 2003). However, preliminary reports for fall 2020 show enrollment declines across most colleges for Minnesota resident undergraduates. Data from the Office of Higher Education’s Minnesota State Grant Spending Projections (February 2021) show a 7% decline in Minnesota resident undergraduate enrollment at Minnesota State two-year colleges.

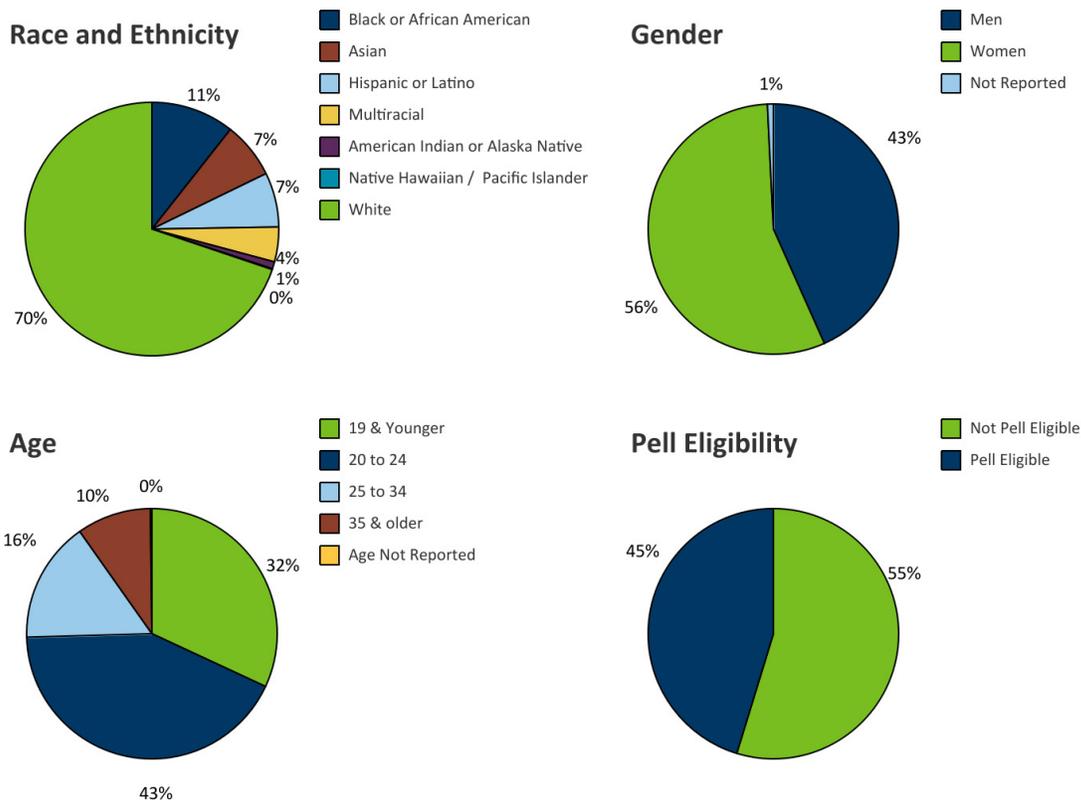
**Figure 9: Enrollment characteristics of Minnesota undergraduate students (fall term 2019)**



Note: Students enrolled at two online-only institutions that report their nationwide enrollment, Capella University and Walden University, are excluded.

Most Minnesota undergraduates enroll at full-time levels of 12 credits or more, and over half (58%) enrolled at four-year schools. 20% were enrolled at the University of Minnesota, 19% were enrolled at Minnesota State Universities (four-year), and 19% at private colleges and universities. Minnesota State Colleges (two-year) enrolled 38% of Minnesota undergraduates – the largest percentage of any institution type – while private career schools (mostly two-year programs) enrolled just 5%.

**Figure 10: Demographic profile of Minnesota resident undergraduate students (fall term 2019)**



Note: Students enrolled at two online-only institutions that report their nationwide enrollment, Capella University and Walden University, are excluded.

In fall 2019, 70% of Minnesota resident undergraduates were White students versus 30% who were students of color or indigenous students. Within students of color and indigenous students, Black or African American students make up the largest percentage at 11%, followed by Asian students at 7%, Hispanic or Latino students (7%), Multiracial students (4%), American Indian or Alaska Native students (1%). Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander students made up just a fraction of a percent.

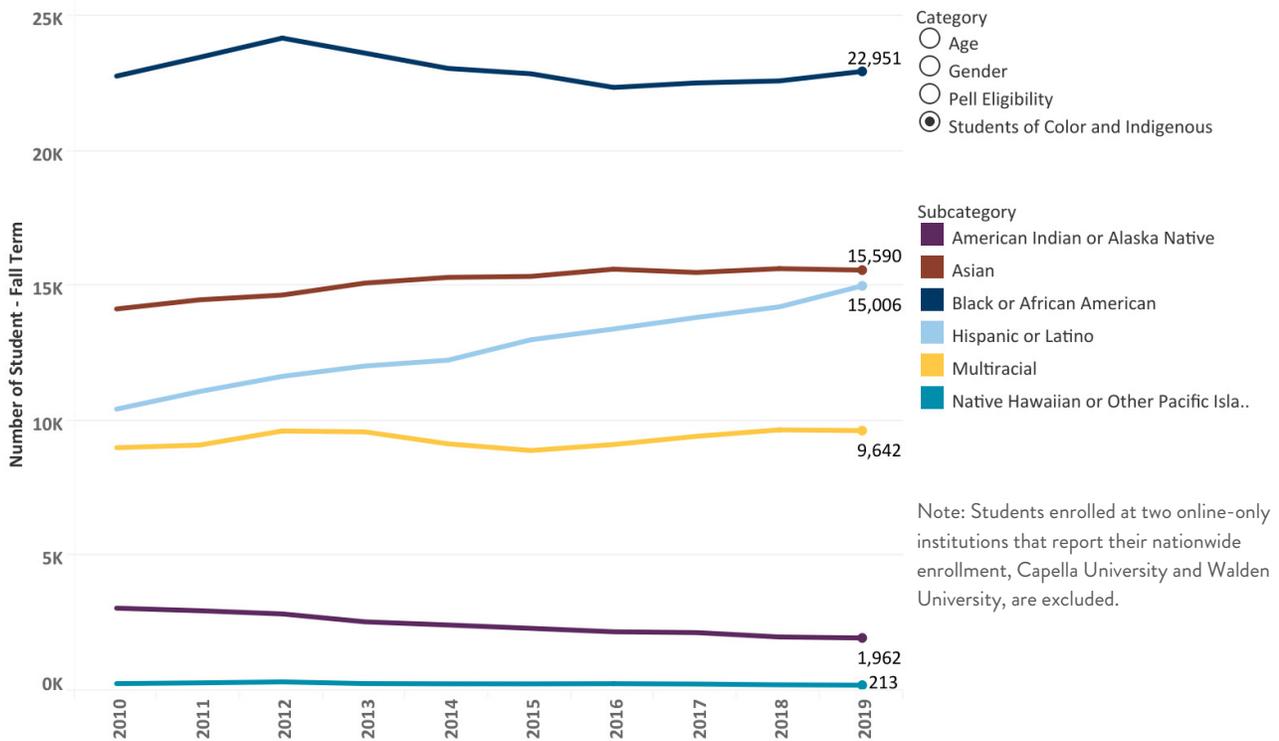
Women outnumber men among Minnesota resident undergraduates, making up 57% of students versus men at 42% (gender was not reported for 1% of students).

A significant percentage of Minnesota resident undergraduates are older than the traditional student, with 28% of these students age 25 or older. Still, Minnesota resident undergraduates age 24 or younger account for the majority, at 72%.

Slightly less than half of undergraduate students (46%) were Pell-eligible, while 54% were not Pell-eligible.

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**Figure 11: Undergraduate enrollment of students of color and indigenous students, 2010-2019 (fall term)**

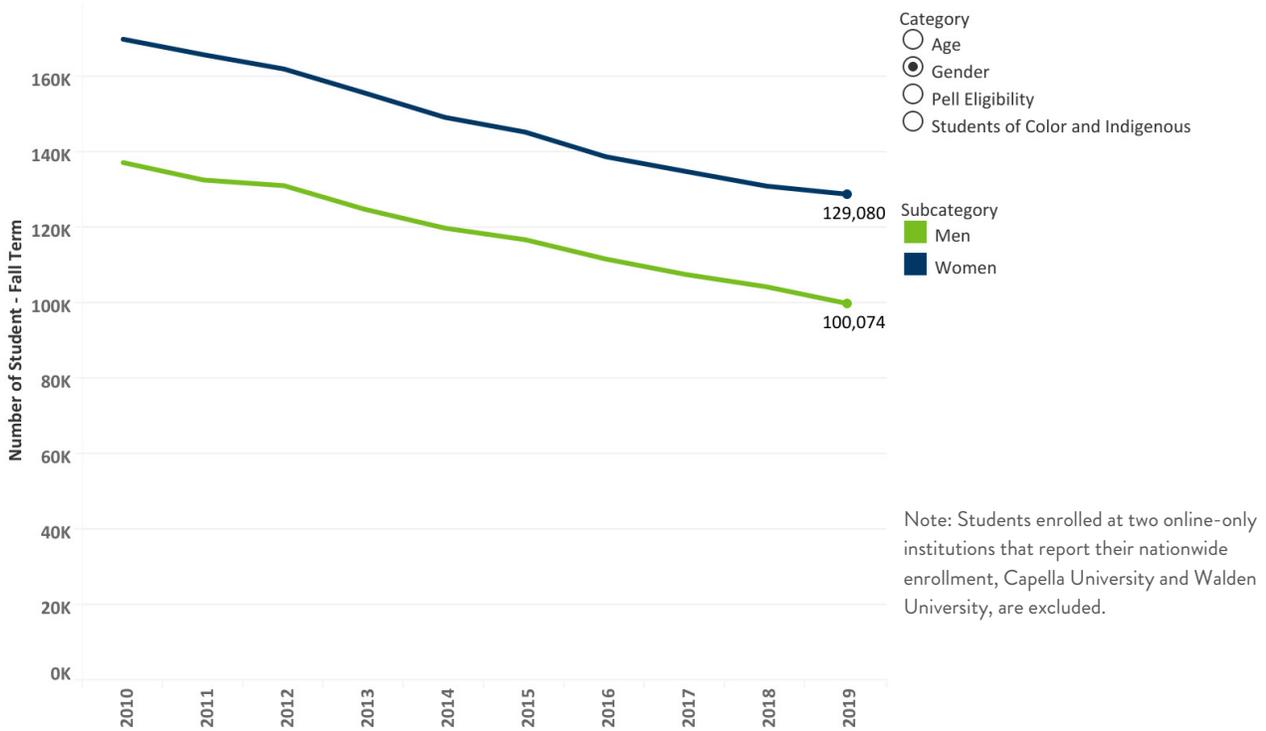


Differing trends are apparent in the total number of undergraduate students enrolled by race and ethnicity among students of color and indigenous students. Black or African American students, the largest group of non-white students, decreased from 2010 to 2016 before increasing to 22,951 in 2019. Hispanic or Latino students increased substantially over the 10-year period, from 10,441 in 2010 to 15,006 in 2019. Asian students increased only slightly, from 14,151 in 2010 to 15,590 in 2019. Multiracial students also increased slightly from 9,011 in 2010 to 9,642 in 2019. American Indian or Alaska Native students decreased from 3,065 in 2010 to 1,962 in 2019.

In understanding these trends, one important factor is the categorization required by federal race reporting: students indicating Hispanic or Latino ethnicity are reported as such regardless of their race, and students indicating more than one racial identity are categorized as multiracial.

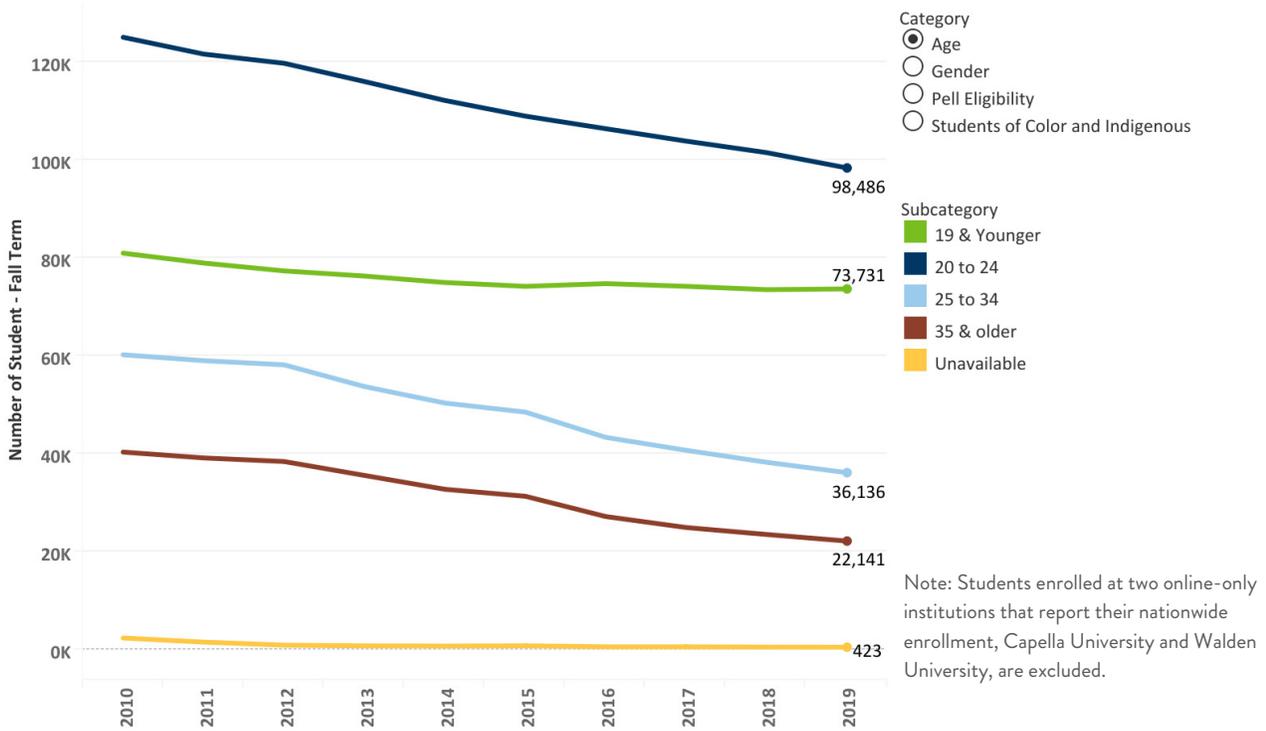
**Enrollment of Hispanic or Latino students increased substantially between 2010 and 2019.**

**Figure 12: Undergraduate enrollment by gender, 2010-2019 (fall term)**



Women and men saw a similar decline in enrollment numbers from 2010 to 2019, showing that the post-recession enrollment declines tended to affect both genders roughly equally.

**Figure 13: Undergraduate enrollment by age, 2010-2019 (fall term)**



Trends by age group for Minnesota resident undergraduates show the largest decline among students aged 20 to 24. This mirrors the decline in new undergraduate enrollments seen in Figure 9. Declines were less notable among undergraduates age 19 and younger. Within older undergraduates, similar declines were seen for students age 25 to 34 and 35 and older.