

Community College Finance Research Project

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Community College Resilience and COVID-19

Preliminary Findings

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A Mixed Methods Synthesis

- Quantitative analysis of student-level and school-level data
- Qualitative analysis of select community colleges

Data Collection & Analysis

Data Collection (ongoing)

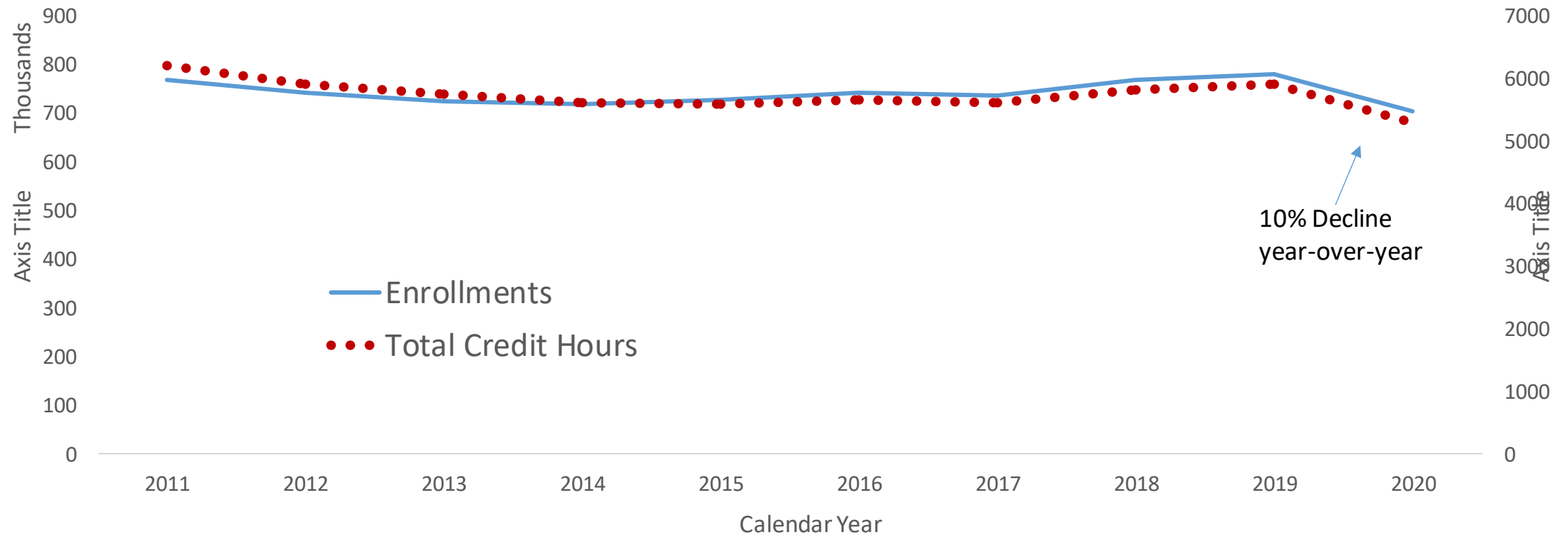
- 16 Interviews with senior administrators
- Approximately 45 minutes each
- 5 institutions to date
- Representing variation in size, region, and student population

Analysis

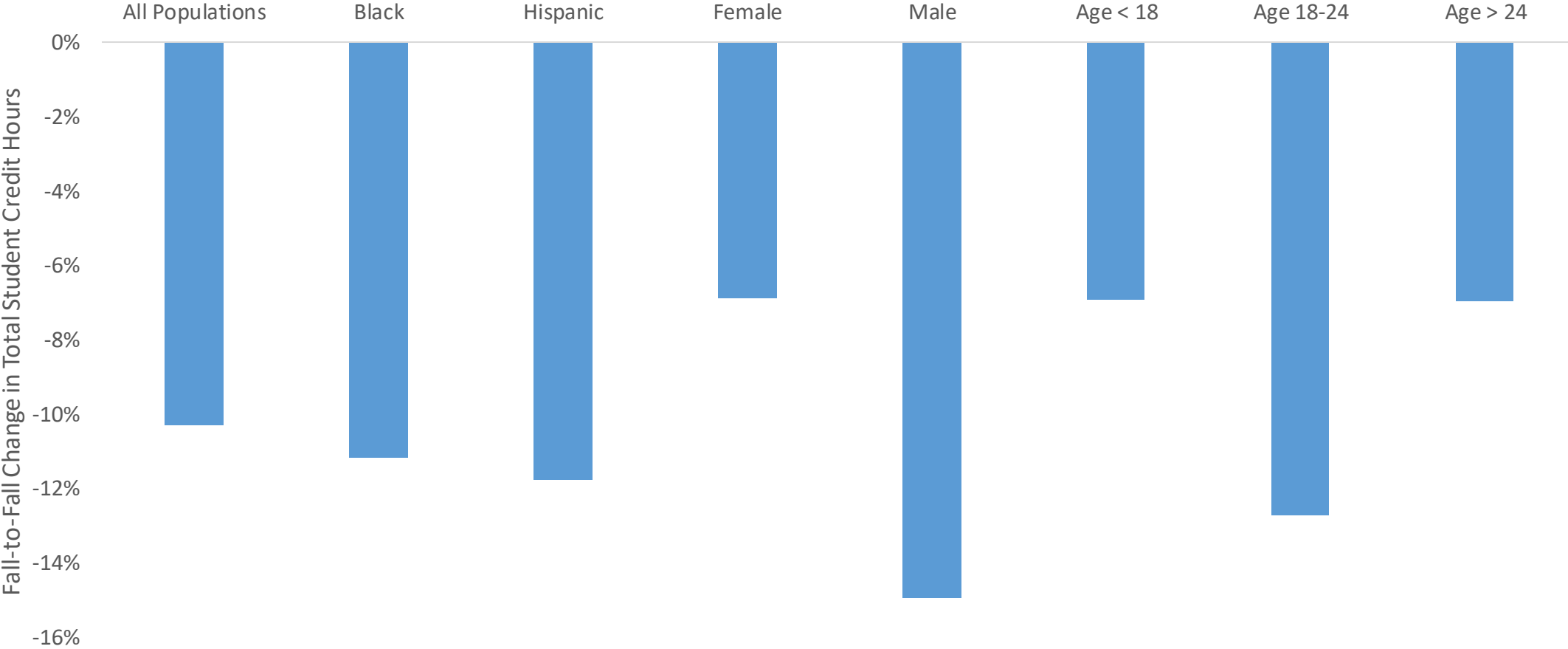
- Transcribe interviews
- Coded in Nvivo
- Analysis identified primary themes

Fall Community College Enrollments Over Time

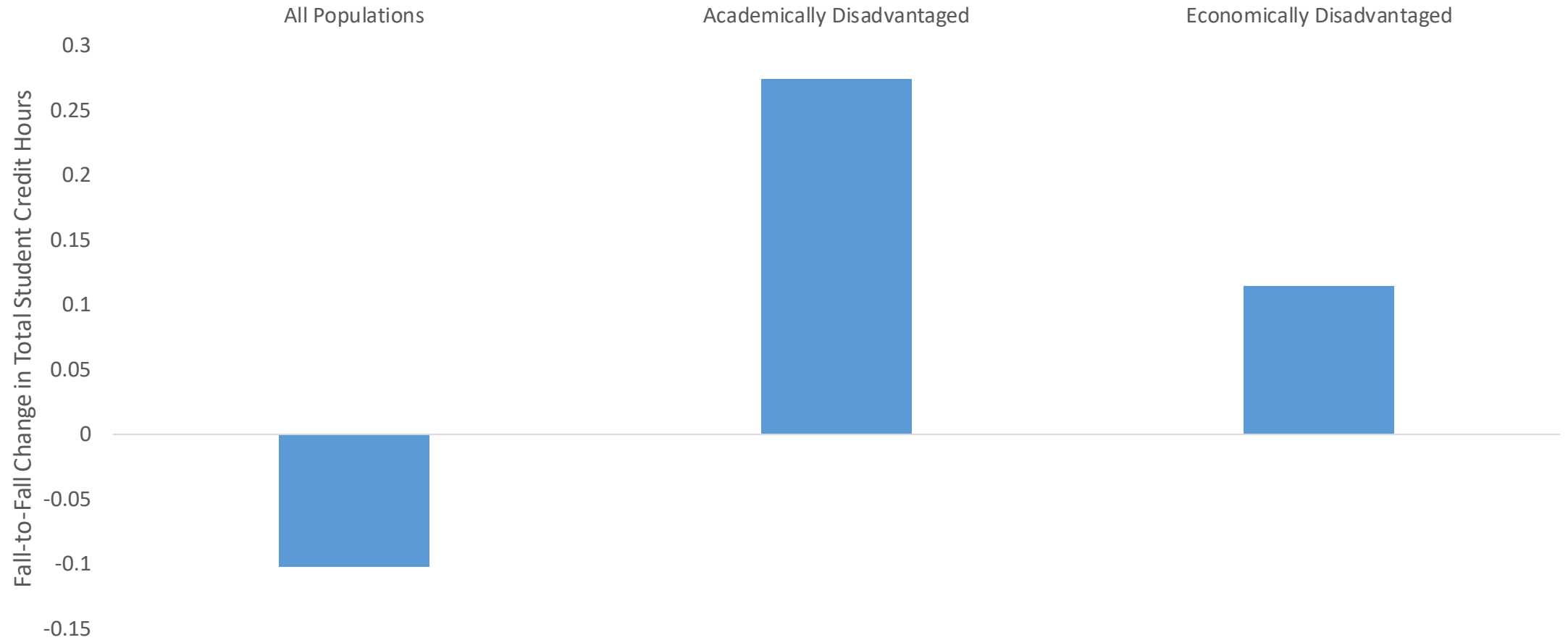
Community College Enrollments (including Flex) and Credit Hours



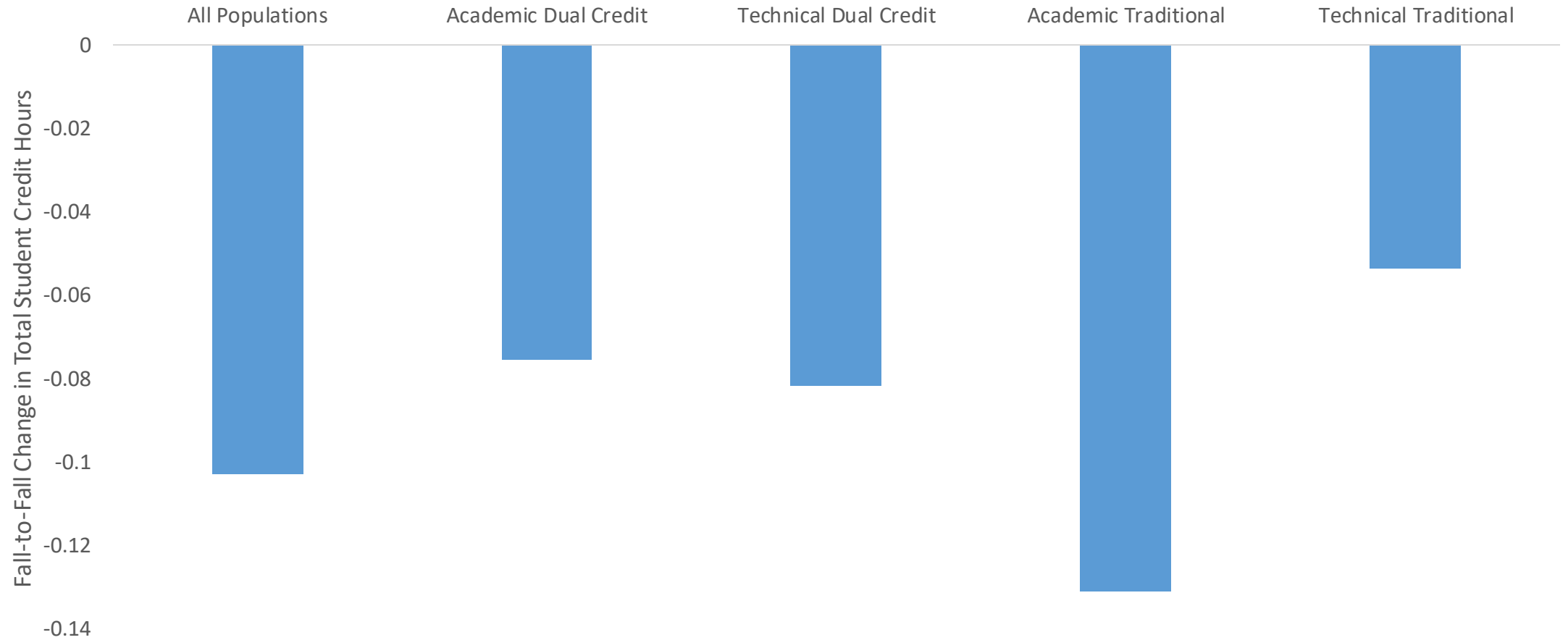
Differential Impacts by Student Populations



Changes in Student Need

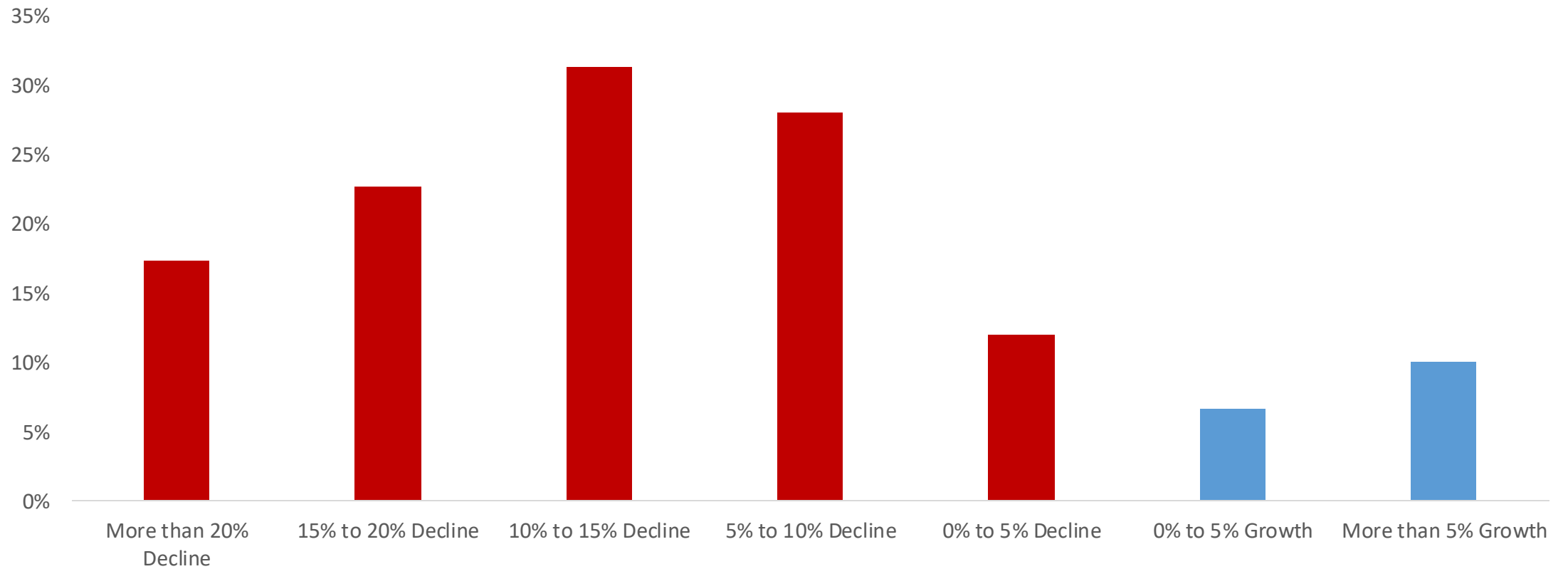


Differential Impacts by Course of Study



Differential Impacts by IHE

Percentage of Community Colleges in SCH Growth Category

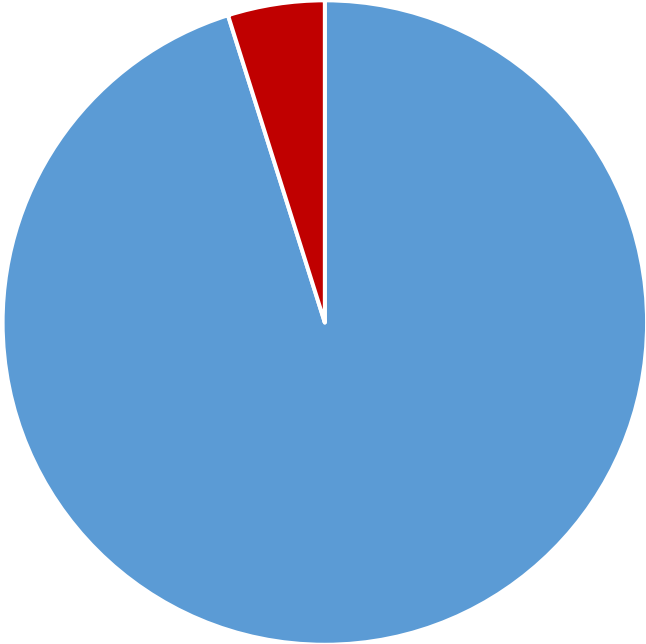


Differential Responses –More Flex

- And I will say that after COVID, I saw flex courses really increasing by a lot. So if they come in two weeks late in the game to register, it's like, well, in a couple of weeks you could join in our flex class and just not discourage them from coming, but definitely start at a time you're... Because also, I was always a firm believer that when you register a student too late in the game, you're also grooming them for failure throughout the semester.
- Right now, we are at 51% of our courses are in eight-week format.... That is an implementation that was obviously prompted by the absolute need at the COVID time to have shortened chunks of time that you have the student.

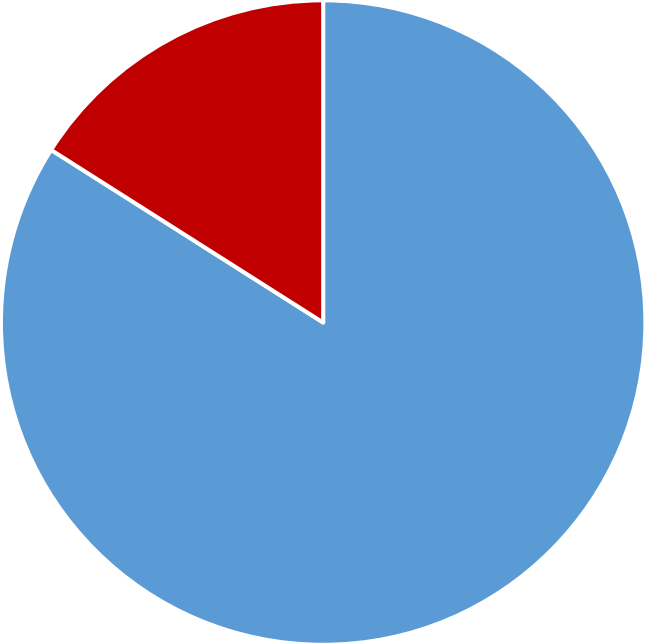
The Percentage of Community Colleges with Substantial Flex Enrollments

Three Years Before COVID-19



■ Regular ■ Substantial Flex

Fall 2020



■ Regular ■ Substantial Flex

Differential Responses –Tuition Relief

- Well, we had a big boost this year because we used the HEERF monies to give tuition discounts. So that helped our enrollment, basically, grew over the pandemic because of those.
- So essentially, if it is your first semester, whether or not you are a high school graduating senior or just someone that's come in off the streets, so to speak, general population students, non-traditional students, they can come to school free for their first semester.

Other Emerging Themes

Course
Delivery and
Training

Transition and
Retention

Supporting
the Whole
Student

Adapting Course Delivery

Building a Flexible Delivery: Institutional leaders foregrounded their need to swiftly adapt course delivery in order to address the dynamic needs of students.

“What is it that is beneficial to the students, what is it that is working? What is it that students need? Where are students' fears or not right now to come to campus? How do we adapt to that?”

Supporting Online Delivery: Several institutions noted that their success in transitioning to online was linked to long-standing online learning platforms and training.

“Most of the 300 had gone through the online training.... we also have a very robust process for approval of online classes”

Enrollment, Transition, and Retention

Increasing enrollment: Institutions developed programs to address the costs of enrollment, including tuition and materials.

“The tuition discount really helped with that [enrollment]. We saw a lot more full-time students. A lot less part-time students than we usually have...So a lot of students were trying to take advantage of, take as many classes as possible and they know it's temporary.”

Transition programming: The online environment highlighted the limitations of institutions' transition programming. Orientations, first-year experience courses, and transition programming filled that gap.

“the [program] really was developed and designed for the online student ... But a lot of the information that is in the [program] is the different resources that students have here on campus, which is we find that a lot of times students don't know where to go when they need something”

Supporting the Whole Student

Mental Health Support: The pandemic highlighted the significant mental health needs facing community college students. Addressing this need was a significant adaptation engaged by institutions.

“[Support team] has now just really looked at just providing different services for mental health. That's our biggest thing we have now, full-time mental health therapist on our campus.”

Social Services: Institutions sought to build programming, including but not limited to mental health, in order to address the array of student needs.

“we're also going to have a place for feminine hygiene products, baby products, clothing closet ... We are going to have people visiting that provide you different kinds of services, rent assistance, legal assistance, and mental health.”

Questions?