

NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE®

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“Hey, Mom. Off to Class Today?” Rapid Growth in Two-Year Degrees for Adult Learners

Herndon, Virginia, October 16, 2012 – The growth in the number of two-year degrees awarded to adult learners outpaced that of traditional-age students in the three years following the economic downturn, according to a Snapshot Report™ from the [National Student Clearinghouse® Research Center.™](#)

[Snapshot Reports](#), which are released throughout the year, draw on college enrollment data provided to the [National Student Clearinghouse](#) by its more than 3,300 participating postsecondary institutions. The reports are unique snapshots in time that reveal emerging college enrollment patterns and student mobility pathways.

From 2007-08 to 2010-11, the number of two-year degrees from public institutions awarded to students aged 25 and older increased by 22 percent, compared to 17 percent for those under age 25. The number of degrees awarded to each age group decreased in 2011-12, but totals remained well above pre-recession levels.

In its first [Signature Report™](#), “[National Postsecondary Enrollment Trends: Before, During, and After the Great Recession.](#)” the Research Center documented a period of accelerated growth in community college enrollments that peaked in 2009-10. As this follow-up analysis shows, enrollment increases were followed by an increase in the number of degrees awarded through 2010-11.

The Signature Report series, which is supported by a grant from the Lumina Foundation, serves as a national resource for the continued study of student pathways and college enrollment patterns and has immediate relevance for institutional, state, and federal policy. Written specifically for public and institutional policymakers, the Signature Reports provide comparison data that reveal patterns and valuable insights on students’ postsecondary access, persistence, and other success outcomes. Later in 2012, the Clearinghouse will release a fourth Signature Report focusing on college completion rates nationwide.

“As we continue to study student pathways with our Signature and Snapshot Reports, we see patterns, such as larger numbers of adult learners and increases in community college enrollment, as continuing trends that could change institutional and government policies,” stated Doug Shapiro, Executive Research Director, Research Center. “The Clearinghouse strives to give a complete picture of enrollment trends in order to provide institutions with evidenced-based decision making tools as they formulate policy.”

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About the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center is the research arm of the National Student Clearinghouse. The Research Center collaborates with higher education institutions, states, school districts, high schools, and educational organizations as part of a national effort to better inform education leaders and policymakers. Through accurate longitudinal data outcomes reporting, the Research Center enables better educational policy decisions leading to improved student outcomes.

To learn more, visit <http://research.studentclearinghouse.org>.

About the National Student Clearinghouse

The National Student Clearinghouse (a nonprofit formed in 1993) is the unique and trusted source for higher education enrollment and degree verifications. The Clearinghouse serves as a single point of contact for the collection and timely exchange of accurate and comprehensive enrollment, degree, and certificate records on behalf of its more than 3,300 participating higher education institutions, which represent 96 percent of all students in public and private U.S. institutions. The Clearinghouse also provides thousands of high schools and districts with continuing collegiate enrollment, progression, and completion statistics on their alumni.

Through its verification and reporting services, the Clearinghouse saves the education community cumulatively nearly four hundred million dollars annually. Most Clearinghouse services are provided to colleges and universities at little or no charge, including enhanced transcript and research services, enabling institutions to redistribute limited staff and budget resources to more important student service efforts. Clearinghouse services are designed to facilitate an institution's compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, The Higher Education Act, and other applicable laws.

In addition, the Clearinghouse provides accurate, timely enrollment and degree verifications to student loan providers, employers, student credit issuers, the U.S. Department of Education, and others who access its registry more than half a billion times annually.

For more information, visit www.studentclearinghouse.org.

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