



FISCAL SNAPSHOT

10-YEAR UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT TRENDS

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Analyst: Perry Zielak

Summary

Enrollment¹ at the 15 public universities in the state has dropped by 9.7% over the past decade. That said, enrollment trends at the institutional level vary widely, with 12 realizing enrollment declines and only three experiencing enrollment growth.

Background

Fiscal Year Equated Student (FYES) enrollment at public universities peaked in FY 2011-12 at 264,913. Public universities as a collective have been losing students since that peak. The table below shows FYES enrollment at each university for FY 2011-12 and FY 2021-22 to show a 10-year growth comparison.

UNIVERSITY 10-YEAR FYES ENROLLMENT CHANGE

University	FY 2011-12	FY 2021-22	10 Year # Change	10 Year % Change
Central Michigan	22,510	13,993	(8,517)	(37.8%)
Eastern Michigan	18,434	12,199	(6,235)	(33.8%)
Ferris State	12,217	8,608	(3,609)	(29.5%)
Grand Valley	22,347	20,341	(2,006)	(9.0%)
Lake Superior	2,418	1,460	(958)	(39.6%)
Michigan State	44,738	47,253	2,515	5.6%
Michigan Tech	6,378	6,619	241	3.8%
Northern Michigan	8,568	6,374	(2,194)	(25.6%)
Oakland	16,319	15,229	(1,090)	(6.7%)
Saginaw Valley	9,190	6,482	(2,708)	(29.5%)
UM-Ann Arbor	42,918	51,260	8,342	19.4%
UM-Dearborn	6,669	6,571	(98)	(1.5%)
UM-Flint	6,731	5,478	(1,253)	(18.6%)
Wayne State	23,873	21,587	(2,286)	(9.6%)
Western Michigan	21,603	15,673	(5,930)	(27.4%)
TOTAL	264,913	239,127	(25,786)	(9.7%)

Recent Activity

Only three universities saw FYES enrollment increases over this time: University of Michigan-Ann Arbor (19%, or 8,342 students); Michigan State (6%, or 2,515 students); and Michigan Tech (4%, or 241 students). The remaining 12 institutions had declines in FYES enrollment that ranged from 40% at Lake Superior State to 2% at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, with eight institutions losing more than a fifth of their FY 2011-12 FYES populations. Michigan’s universities saw 25,786 fewer FYES in FY 2021-22 than in FY 2011-12.

The Bottom Line

Recent enrollment declines can be attributed to Michigan’s shrinking population of students and high school graduates. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic caused enrollment declines at many higher education institutions [nationwide](#). To the extent that much of the cost side of the equation is fixed, a drop in FYES adds additional financial pressures at universities through the loss of tuition and fee revenues.

¹ Based on Fiscal Year Equated Student (FYES). FYES is a calculated measure to determine the number of full-time students at each institution by taking the total number of credit hours earned at each university and dividing by 30 credits.

[Section 266a](#) of [2022 PA 144](#), the FY 2022-23 Higher Education budget act, contains legislative intent language that alerts universities whose enrollment has declined by 10% or more since January 1, 2012, that they may be called to testify to the House and Senate Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittees to address a host of related topics concerning the decline. The table above shows that eight universities would meet that criteria based on FYES enrollment.