

AACC Member Survey Results Show Significant Campus Impact of Revived Summer Pell Grant

The findings of a national survey of community colleges show a spike in Pell Grant recipients as a result of the reinstated year-round Pell Grant. Half of all responding institutions reported increases of 15% or more in Pell Grant recipients for summer 2018 over the previous summer. Another 10% saw increases in Pell Grant recipients of more than 10%. Overall, the data show that the Congressional intent of fostering year-round attendance via an expanded Pell Grant was hugely successful.

Reinstating the year-round Pell Grant was an overriding AACC legislative priority since its elimination in 2011. It was reinstated in early 2017. The first full year of the re-implementation of this student eligibility concluded on June 30, 2018.

Survey responses to the American Association of Community Colleges represented 1.9 million students, or 34% of all public community college students, attending 186 colleges. This breaks down into 109 individual college responses and state-level responses for four states (an additional 77 colleges).

Increased Summer Pell

The following table outlines the experiences of the surveyed colleges in terms of changes in the number of Pell Grants that were awarded to students in the summer of 2018, compared to the summer of 2017, before the year-round Pell eligibility went into effect. It clearly shows the dramatic positive impact of the year-round Pell Grant. Nearly 83% of the colleges indicated increases in the number of Pell Grant recipients in summer 2018 from 2017, with the highest number reporting increases of 15% or more.

Q. What is the estimated percentage change in the number of Pell Grant recipients from last summer (2017) to this summer (2018)?

Percent change	# colleges	% colleges	
15% or more decrease	4	3.7%	11.0%
10.1% to 15% decrease	0	0.0%	
5.1% to 10% decrease	2	1.8%	
2.1% to 5% decrease	4	3.7%	
0-2% decrease	2	1.8%	
About the same	7	6.4%	6.4%
0-2% increase	8	7.3%	82.6%
2.1% to 5% increase	6	5.5%	
5.1% to 10% increase	11	10.1%	
10.1% to 15% increase	11	10.1%	
15% or more increase	54	49.5%	

Only responses for the individual college responses are represented.

The survey also asked about the marketing of the availability of the year-round Pell Grant. More than 70% of respondents indicated that they either explicitly marketed it or otherwise highlighted the existence of this new funding.

Enrollment Impact

Community college officials also have closely watched the impact of the new Pell Grant eligibility on enrollments, particularly now after four years of steady overall declines in community college enrollments. Although a causal link between the summer Pell and enrollment links cannot be drawn, the responses show that summer 2018 enrollments improved in a robust way that might not have been anticipated absent the new year-round Pell Grant.

More than half of the responding institutions saw summer enrollment increases; nearly 27% reported enrollment increases of 5 or more percent. This is in contrast to a continued overall decline in enrollments through spring of 2018, according to the National Student Clearinghouse (<https://nscresearchcenter.org/currenttermenrollmentestimate-spring2018/>).

Q. What is the estimated percentage change in Full-time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment from last summer (2017) to this summer (2018)?

Percent change	# colleges	% colleges	
15% or more decrease	3	3.1%	30.6%
10.1% to 15% decrease	2	2.0%	
5.1% to 10% decrease	9	9.2%	
2.1% to 5% decrease	9	9.2%	
0-2% decrease	7	7.1%	
about the same	10	10.2%	10.2%
0-2% increase	17	17.3%	62.2%
2.1% to 5% increase	18	18.4%	
5.1% to 10% increase	9	9.2%	
10.1% to 15% increase	9	9.2%	
15% or more increase	8	8.2%	

Only responses for the individual college responses are represented.

AACC continues to advocate aggressively for increased support for the Pell Grant program in addition to year-round eligibility, including increasing the maximum grant, adding eligibility for short-term workforce development programs, providing support for some incarcerated students, and in other areas.

For more information on the survey results, please contact Kent Phillippe, associate vice president for research and student success, kphillippe@aacc.nche.edu. For more information on the public policy aspects of the year-round Pell Grant, contact David Baime, senior vice president of government relations and policy analysis, dbaime@aacc.nche.edu.