

The Impact of the Pandemic on Postsecondary Education

Findings from Arizona and the Nation

December 2020



About College Success Arizona

- Our work centers on increasing the college attainment rate in Arizona.
- As an equity-oriented organization, we are particularly focused on supporting students who historically have not attended or graduated from a postsecondary institution at high enough rates.
- What we do:
 - ★ Scholarships, advising/mentoring support, and services for students
 - ★ Serving as an informational resource for the state on access and attainment issues
 - ★ Thought leadership, awareness building, and advocacy

Overview of Impacts on Postsecondary Education



Equity, Access and Sustainability Implications Are Being Felt By All Postsecondary Participants

Institutions – Face financial and mission-related challenges

Students and Families – Face increased pressure to meet fundamental needs; many high-school students face access hurdles

Equity Impacts – Mounting evidence shows educational equity and opportunity are widening in AZ and nationally.

Key Metrics for Tracking Impact on Students



Decline in FAFSA, Applications, Leads to Alarming Enrollments Drops

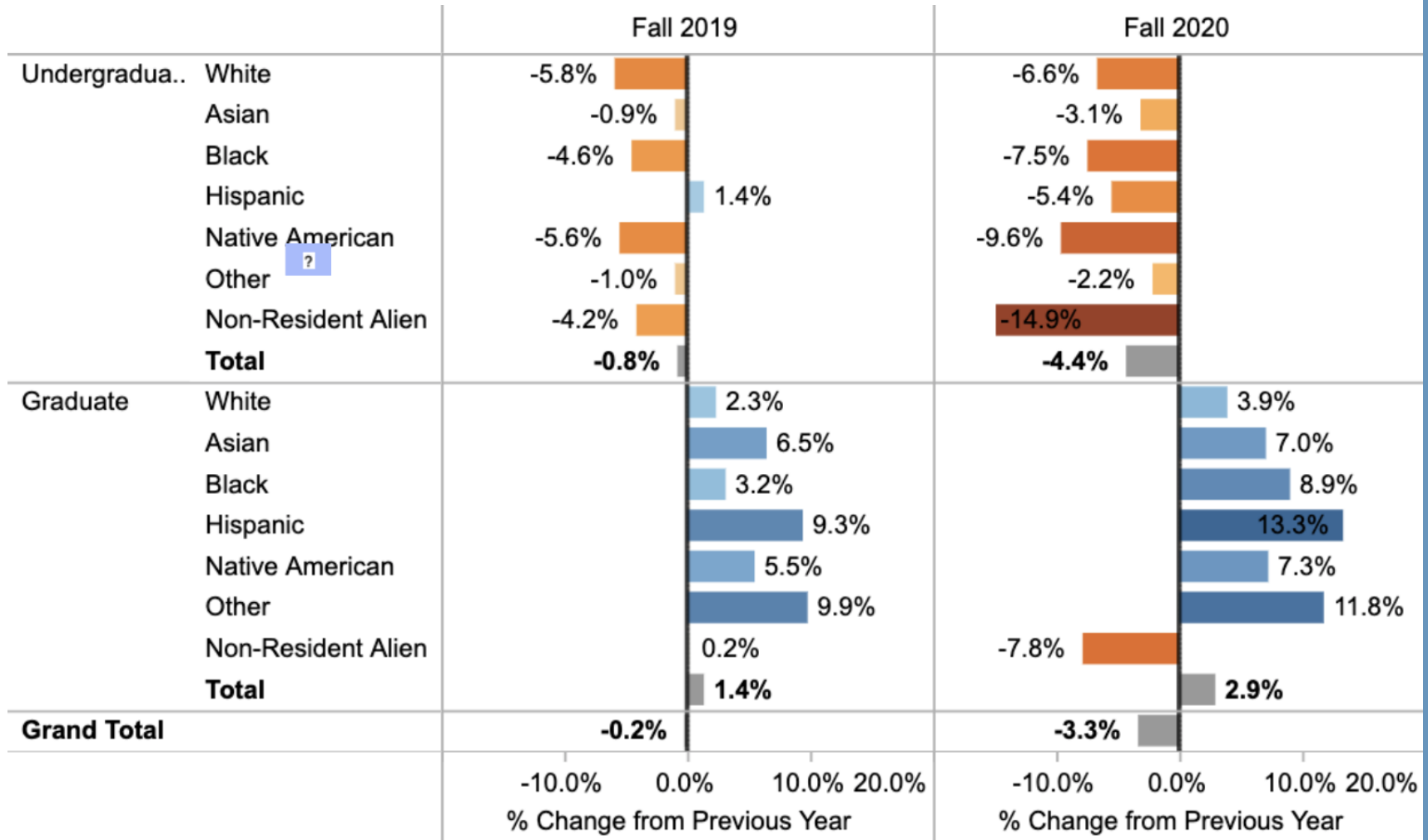
FAFSA – AZ down 17% versus last year and alarming 22% at schools with high concentrations of minority students.

Applications - The Common Application, reported that applications are down 4%, and First-Gen and Fee Waiver applicants are down about 10%.

Enrollment – U.S. = -4.4% vs -.8% (2019). In AZ = -3.5% (2020) vs. +3.3% (2019)

National Decline in Enrollment Rates

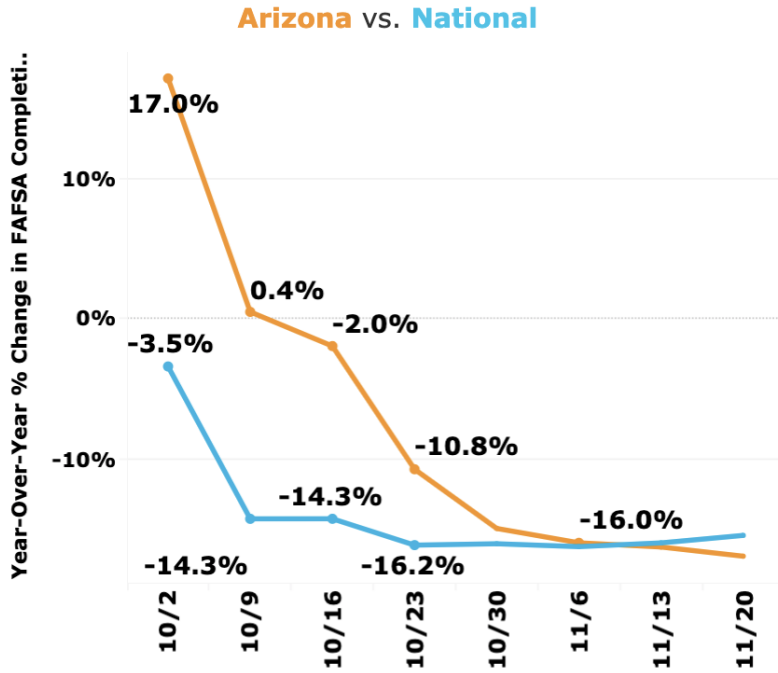
Enrollment Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Award Level



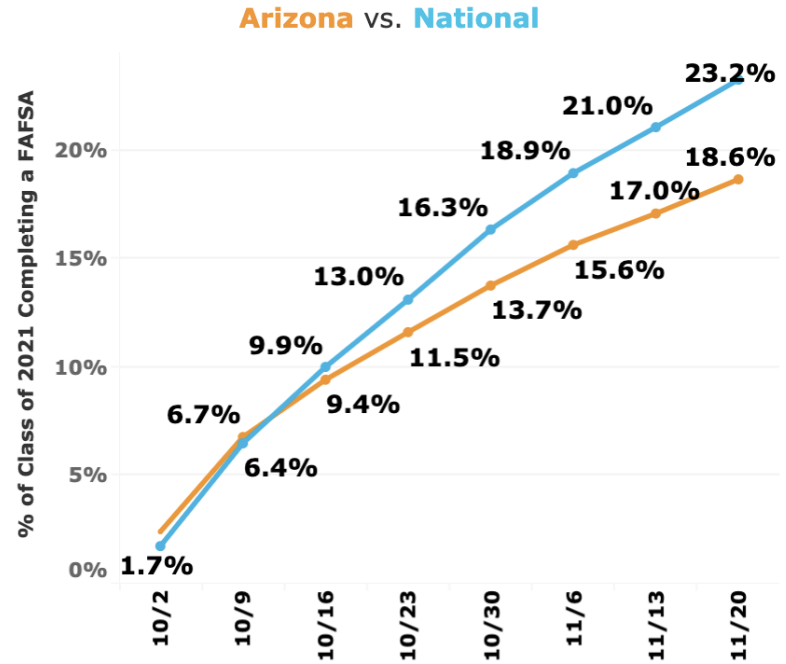
Credit: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

Decline in AZ FAFSA Completion

Year-Over-Year % Change in FAFSA Completions



Estimated Percent of Seniors Completing a FAFSA



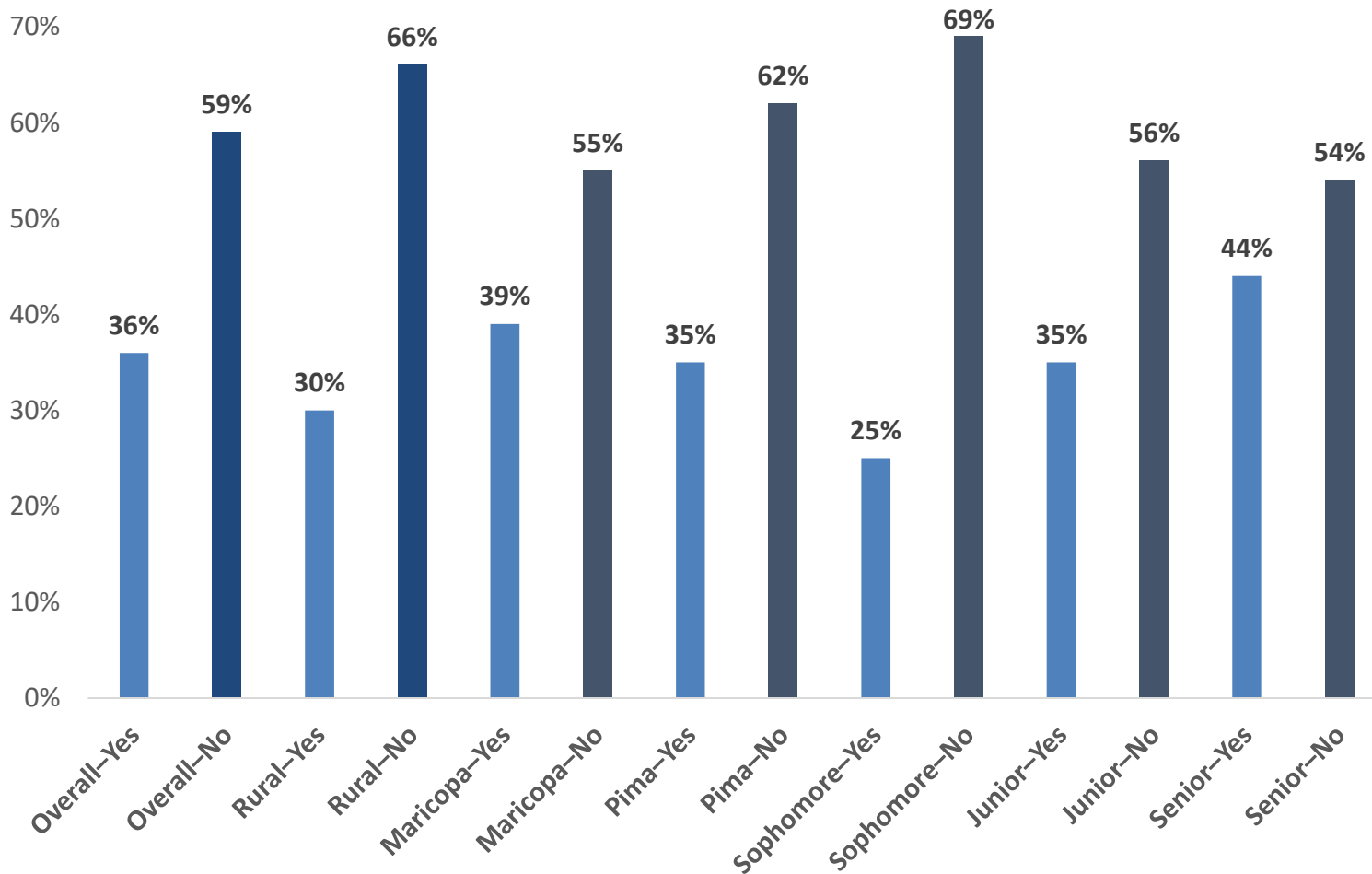
Credit: National College Attainment Network

Impact on Persistence and Completion

- An April 2020 survey of more than 1,500 undergraduate students at Arizona State University, found that:
 - ★ 13% of the students surveyed had delayed graduation,
 - ★ 11% had withdrawn from classes
 - ★ 50% reported a decrease in academic performance and in time spent studying
- In the same survey, students from lower-income families were 55% more likely to delay graduation than their more affluent peers.

Access to Information About College

Parents Who Say They Have Access to the Necessary Information About How the Pandemic Will Impact Their Student's Future College Enrollment



The Pandemic Has Inspired Innovations and Improvements



Crisis as Catalyst for Improvement

- The pandemic has accelerated a sector-wide transition to online/hybrid modes of instruction and learning.
- More institutions are now flexibly delivering non-academic services (e.g., telehealth, virtual advising)
- We are also seeing a renewed and intensified focus on long-standing equity challenges.

Arizona's Cross-Sector Response

- Postsecondary access and success organizations, student advocates, funders, and institutions have redoubled their efforts amid the uncertainty.
- Educators have been on the frontlines, navigating the crisis in the context of difficult public policy conversations about school openings and virtual schooling/learning.

College Success Arizona's Response to the Pandemic



Programs and Services to Help Students Succeed Now and Later

Arizona Postsecondary Student Resiliency Fund – In Partnership with Helios, and with the help of multiple access partners, CSA awarded \$500,000 to 1,156 students across AZ.

CSA and AzCAN Advising and Mentoring – The way we reach and help students has evolved, using expanded online capabilities, leveraging technology, and expanding key partnerships

CSA Engagement and Advocacy – We have been more active in raising awareness of the impact of the pandemic

Project Benjamin

PROJECT BENJAMIN

Data through June 30, 2020

21

School Districts

40,000

High School Seniors/Families
in 122 High Schools

17,687

Number of Users

376,292

Outgoing Messages/Nudges

40,998

Incoming Messages/Questions

2,655

Opt Outs



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Next Steps for Arizona



Three Recommendations To Advance AZ As We Emerge From The Pandemic

Address Access Challenges – Embrace assertive FAFSA policies and address the counselor to student ratio crisis

Prioritize Equity – Provide supports to address known barriers, and directly partner with communities to develop sustainable access programs for underrepresented student groups

Increase Support For High Schoolers – Help adapt to remote learning, with a focus on technology and social and emotional needs.

Contact Information

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