

California high school grads bypassing CSU, UC systems

By Matt Krupnick, Contra Costa Times

An alarming number of California high school graduates are deciding not to attend the state's once-vaunted public universities, researchers have found.

From 2007 to 2010, the percentage of graduates attending University of California or California State University campuses fell by 20 percent, according to figures released Wednesday by the Public Policy Institute of California. The trend developed amid deepening budget problems that dramatically lifted university tuitions and forced schools to turn away qualified students.

"UC and CSU are increasingly unable to accommodate the demand by students," said Hans Johnson, the report's author.

Fewer than 18 percent of California high school graduates ended up at a Cal State or UC campus in 2010, down from 22 percent in 2007. And 55 percent of the most highly prepared students enroll there, down from 67 percent.

The figures underscore a recent migration by students who once would have attended California's public universities, which once were higher-education models admired by other states and countries. Private and public universities in California and throughout the country have seen a significant uptick in the number of California applicants since UC and Cal State tuition started ballooning in the past few years.

About one in 10 who reject admissions offers from the state universities choose not to go to college at all, Johnson found. California's economic woes are likely to deepen if students continue to pursue college degrees elsewhere or not

at all, he said.

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