

U.S. university enrollment on the decline

By Janet Lorin, Bloomberg

The number of U.S. university students declined by almost half a million last year, following years of growth, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The decrease was driven by students 25 and older, with 419,000 fewer enrolled in the fall of 2012 from a year earlier, according to data the Census Bureau released today. The number of college students younger than 25 also declined.

The cost of college continues to rise as the population of college-age students drops. After two decades of growth, the number of high-school graduates probably peaked at 3.4 million in the 2010-2011 school year, the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education said in January. College enrollment at the undergraduate and graduate levels had grown to 3.2 million between 2006 and 2011 before the decline.

One group that didn't follow the trend was Hispanics, whose numbers grew by about 447,000 between 2011 and 2012.

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