## Distance Education State Almanac

## NORTH CAROLINA



Julia E. Seaman, Ph.D.
Research Director, Bay View Analytics

Jeff Seaman, Ph.D.
Director, Bay View Analytics

## National setting

Student enrollment in higher education institutions has undergone fundamental changes over the last decade, a condition only exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2012 and 2019, the total number of students enrolled at U.S. degree-granting institutions dropped by almost 1.1 million. At the same time, the number of students taking at least one online course grew by 2 million, from 5.4 million to 7.4 million, representing $37.2 \%$ of all students in 2019. The net result of these two changes was far fewer students studying on campus, from 18.3 million in 2012 to 16.4 million by 2019.

The information presented in the report represent the classifications and enrollments for Fall 2019 and were measured before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. National totals include all 50 states, District of Columbia, America Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Islands, Northern Marianas, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

## North Carolina

North Carolina has 135 degree-granting higher education institutions, representing 3.3\% of all such institutions in the United States. Of these institutions, 75 are classified as public, 49 as private not-for-profit, and 11 as private for-profit. Of these 135 institutions, 73 offer four-year programs, and 62 offer two-year programs.

The state has 568,563 students enrolled across its institutions and ranks 9th in terms of total higher education student enrollment. Between 2012 and 2019, the total number of students enrolled nationally declined by $5.0 \%$. For North Carolina, the enrollment decreased by 10,670 students, or $-1.8 \%$. North Carolina has 492,620 students studying at the undergraduate level, a loss of 16,545 students from 2012 ( $-3.2 \%$ ), compared to a $6.8 \%$ national decline. There are 75,943 students studying at the graduate level, which is 5,875 greater than in 2012; this represents a change of $8.4 \%$, where the national data showed an increase of 5.7\%.

There are 243,382 students in North Carolina that take at least one distance course. The state is ranked 20th for the proportion of students taking at least one distance course (42.8\%). In 2019, there were 108,551 students taking all of their courses at a distance, a growth of 41,423 students ( $61.7 \%$ ) from 2012. North Carolina ranks 19th in the proportion of students (19.1\%) taking exclusively distance courses in the nation.


## COVID-19 Distance Learning Preparedness

Not all higher education institutions were equally prepared to move courses online. Those institutions with a substantial number of students studying at a distance ( 1,000 or more), or a substantial percentage of their students taking at least one distance course ( $25 \%$ or more), can be expected to have the experience and infrastructure to better support a transition to online learning. Likewise, institutions with no distance students will have the least experience and infrastructure to support such a transition.

Nationally, $59.3 \%$ of all degree-granting institutions meet the criteria of having $25 \%$ or more or over 1,000 of their students taking distance courses. In North Carolina, $74.8 \%$ of institutions are better prepared for moving completely online. These institutions enroll 492,299 students, or $86.6 \%$ of all students in the state. There are 10 institutions in North Carolina with no distance students (representing $7.4 \%$ of the total in state institutions) that were likely not well prepared for a rapid transition to distance learning.


Preparedness Definitions:

BETTER PREPARED: Schools with more than 1,000 online students (thus extensive support staff) or having 25 percent or more of their students online

LESS PREPARED: Large schools with less than 1,000 online students (thus some support staff) or having less than 25 percent of their students online

NOT PREPARED: Schools with no distance enrollment

Preparedness by Control


Preparedness by Size




Institutions in North Carolina enrolled a total of 568,563 students in the of Fall 2019; 492,620 students were enrolled at the undergraduate level, and 75,943 enrolled at the graduate level. The Fall 2019 figure represents a decrease of 10,670 students ( $-1.8 \%$ ) from the number enrolled in the fall of 2012. The number of undergraduate students decreased by 16,545 during this period, from 509,165 in 2012 to 492,620 in 2019 (-3.2\%). The number of graduate students increased from 70,068 to 75,943 (8.4\%) in the same period.

Enrollments in Fall 2019 totaled 462,970 students at public institutions (81\% of all students), 94,959 students at private not-for-profit institutions (16.7\%), and 10,634 students at private for-profit institutions (1.9\%). Enrollments at public institutions decreased by 2,980 students between 2012 and 2019, while those at private not-for-profit institutions decreased by 32 students, and those at private forprofit institutions decreased by 7,658 students.



In 2019, a total of 243,382 students took at least one distance course from North Carolina institutions; 216,361 (43.9\% of all undergraduate students) were enrolled at the undergraduate level, and 27,021 ( $35.6 \%$ of all graduate students) were enrolled at the graduate level.

Among undergraduate level distance students, 196,350 were enrolled at institutions classified as public, 11,605 as private not-for-profit, and 8,406 as private for profit. At the graduate-level, 20,311 distance students were enrolled at institutions classified as public, 5,712 as private not-for-profit, and 998 as private for profit.

The number of undergraduate distance enrollments at North Carolina institutions increased by 41,664 ( $23.8 \%$ ) between Fall 2012 and Fall 2019, while the number of graduate distance enrollments grew by 10,135 ( $60.0 \%$ ) during this same period.


North Carolina


A total of 108,551 students were taking all of their courses at a distance from North Carolina institutions in the fall of 2019. This represents $19.1 \%$ of the enrolled students in the state, which ranks the state at number 19 in the U.S. The number of exclusively distance students who reside in North Carolina while taking courses from an institution in North Carolina was 60,705 in 2012 and grew to 98,801 by 2019. There are 9,750 students enrolled as exclusively distance students in North Carolina institutions who reside outside North Carolina, or whose place of residence is unknown.

## Location of Exclusively Distance Students

- Same State

■U.S., not in same state
■ Unkonwn/ Outside U.S.


Undergraduate
Graduate



On-campus students are those who take one or more of their courses physically on-campus. The number of students studying on campus declined from 512,105 to 460,012 between 2012 and 2019 in North Carolina, representing a reduction of $10.2 \%$. This compares to a national decrease of $10.3 \%$ for the same period. In 2019, 82.0\% of undergraduate students and 74.0\% of graduate students in North Carolina were taking at least one on-campus course.


North Carolina

## INSTITUTIONS

|  | North <br> Carolina |  | National | State Rank |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Total institutions | 135 | 4,089 | 42 | State as \% <br> of National |
| Institutions w/ distance | 125 | 3,161 | 7 | $4.0 \%$ |
| \% Institution w/ distance | $92.6 \%$ | $77.3 \%$ | 7 |  |

## Enrollments

|  | North Carolina | Total | Any <br> Distance | Exclusive <br> Distance | On <br> Campus |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Size | Total | 568,563 | 243,382 | 108,551 | 460,012 |
|  | Under 1,000 | 16,365 | 6,824 | 3,156 | 13,209 |
|  | $\mathbf{1 , 0 0 0}-\mathbf{4 , 9 9 9}$ | 149,853 | 73,617 | 33,275 | 116,578 |
|  | $\mathbf{5 , 0 0 0}-\mathbf{9 , 9 9 9}$ | 115,774 | 52,857 | 27,444 | 88,330 |
|  | $\mathbf{1 0 , 0 0 0}-\mathbf{1 9 , 9 9 9}$ | 119,925 | 47,425 | 22,208 | 97,717 |
|  | $\mathbf{2 0 , 0 0 0}$ and above | 166,646 | 62,659 | 22,468 | 144,178 |
| Carnegie | Not assigned | 11,282 | 8,727 | 7,182 | 4,100 |
|  | Associates | 224,253 | 126,430 | 59,957 | 164,296 |
|  | Research | 182,380 | 57,296 | 18,966 | 163,414 |
|  | Masters | 101,469 | 39,229 | 16,409 | 85,060 |
|  | Baccalaureate | 44,205 | 8,237 | 3,296 | 40,909 |
| Control | Specialized | 4,974 | 3,463 | 2,741 | 2,233 |
|  | Public | 462,970 | 216,661 | 91,501 | 371,469 |
|  | Private not-for-profit | 94,959 | 17,317 | 8,781 | 86,178 |
|  | Private for-profit | 10,634 | 9,404 | 8,269 | 2,365 |
|  | At least 2 but less than 4 years | 224,342 | 126,631 | 59,891 | 164,451 |

