

Macro Roundup Article

Headline: [Is College Enrollment Falling?](#)

Article Link: <https://economistwritingeveryday.com/2023/05/31/is-college-enrollment-falling/>

Author(s)	Jeremy Horpedahl
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Tweet: The decline in college attendance by recent high school graduates is entirely driven by a decline in students choosing to attend 2yr schools. In 2022, 45.1% of high school graduates enrolled in a 4yr school above the 2019 level of 44.4%. @jmhorp.

Summary: Are young people really skipping traditional four-year colleges for other opportunities? The answer is a big fat No. And we can even use the same data the WSJ used (from the CPS) to prove it, but slice it more finely. The percent of recent high school graduates enrolled in 4-year colleges and universities in 2022 was 45.1%. That's slightly higher than 2019 (44.4%) and is, in fact, the second highest level ever in this data, with only 2016 being higher at 46%. So what gives? The decline that the WSJ is reporting is entirely driven by a decline in enrollment at 2-year colleges, though you would never get a hint of that in the article. You might even think it was the opposite: perhaps young people are forgoing 4-year colleges in favor of trade schools! Nope. Here's the data. Notice that this is in fact the exact same data as the WSJ is using. If you add the two figures for 2022, it's the same 62% in the WSJ article. But 4-year college enrollment is up slightly since 2019, while 2-year enrollment is down about 5 percentage points. Also, it doesn't really seem like a pandemic-induced change: this is a long-run decline in 2-year college enrollment of about 12 percentage points since the peak in 2012.

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Primary Topic: Education

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