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Tennessee Higher Education Enrollment Increases for the Third Consecutive Year

State agency releases data showing significant increase in adult students

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – *October 10, 2018* – The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) released college enrollment data for the fall 2018 semester, indicating that 221,775 students across the state enrolled in community colleges and public universities for the 2018-2019 academic year. This marks the third consecutive year that postsecondary enrollment has grown across the state, and an increase of 1,656 additional students compared to fall 2017.

“Tennessee’s overall public college enrollment growth defies the national trend of declining enrollment,” said THEC Executive Director Mike Krause. “Innovative state policy, including the Tennessee Reconnect grant and Tennessee Promise, has continued to expand opportunity for Tennesseans to enroll in higher education.”

The largest gains in enrollment occurred at Tennessee’s thirteen community colleges, with 88,352 students enrolled for the fall semester; a 2.1 percent increase over fall 2017. Cleveland State Community College and Columbia State Community College saw the largest enrollment increases of 8.9 and 5 percent, respectively, over fall 2017. This increase includes the first cohort of adult learners using the Tennessee Reconnect scholarship at community and technical colleges. As reported by the Tennessee Board of Regents, adult student enrollment increased by 17.4 percent this fall.

At public universities, UT-Knoxville and UT-Martin saw the largest increases in enrollment, increasing 3.1 and 4.5 percent, respectively, over fall 2017. Enrollment data for the six locally governed public universities declined by 1.5 percent.

For more information about THEC’s research, data, and statewide higher education reports, please visit www.tn.gov/thec/research.

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About the Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The Commission develops, implements, and evaluates postsecondary education policies and programs in Tennessee while coordinating the state's systems of higher education, and is relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential.