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Wright State Student Body

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National Study Shows Pandemic Impacted College Program Decisions

Jamie Naylor

July 14, 2021

A [national survey](#) published by a higher education research company shows the coronavirus pandemic impacted college program decisions made by 42% of incoming freshmen, with declining interest in law enforcement studies, journalism-related programs and liberal arts programs. Wright State University's (WSU) data may reflect the study's findings.

Intelligent's study

Intelligent, the company that conducted and published the study, surveyed recent high-school graduates across the nation. Comparing this data to 2018-2019 data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), finding that 42% of incoming college students choose their major based on events and perspectives of the past year and a half.

According to the study, student's interests in liberal arts, English, communication and journalism, public administration, social services, fitness studies and history programs, declined 50% or greater. While interest grew in fields of legal studies, gender, and ethnic studies, engineering, philosophy and library sciences.

These shifting interests are attributed to generation z, ages 9-24, exposure to major events in the past two years, including social unrest, political unrest, a major election and a global pandemic.

"The data is showing that students are choosing their studies based on what they saw during the pandemic," Beata Williams, Intelligent contributor and education specialist, commented.

Via social media, many college-aged people have unlimited access to current events with insight into different fields and professions.

READ MORE: [How does social media impact politics?](#)

WSU correlation

WSU numbers support the data presented in the national Intelligent survey. According to WSU data, enrollment numbers are down 10% or greater in almost all college programs except

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psychology, down 4%, and science and math, down 7%. Enrollment in the Boonshoft School of Medicine grew by 1% during 2020.

Wright State University Total Headcount Enrollment: Fall 2018–2020

<u>College/Category</u>	<u>Fall Census Date Headcount</u>				
	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Boonshoft School of Medicine	583	566	-3%	573	1%
Education and Human Services	1,873	1,669	-11%	1,434	-14%
Engineering and Computer Science	2,549	2,155	-15%	1,879	-13%
Lake Campus	819	795	-3%	853	7%
Liberal Arts	2,586	2,213	-14%	1,950	-12%
Nursing and Health	1,296	1,123	-13%	933	-17%
Raj Sooin College of Business	2,284	1,994	-13%	1,721	-14%
School of Professional Psychology	121	114	-6%	110	-4%
Science and Mathematics	2,013	1,828	-9%	1,704	-7%
Undergraduate Non-Degree	173	133	-23%	111	-17%
Graduate Non-Degree	80	75	-6%	33	-56%
Undecided	305	182	-40%	135	-26%
High School - College Credit Plus	876	895	2%	798	-11%
	15,558	13,742	-12%	12,234	-11%

Graph via Wright State's 2022 Budget Presentation

Looking at specific programs mentioned in the national Intelligent Survey including communication studies, English, crime, and justice studies, and fitness/sports sciences, WSU numbers for first-time students starting in Fall 2021, are reflexive.

According to WSU's Institutional Research and Effectiveness office, only six new students are enrolled in the communication studies program, 31 students overall enrolled in the crime and justice program, eight in English and 20 in sports science.

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Major	Submitted	Admitted	Orientation	Enrolled
Communications Studies (Dayton)	47	43	9	5
Communications Studies (Lake)	2	2	No Data	0
Crime and Justice Studies (Dayton)	197	183	28	25
Crime and Justice Studies (Lake)	24	24	No Data	6
English (Dayton)	53	51	11	6
English (Lake)	4	4	No Data	2
History (Dayton)	47	45	8	6
History (Lake)	2	1	No Data	0
Media Studies (Dayton)	7	6	2	1
Sports Science (Dayton)	160	153	32	20
Sports Science (Lake)	9	9	No Data	0

All of these programs, except sports science, are housed in the College of Liberal Arts (COLA), a college that has seen an overall decline in interests and enrollment.

WSU's College of Liberal Arts (CoLA), one of the areas of declining interest explored in the national survey, also saw a drop in numbers.

"Numbers are down in most CoLA majors," Linda Caron, dean of CoLA, wrote.

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Caron elaborated that she did not know whether this decrease is due exclusively to the pandemic or WSU's declining enrollment. WSU enrollment is in a steady decline, with the latest student count at 12,500 in both undergraduate and graduate programs. In previous years enrollment peaked at around 20,000 students overall.

As WSU and universities all across the nation enter their second full academic year under the cloud of Covid-19, it is unclear how shifting interests in new students will impact universities and future career programming.

As expressed by Williams, the effects of the study will not be known until these new students actually enter the workforce.

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Inspiring the Community: WSU Veteran and Military Center

Kaylee Raines

July 15, 2021

Wright State University's (WSU) Veteran and Military Center (VMC) is dedicated to helping veterans and active-duty servicemen achieve their academic and professional goals. The VMC exists to support military-involved students, promote inclusion and has inspired many student-employees to lift up the voices of local veterans.

Functions of the VMC

VMC Director Seth Gordon spends most of his time helping military-connected students. This is because one of the main tasks of the VMC is to help veterans with questions about the processes involved in the Department of Veteran Affairs educational benefits ("GI Bill"). However, the VMC's main goal is to create a welcoming and positive experience for military students and their families.

"Our vision is to make WSU a space where veteran and military-connected students feel like they belong. When we are not focused on benefits we are trying to assess what that means and how to provide students the support they need to be successful in their academic, professional, and personal goals," Gordon said.

As with many organizations, events and activities have been affected by the coronavirus as students are not as present on campus. The VMC is hosting a handful of events this summer and fall to gradually work towards a sense of normalcy.

"This summer and early Fall through October, every Friday between 12-3 p.m. we are hosting Corn Hole and Hot Dogs outside of Allyn Hall. People have been away for so long we want to do things that start to bring students back together. So we are starting with some low commitment events to gauge their interests," Gordon said.

Impact of the VMC on Bradshaw

WSU student and Air Force veteran Katie Bradshaw worked in the VMC as part of the Veteran Voices Project (VVP) in which veterans are given an opportunity to share their story via interviews. These interviews are filmed and then uploaded to WSU's VVP YouTube account.

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Bradshaw helped to conduct the interviews and says that hearing their stories had a tremendous impact on her life.

“It allowed me to work with other veterans, which I found to be comfortable in a way that only veterans can understand. The opportunity also allowed me to work through some prior complicated feelings I had towards my military experience. Conducting the interviews had a lasting impact on my life, which I will always be grateful for,” Bradshaw said.

Highlighting the Litten family

John, Dave, Larry, Kenny, Jerry, Art and Steve Litten all served in the Air Force. With this, the seven brothers served a combined 137 years of service.

According to the Dayton Daily News, President Richard Nixon even wrote a letter to their parents to thank their sons for their tremendous dedication to the United States.

“I understand that all seven of your sons have served with the Air Force, six of them in southeast Asia. You must be extremely proud of the outstanding contribution which your sons have made to our country,” Nixon said.

When conducting interviews with Larry and Gerald Litten for the VVP, Bradshaw and her peers decided to help honor the family by raising money for a memorial bench dedicated to the Litten family.

“We were able to raise the money and survive the setbacks of Covid and finally the dedication date for the memorial bench is set for July 20 at 10 a.m.” Bradshaw said.

WSU students and the general public are invited to attend this dedication honoring the Litten family.

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Breaking: DeWine Signs Bill Restricting COVID Vaccine Requirements at Public Universities
Jamie Naylor
July 15, 2021

DeWine signed a bill Wednesday afternoon preventing public schools and universities from requiring students, staff and faculty to receive vaccinations not fully approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This includes the Covid-19 vaccines.

Ohio House Bill 244 also prohibits “discrimination against individuals who have not received a vaccine” according to the text. Leaving “discrimination” up for interpretation.

Restricting Covid-19 vaccine requirements for state schools and universities, H.B 244 impacts Wright State University (WSU).

The Bill

The bill first introduced by local Republican legislators Andrea White (District 41) and Brian Lampton (District 73), is part of a series of proposed covid-19 vaccination bills.

The law will go into effect in 90 days according to the [Ohio Senate's website](#).

WSU's Covid-19 policies

WSU currently does not require individuals to be vaccinated against Covid-19 to attend classes or live on campus. Campus policy requests those who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask.

Currently voluntary, the university housing administration asks students to submit their vaccination status to an online portal. Those who do not submit their status and live on campus are expected to participate in a “survey testing program’ through Wright State Physicians,” according to a campus announcement.

Students not fully vaccinated with plans to live on campus in Fall 2021 cannot request to have a roommate.

Read more here: [‘Vaccinated Residential Students Permitted to Have Roommates Fall Semester’](#)

Possible changes to WSU's policies

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Now that the bill has been signed into law, it is unclear whether WSU will continue to gather coronavirus vaccine information from students or incentivize the vaccine. Campus housing has yet to announce what happens with already submitted student vaccination information.

The Wright State Guardian reached out to Dean of Students Chris Taylor for more information regarding possible changes to WSU's Covid-19 policies due to H.B. 244 and was informed that decisions would be made in "a few weeks." No further comment was made.