



The San Diego
Union-Tribune.

Final
75¢
K13 B10
UNIONTRIB.COM

Two-year colleges nearly full

Higher enrollment, fewer courses equal 'unprecedented' summer

By [Leonel Sanchez](#)
Union-Tribune Staff Writer

2:00 a.m. July 9, 2009



Sarah Uribe (left) and Breanna Thedell worked yesterday on an assignment in their statistics class at Grossmont College. Enrollment is 24 percent higher this summer than last year at the El Cajon school. (Eduardo Contreras / Union-Tribune) -

Enrollment at San Diego County's community colleges is up this summer despite fewer classes being offered because of state funding cuts.

Community colleges are trying to accommodate students by fitting as many of them as they can in classrooms.

"We've never seen fill rates this high," said Lynn Neault, vice chancellor for student services for the San Diego Community College District. "It's unprecedented."

Classrooms are filled nearly to capacity at the district's three colleges: City, Mesa and Miramar.

The colleges cut summer offerings by 10 percent this year but have seen an 8 percent increase in enrollment, Neault said.

Statewide summer enrollment figures won't be available until the fall, but "anecdotally we're hearing that it is up," said Erik Skinner, spokesman for the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

"Many community colleges are reducing course sections to cut costs," Skinner said. "However, given the high demand, many of the remaining course sections are filling up and overflowing."

Community college enrollment also rose during the most recent fall and spring semesters.

Many summer students are trying to earn extra credits to graduate sooner. Others are upgrading their skills because they worry about being laid off or have lost their jobs, college officials say.

At Grossmont College, where summer enrollment is up 24 percent this year, Mitchell Blevins, 19, enrolled in a statistics class because he's not certain he can get into one in the fall when he returns to San Diego State University. He is one of about 50 students in the class.

"I sit in the front, and it didn't seem as crowded until I looked behind me," Blevins said. "I was shocked at how many kids were actually in the class."

A record 9,115 students are attending classes at Grossmont College despite 50 fewer classes being offered, officials said.

Grossmont College student Nikki Estañol of Chula Vista is taking two summer classes to speed up her education and avoid the effects of future budget cuts.

"I heard about the budget crisis and how schools are getting impacted," said Estañol, 19, "I just want to finish fast."

Colette Greenberg, one of about 50 students in an intermediate algebra class at Grossmont College, said she's been following news coverage of the state budget crisis and advised two of her children to enroll in summer classes at Cuyamaca College in Rancho San Diego.

"I'm concerned they won't get into their classes this fall if they wait," she said.

Grossmont-Cuyamaca, San Diego and Palomar community college districts saw their enrollments increase despite offering fewer classes than last summer. Only MiraCosta College, where summer enrollment is up 22 percent, added more classes this year.

Community colleges scaled back summer classes this year because they expect the state to reduce funding. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and state legislators recently proposed cutting \$700 million from community colleges to help close a \$24.3 billion deficit.

California began the new fiscal year last Wednesday without a budget agreement, and the projected deficit grew by \$2 billion, to \$26.3 billion.
