Examination of Enrollment Trends among Area High School Graduates

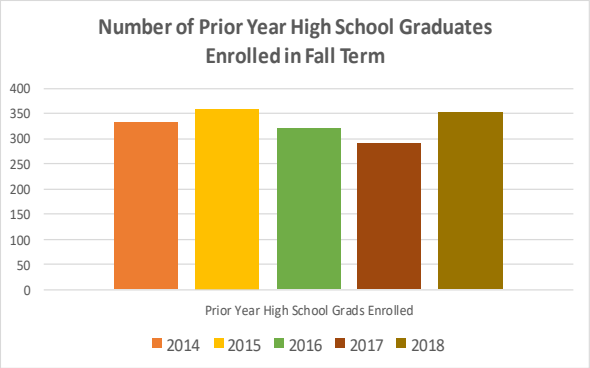
Purpose

According to the 2018 Student Success Scorecard, nearly half (49.6%) of Columbia College's students were 25 years old or older in 2016 - 2017, however students aged 24 and under still account for the vast majority of the course enrollments*, with prior year high school graduates accounting for over 20% of all fall 2018 census unit enrollments alone. The purpose of this research brief is to examine the enrollment patterns of these recent high school graduates.

*Students aged 24 and under accounted for 68% of the census enrolled units over the prior 5 years, and 70% of the census enrolled units in the fall of 2018.

Research Question 1:

How many students attend Columbia College immediately after graduation from high school?



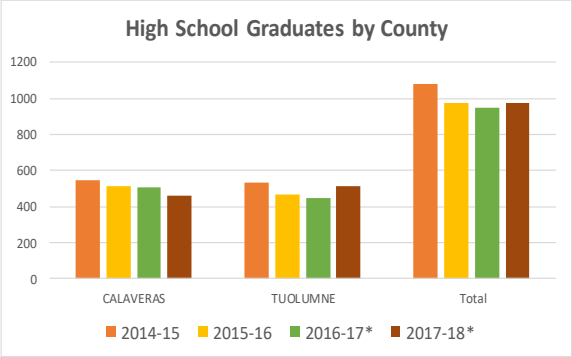
In the fall of 2018 there were 352 students enrolled who indicated they had graduated from high school in 2018. This marked an increase of 21.4% increase over the previous year.

Table 1: Fall Term Enrollment of Prior Year high School Graduates

Fall Term	Prior Year High School Grads Enrolled
2014	333
2015	360
2016	319
2017	290
2018	352

Research Question 2:

How many high school graduates are there each year in our service area?



The table below shows the number of high school graduates in Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties from 2014-15 to 2017 - 18.*

Table 2: Area High School Graduates by Year

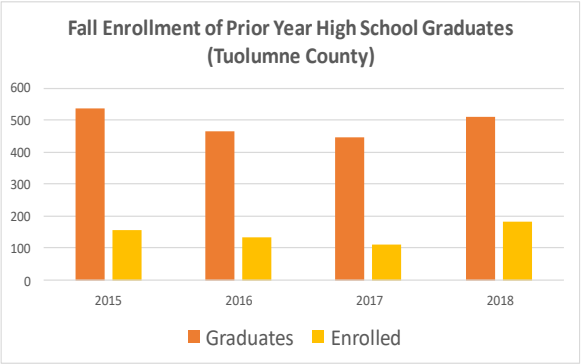
County	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17*	2017-18*
CALAVERAS	546	510	503	460
TUOLUMNE	535	465	445	512
Total	1081	975	948	972

** 2016—2017 and 2017—2018 are projected.*

Note: Total values do not include areas of Stanislaus County which are also in the College's service area.

Research Question 3:

What proportion of area high school graduates attend Columbia College?



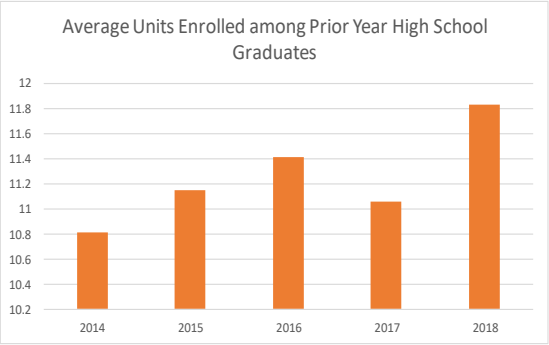
In the fall of 2018, approximately 35% of all students who graduated from Tuolumne County high schools in 2018 enrolled at Columbia College.

Table 3: Enrollment of 2018 Tuolumne County High School Graduates

Fall Term	HS Graduates	Enrolled	Proportion	Change in N Enrolled
2015	535	155	29%	NA
2016	465	135	29%	-13%
2017	445	113	25%	-16%
2018	512	181	35%	60%

Research Question 4:

To what degree has the average unit taking among recent high school graduates attending Columbia College varied over the past 5 years?



Over the previous 5 years the average number of units which prior year high school graduates enrolled in has increased from 10.81 to 11.83 in the fall term after high school graduation.

Table 4: Average Units Enrolled among Prior Year High School Graduates

Fall Term	Prior Year HS Grads Enrolled	Cumulative Units Enrolled	Average Units Enrolled
2014	333	3600.5	10.81
2015	360	4014	11.15
2016	319	3640.5	11.41
2017	290	3207.5	11.06
2018	352	4163	11.83

Research Question 5:

To what degree do we expect the number of high school graduates to change over the next 5 years.

According to projections from the California Department of Finance, the aggregate number of high school graduates from Tuolumne and Calaveras counties will decrease, from 972 in 2017-18 to 890 in 2021-22, before rebounding to 931 in 2022-23.

Table 5: Projected Public High School Graduates by School Year

	Actual	Actual	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
CALAVERAS	546	510	503	460	469	443	436	441	458	450
TUOLUMNE	535	465	445	512	467	448	457	449	473	505
TOTAL	**1081**	**975**	**948**	**972**	**936**	**891**	**893**	**890**	**931**	**955**
STANISLAUS	7472	7310	7633	7524	7578	7694	8057	7976	8378	8642
CALIFORNIA		429138	421947	429583	427704	427921	434678	437255	441251	451741

Research Question 6:

What proportion of Oakdale High School and Waterford High School High School graduates attend Columbia College?

In 2016—2017 Oakdale High School had 342 high school graduates, of which 32 attended* Columbia College in the Fall of 2017. In 2016—2017 Waterford High School had 103 graduates of which 3 attended* Columbia College in the Fall of 2017.

**Attended = the number of Columbia College students enrolled in fall of 2017 who indicated they graduated from Oakdale High or Waterford High in 2017.*
**High school graduate data queried from the California Department of Education DataQuest*

Discussion

The data suggests that in the Fall of 2018 Columbia College experienced a significant increase in the proportion of prior year high school graduates who enrolled at the college, as well as an increase in the average unit taking among these students. One major change which occurred in the Fall of 2018, which likely made a significant contribution to the increase in enrollment among recent high school graduates was the implementation of the Columbia College Promise. The Columbia College Promise ensures that graduates of local public high schools can attend Columbia College tuition free their first year after high school graduation if they enroll fulltime.

Given the recent decrease in the number of high school graduates in the region it is critical for the college to attract a larger proportion of recent high school graduates, ensure that these graduates are not "under-enrolling", and ensure that they are persisting to completion. The Columbia College Promise and the College's efforts to promote dual enrollment, appear to be having a positive effect on the proportion of recent high school graduates enrolling at Columbia College.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Study

Several aspects of the study were limited to Tuolumne County and should be expanded to other portions of the College's service area if possible. Additionally, enrollment patterns at Modesto Junior College among recent high school graduates from local high schools should also be examined.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE
YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

For more information related to this brief please contact:

Brandon Price
Dean, Student Services
209 588 5079
priceb@yosemite.edu