







enrollments at the community colleges. The projections involve the application of regression models based on a series of assumptions on the factors that may have an impact on enrollment. The final products include FTE and FTDE enrollment figures to assist in planning capital projects on a 10-year time horizon.

For FY 2024, MHEC enrollment projections forecast that the statewide potential credit enrollment will rise to 334,766 by Fall 2033, a 19.2% increase over 10 years. Public four-year institutions will experience a 13.3% increase in undergraduate enrollment and a 32.0% increase in graduate enrollment, and community colleges are estimated to observe a 22.4% increase in the next 10 years.

Starting in FY 2022, MHEC refined the projection model slightly to remedy the possible overestimation of the projections that existed in past reports<sup>1</sup>. There are several reasons behind the possibility of overestimation of credit headcount enrollment leading to an overestimation of FTE/FTDE in community colleges and public four-year institutions for both undergraduate part-time and graduate programs. The primary reason is that the projections aim to predict the number of students that will need education in Maryland's public colleges and universities over the next 10 years for long-term funding planning purposes. Consequently, the model places a strong emphasis on long-term enrollment levels, relying on historical average factors to predict stable enrollment values rather than following short-term trends immediately.

Two issues tied to the model's assumptions also may contribute to estimation challenges. One notable trend that the model intentionally disregards as a persistent factor for the next 10 years is the decreasing proportion of Maryland residents enrolling in these higher education segments. For example, in Fall 2013, approximately 6.0% of Maryland residents aged 15-24 were enrolled full-time in Maryland community colleges. This figure had decreased to 3.7% by Fall 2022<sup>2</sup>. The model aims to reflect the long-term trend of a decreasing proportion of Maryland residents enrolling in community colleges compared to a decade ago. However, it does not anticipate this proportion dropping as low as 3.7% over the next decade. Another emerging phenomenon that impacts the projections is the growing number of out-of-state students, which cannot be precisely predicted by the model. Predominantly, the overestimation of undergraduate enrollment in four-year public institutions is largely driven by overestimating part-time students; 65.4% of the part-time undergraduate students in public four-year institutions were Maryland residents in Fall 2013, while this percentage had dropped to 40.2% by Fall 2023.

In Spring 2023, the Secretary charged the Office of Research and Policy Analysis to explore a possible revision to the current model that could address the possible overestimation of the 10-year projections. The research office proposed a revised model that is more responsive to recent trends and less confounded by increasing out-of-state enrollment. However, the revised model may unavoidably lead to underestimated

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<sup>1</sup> For more details about the model adjustment, please see Enrollment Projection 2022-2031 report here <https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/AnnualReports/MHEC2022-2031EnrollmentProjectionsReport.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The most recent available actual population is for 2022, which is estimated based on the 2020 Census.

































