

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN REPORT 2020-2021

November 2020



Prescott Campus



Verde Valley Campus

Presented by:  
Institutional Effectiveness and Research






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## INTRODUCTION

### ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN PURPOSE

Environmental Scans are an important part of planning as they take stock of the changing external environment – the opportunities, the threats, the developments that could impact the institution reaching its potential and fulfilling its mission. It is closely related to a S.W.O.T. analysis and should be used as part of the strategic planning process. The report examines the following trends:

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| ✓ Demographic         |    |
| ✓ Social & Political  |   |
| ✓ Economy & Workforce |  |
| ✓ Education           |  |
| ✓ Technology          |  |

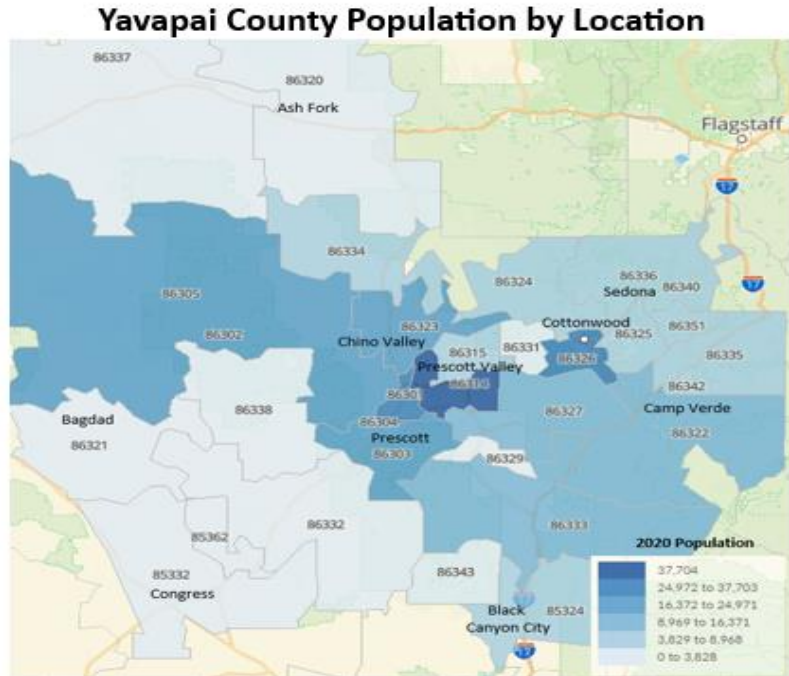


## DEMOGRAPHICS

Yavapai County’s population is spread out over 8,000 square miles, geographically divided by the Mingus Mountain range. The Prescott area in the west county and Verde Valley in the eastern portion of the county are the two primary population centers.

### POPULATION

Yavapai County’s 2020 population is 238,499. Over the next five years, the county population is forecasted to grow by 5.1%, faster than Arizona (4.9%), and U.S. projections of 2.3%.



Source: EMSI, Quarter 3, 2020

### Yavapai County Sub Area Population and Projections

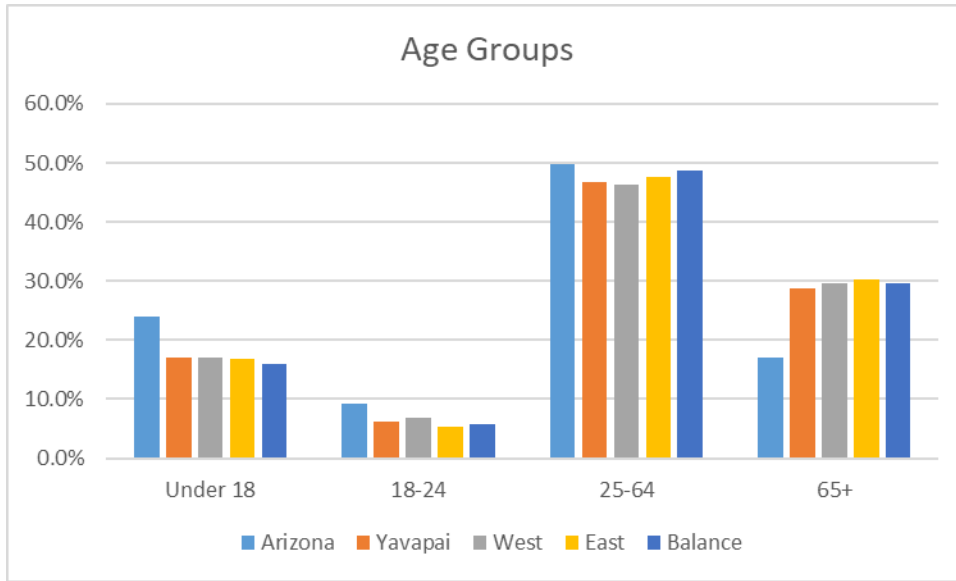
|                       | 2010    | 2020    | 2025    | Net Growth Forecast<br>(2020-2025) | % Growth Forecast<br>(2020-2025) |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Yavapai County</b> | 211,033 | 238,499 | 250,593 | 12,094                             | 5.1%                             |
| <b>West</b>           | 133,038 | 155,072 | 163,054 | 7,982                              | 5.1%                             |
| <b>East</b>           | 68,338  | 71,627  | 75,194  | 3,567                              | 5.0%                             |
| <b>Balance</b>        | 9,657   | 11,800  | 12,345  | 545                                | 4.6%                             |

Source: EMSI, Quarter 3, 2020

Note: Region populations are determined by zip code and may not equal county total.

### AGE GROUPS

Yavapai County’s share of the population age 65 and older is near twice that of Arizona and the U.S. as a whole. The over 65 populations are consistent over the three sub-county areas. Less than half of the county’s population is workforce age (25-64). The west sub-county area has the largest proportion of traditional-age college students (18-24).



Most county growth occurs in the age group 65 and over and will add 12,203 new residents by 2025. In contrast, the 45-64 age group will shrink by 3,976 and decline in both the 20 to 29 (-1,245) and 10 to 14 (-424) age groups. These age trends signal a significant shift for Yavapai College and its curriculum and program offering.

Source: EASI Analytics, Inc., 2020

### RACE AND ETHNICITY

The overwhelming majority (80%) of Yavapai County residents are White, Non-Hispanic, with a median age of 58. Hispanics make up the next largest group at 15% with a median age (28), 50% younger than the majority race.

#### Yavapai County Race and Ethnicity

|   | 2020    | 2025    | Net Growth Forecast<br>(2020-2025) | % Growth Forecast<br>(2020-2025) |
|---|---------|---------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY</b>     |         |         |                                    |                                  |
| White Population, Non-Hispanic          | 190,836 | 199,128 | 8,292                              | 4.3%                             |
| Black Population, Non-Hispanic          | 1,704   | 1,865   | 161                                | 9.5%                             |
| Asian Population, Non-Hispanic          | 2,662   | 3,033   | 371                                | 13.9%                            |
| American Indian and Alaska Native Alone | 3,311   | 3,478   | 167                                | 5.0%                             |
| Two or More Races, Non-Hispanic         | 4,136   | 4,446   | 311                                | 7.5%                             |
| Hispanic, All Races                     | 35,586  | 38,354  | 2,768                              | 7.8%                             |

Source: EMSI, Quarter 3, 2020

Yavapai County's minority populations are appreciably younger than the White majority.

#### Yavapai College Median Age

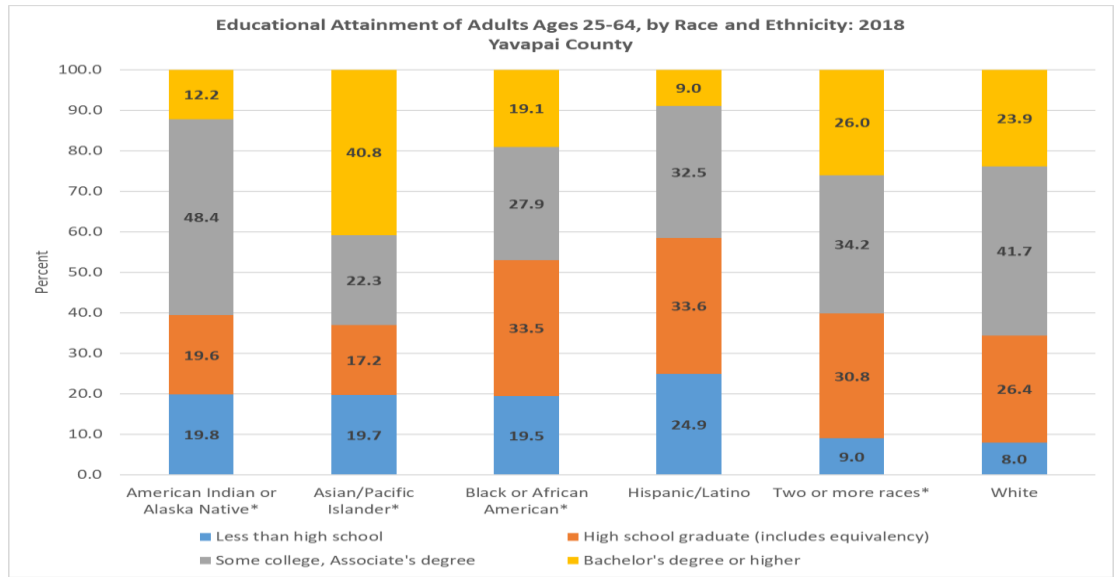
| MEDIAN AGE BY ETHNICITY       |      |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Hispanic Median Age           | 28.3 |
| White Non Hispanic Median Age | 57.6 |

Source: EASI Analytics Inc., 2020

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

**Educational Attainment Workforce Population (Age 25-64)**

Source: IPUMS USA, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Micro Dataset

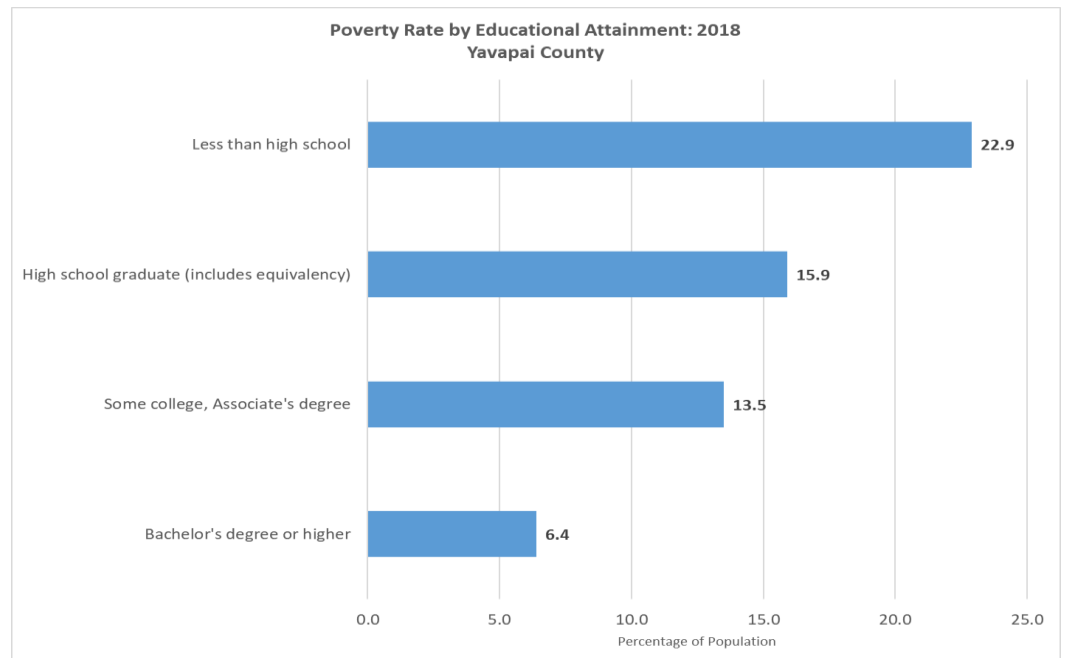


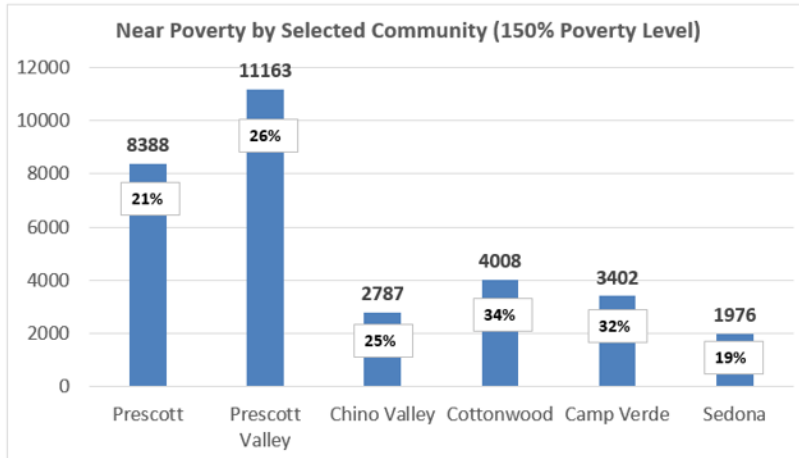
- Examining educational attainment, there is a significant gap and opportunity to increase education levels of Hispanic residents of Yavapai County.

**POVERTY**

**Education and poverty.**

There is a direct association between educational attainment and a region's poverty rate. Poverty rates are significantly lower for County residents with a postsecondary credential





Poverty Threshold

Family of 4: \$26,200

Almost 1 in 4 County Residents live in near poverty or worse

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Yavapai County High Schools Free and Reduced Lunch Percentage

21%      49%      83%  
 Low      Median      High

Source: School Food Authorities 19-20 for public high schools

Source: Arizona Department of Education 19-20 for charter high schools

- High school free and reduced lunch rates are another indicator of financial challenge. The median free/reduced lunch student percentage at Yavapai County high schools is 49%.

### Questions for Consideration

- Given our demographics, how can YC better reach and better serve the Hispanic community?
- How do we improve our recruitment and marketing efforts to entice the 75,000 non-traditional aged residents who do not have a degree?
- How does Yavapai College address college cost barriers for community members facing financial hardships?

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## SOCIAL AND POLITICAL

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Across the world and within our communities and homes, we seem to be living through a period of significant political transformation and are experiencing political divisiveness at unprecedented levels. As these political trends continue to take shape, they will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on higher education teaching and learning models and practices. From policy agendas and legislative battles that target educational standards and funding to the political discourses taking place at campuses and in classrooms, higher education will continue to influence and be a product of the political world around it.

### THE 2020 ELECTION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The 2020 presidential election in the United States has brought more attention, wanted or unwanted, to higher education.

- **Free college.**

Several of the Democrats have made the promise of free college a centerpiece of their education policy.

Meanwhile, as of March 2019, 11 states had free college programs, and related

legislation was pending in nine more states. In those contexts, expect political campaigns at both the national and state levels to include more discussion of financial aid for education.<sup>1</sup>



- **Racial tension.** George Floyd’s death catalyzed national protests and civil unrest in response to numerous unarmed black men and women killed by police. Protests over issues of racial inequality have surfaced in communities and college campuses nationwide.
- **Free speech.** Discussions of “fake news,” election tampering by foreign entities, or campaigning based on wedge issues designed to divide voters may raise issues around free speech, some of which may focus attention on campus-based discussions on that topic.<sup>1</sup>



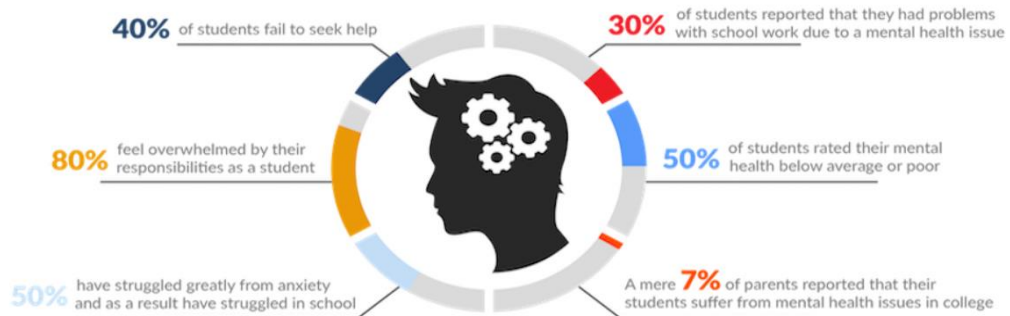
## WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Well-being and mental health initiatives at colleges and universities, including emerging technology and application solutions, need to support the increasing numbers of students who report experiencing anxiety, depression, and related concerns. Faculty and administrators will need to navigate more frequent encounters with students seeking well-being and mental health help. Without services or treatment available, students will likely be less successful in academic and social activities.<sup>2</sup>



Mental health issues are becoming more prevalent in the college setting, so students and concerned family members need to be familiar with it.

Mental health issues that students face during their college years:



Mental health issues can take many forms. The popular ones include depression, anxiety, suicide, eating disorders, and addiction. While it may be difficult to come to terms with any illness, it's important to be aware and be familiar with the resources available whenever they are needed.

These staggering statistics show how important it is to increase awareness about mental health on college campuses because most people that struggle with a mental health condition will experience symptoms before they graduate from College.<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bestcounselingdegrees.net/top-10-mental-health-challenges-facing-college-students-today/>

### COVID-19 IMPACT

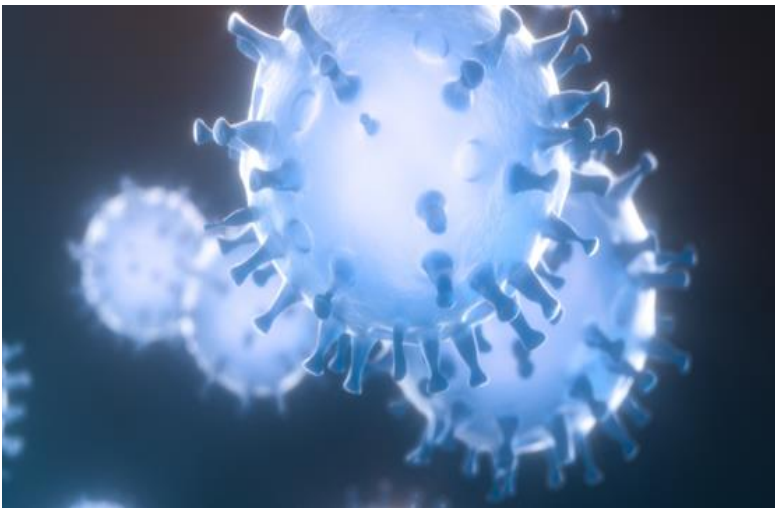
As the global COVID-19 pandemic changes the way we live, a new group of challenges faces the higher education industry. Not only are universities and colleges forced to transition all on-campus classes to a virtual setting, but they are also faced with concerns around enrollment, finances, and student support. Of course, one of the biggest questions is when on-campus classes will resume?<sup>4</sup>

It is also essential to mention what opportunities for long-term innovation Covid-19 has brought to higher education:

- Investment in digital technology
- Student support
  - ❖ Gather student feedback and redesign courses and technologies in a student-centered way
- Hiring and retention

❖ Increase remote work for staff and faculty

Many scenarios involve a compromise between open and online learning as higher education moves toward long-term financial stability goals, refined remote learning, and safety policies. Every setback is an opportunity for change; what is essential is that discussions about goals and priorities occur. While challenging, this moment is a fundamental moment that is causing educators to re-examine traditions and rewrite the future of higher education for the better.<sup>4</sup>



The decision to reopen, at first glance, seems split: either campus will open or campus will deliver education via remote learning. In the [\*Chronicle of Higher Education's\*](#)

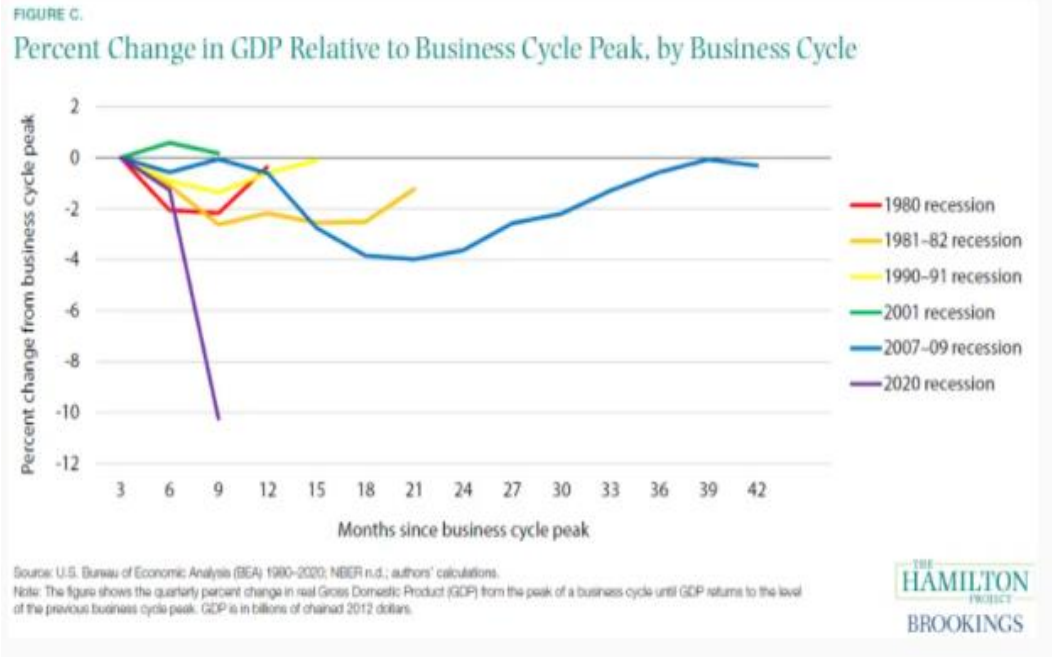
ongoing survey of over 800 schools, more than 60% of community colleges are operating primarily or fully online in Fall 2020. About 20% are primarily or fully in person.<sup>5</sup>

**Questions for Consideration**

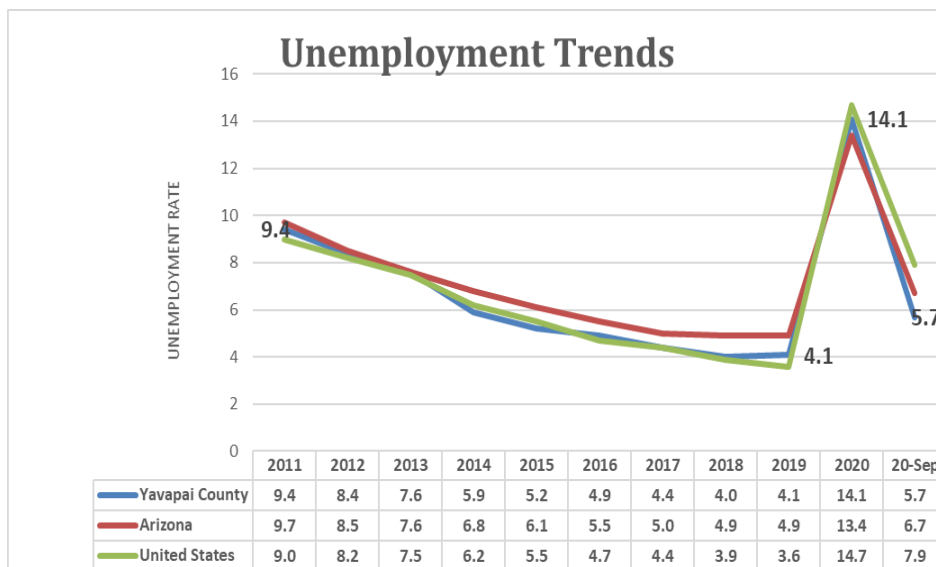
- How can Yavapai College improve its processes to ensure all students, regardless of race or financial means, enjoy high transfer and completion rates?
- Is YC adequately prepared to assist students experiencing mental health issues?
- What academic and operational changes from Covid-19 should be carried forward by YC after the pandemic?

## ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

COVID-19 has created both a public health crisis and an economic crisis. The U.S. has experienced two consecutive quarters of declines in GDP. GDP was down a record of 9.1% in the second quarter of 2020 (BEA 2020a).<sup>6</sup> However, GDP increased by 7.4% in the third quarter.<sup>7</sup> Retail sales and household spending have experienced significant swings—the only certainty seems to be uncertainty.



## UNEMPLOYMENT



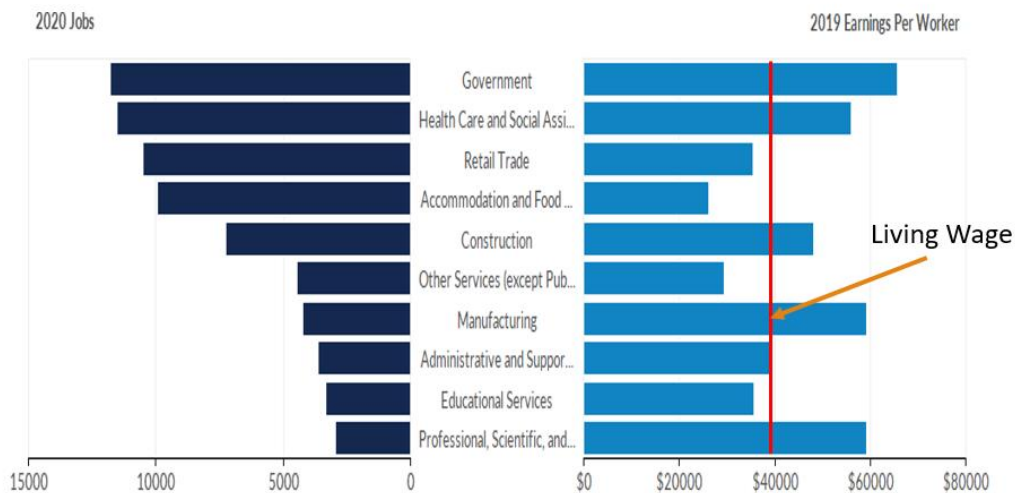
Historically, as employment opportunities decline, community college enrollments increase. However, it is difficult to know if the historical relationship between unemployment and enrollment will play out in a pandemic caused economic downturn.

- Jobs requiring higher education levels will likely return earlier, and unemployment levels will remain elevated for lower-skilled workers.

## INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

Yavapai County has the greatest amount of laborers in government, healthcare, retail, food and accommodation, and construction. Of these top five sectors, government, health care, and construction provide high wage earnings.

### Largest Industry Sectors in Yavapai County 2020



Source: EMSI, Quarter 3, 2020

- 5 of County’s top 10 industry sectors have average earnings per worker below the living wage as calculated by the Economic Policy Institute.

Cross-referencing industry sector growth with occupational growth verifies high demand for academic programs in healthcare, management, business, public administration, and construction technology.

## AFFORDABILITY

Per Zillow, the median Yavapai County home value is \$327,135, an increase of 5.9% over last year—well above the national average of \$259,906.<sup>8,9</sup>



**Low Household Income.** Yavapai County’s median household income of \$50.2 is \$6K below the Arizona median household income and \$10.1 below the national median. The combination of below-average income and high cost of living, especially housing, presents significant headwinds negatively affecting student and labor force recruitment.

**Median Household Income**



Source: EMSI, 2020 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

**High Cost of Living.** Yavapai County’s higher average cost of living is driven primarily by high housing costs compared to nearby Phoenix and the national average.

| Category       | Prescott-Prescott Valley AZ | Phoenix AZ | National Average |
|----------------|-----------------------------|------------|------------------|
| Grocery        | 100.6                       | 99.6       | 100              |
| Housing        | 130.4                       | 108.4      | 100              |
| Utilities      | 94.9                        | 105.9      | 100              |
| Transportation | 108.0                       | 105.7      | 100              |
| Health         | 96.9                        | 89.9       | 100              |
| Miscellaneous  | 108.3                       | 96.4       | 100              |
| Composite      | 111.5                       | 101.6      | 100              |

Source: Council for Community and Economic Research, 2020 Quarter 3.

**Questions for Consideration**

- Does YC have the right program mix to serve local, state and national job market?
- How can YC help in attracting businesses and jobs in high wage industries like manufacturing and professional, scientific, and technical services?
- How can YC address lowering housing costs in our county?

## EDUCATION

### K-12 EDUCATION TRENDS

There is a national teacher shortage, with many slots being filled by uncredentialed people out of necessity. Part of this has to do with financial pressures. A lack of resources creates high student-teacher ratios (which causes a stressful work environment) and inadequate pay.



### Challenged K-12 System.

Attracting and retaining quality teachers is a significant challenge for state k-12 schools. Competition from other states offering higher salaries and lower cost of living recruit in Arizona openly.

|                            | Arizona Ranking |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Teacher Pay*               | 46th            |
| Expenditures per Student** | 47th            |

\*National Education Center's 2018-19 data, analysis business.org

\*\*U.S. Department of Education, National Public Education Financial Survey, 2016

**Teacher Pay and K-12 Funding:** Arizona teacher pay remains near the bottom nationally. Despite the recent passage of Proposition 208 that raises teacher pay, Yavapai County teachers remain over \$6,000 below the Arizona average salary.<sup>10</sup>

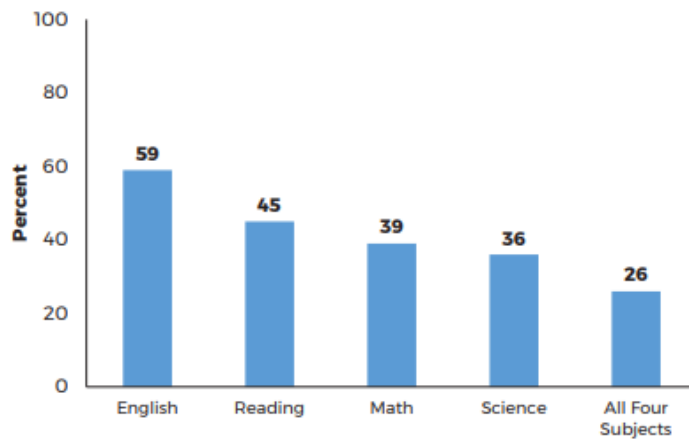
Arizona's expenditures per student also rank as one of the lowest in the nation. A challenged K-12 system presents a significant barrier to recruiting top businesses and talent to the area.

**Underprepared Students.**

As many as two-thirds of students entering community colleges today require some level of remediation (Cohen & Brawer, 2014). ACT (2020) reports that just 26% of college-bound students met all four college-readiness benchmarks (English, mathematics, reading, and science).

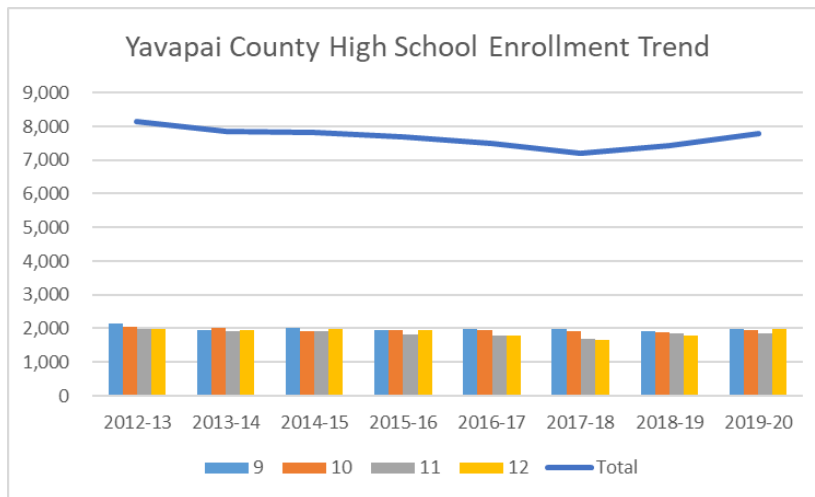
The recent voter failed overrides in the Humboldt and Prescott Unified School districts signal a lack of community support and likely will contribute to more underprepared students attending YC.

Percent of 2019 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



**Yavapai County high school enrollments continue to decline.**

The net decline between 2013 and 2020 was 346 students. The drop represents a compound average annual enrollment drop of nearly 2 percent.

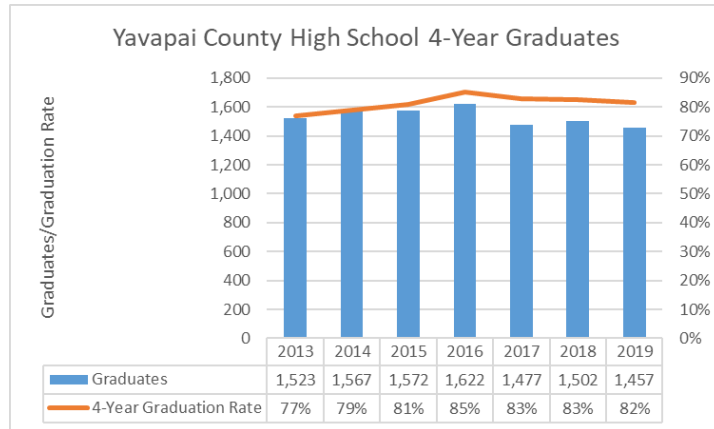


Source: Arizona Department of Education—Arizona October 1 Enrollment Reports.

**Yavapai County high school graduates fall.**

Declining birth rates and the aging shift in net migration indicate the number of high school graduates will likely continue to decline moderately over the next five years. The rising county high school graduation rate (82%) is encouraging and exceeds the Arizona graduation rate of 79%.

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education projects new high school graduates to drop precipitously beginning in 2025. Declines in the Northeast and Midwest are already well underway and foreshadow graduate trends in the West.<sup>11</sup>



**COMPETITION**

- Online completion, mainly from institutions that offer multiple semester start dates—some offer new courses every week, presenting a threat to YC.
- With increased online competition, YC must develop a strategic online direction considering standardization, degree pathways, multiple start dates, and course success rates on par with face-to-face courses.
- State universities with large marketing budgets and unfettered territory are beginning to enter areas such as offering certificates that previously were the domain of community colleges.



**Private competitors as an alternative to traditional higher education are an increasing threat.**

- CareerBuilder partnered with Cappella Education to offer a new program called Right Skill—students who are not placed in a new job within 90 days of completing the online program received a full tuition refund.
- LinkedIn Learning offers more than 16,000 courses, many of which offer a skills certificate.
- Coursera and edX are MOOCs offering free online courses by Harvard, MIT, Stanford, and more. Students can pay to earn certificates and micro-degrees.
- Companies like Google are creating their own curriculum to meet industry needs.



**Questions for Consideration**

- Is YC delivering programs the way our students want/ need them? Should we offer more online programs? Short format courses? Bootcamps?
- Is it time for Yavapai College to explore recruiting students beyond Yavapai County for online and on-ground programs?
- Should YC explore collaboration with organizations like edX and Coursera to leverage already developed curriculum?
- Given a shrink in traditional age students and increased completion, how does YC consciously decide who we are, how we are different, and what market needs we are fulfilling?



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## TECHNOLOGY

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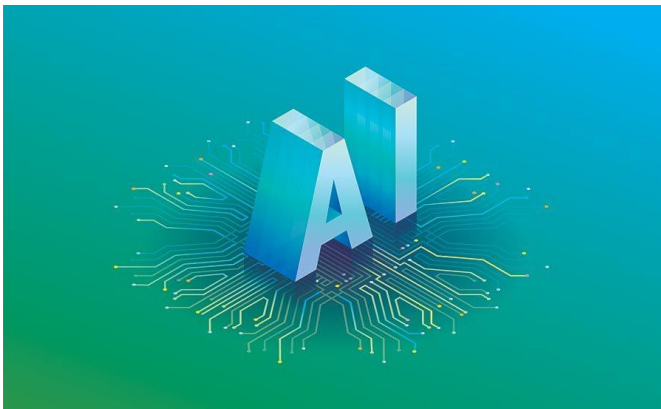
### TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

#### Cybersecurity and Predictive Analytics

- Data and privacy protection remain top concerns for colleges and universities.
- As colleges adopt predictive analytics to identify at-risk students and improve student success, it is vital to ensure that the data used does not perpetuate biases.<sup>12</sup>
- Technological disruption is here to stay. Technology brought us innovations, increased efficiencies, and broadened access to higher education. Nonetheless, exponential growth and changes in applications, enterprise resource systems, and data environments will require an increased demand for upgrades and systems integration.
- All the above come with increased costs to keep colleges safe and up to date.



#### Artificial Intelligence and Looking Beyond Covid-19



will need to develop long-term strategies to determine which services and pedagogical innovations to carry forward.<sup>12</sup>

- Thanks to artificial intelligence, bilingual chatbots are now a reality. Ocelot recently deployed a bilingual English-Spanish Chatbot that is being used by more than 40 colleges and universities.<sup>12</sup>
- The pandemic has forced colleges and universities to become more fully versed in delivering education and support services virtually. Institutions

- Institutional connections with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and donors that have relied on technology out of necessity likely will continue post-pandemic as there is greater acceptance that operations can occur online anywhere, anytime. Colleges will have to adopt planning and policies accordingly.

### Questions for Consideration

- How does YC improve its predictive analytic tools to better understand which students are at risk of dropping out, how to create better class schedules, etc.
- Is Yavapai College allocating adequate resources to reasonably secure the college against cyber threats? How do we know?
- How will remote work instigated by the pandemic influence master planning for office and instruction space in the future?

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>*Trends for Higher Education*, Society for College and University Planning, Fall 2019.
- <sup>2</sup>*Educause Horizon 2020 Teaching and Learning Report*.  
<https://library.educause.edu/resources/2020/3/2020-educause-horizon-report-teaching-and-learning-edition>
- <sup>3</sup>*Mental Health Facing Today's College Students*. <https://www.bestcounselingdegrees.net/top-10-mental-health-challenges-facing-college-students-today/>
- <sup>4</sup>The Impact of Covid-19 on Higher Education. <https://www.turnitin.com/blog/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-higher-education-what-will-2020-2021-look-like>
- <sup>5</sup>College Plans for Reopening in the Fall. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/heres-a-list-of-colleges-plans-for-reopening-in-the-fall/>
- <sup>6</sup>Ten Facts about Covid-19 and the U.S. Economy.  
[https://www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/ten\\_facts\\_about\\_covid\\_19\\_and\\_the\\_u.s\\_economy](https://www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/ten_facts_about_covid_19_and_the_u.s_economy)
- <sup>7</sup>U.S. Economy Recovered Significant Ground in Record Third-Quarter GDP Rebound.  
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/us-gdp-third-quarter-2020-11603908566>
- <sup>8</sup>Zillow Home Values Yavapai County. <https://www.zillow.com/yavapai-county-az/home-values/>
- <sup>9</sup>Zillow Home Values United States. <https://www.zillow.com/home-values/>
- <sup>10</sup>Superintendent's Report: Despite failed override, Prescott teachers and students will shine.  
<https://www.dcourier.com/news/2020/nov/10/howard-despite-failed-override-prescott-teachers-a/>
- <sup>11</sup>Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates, 2016. <https://www.wiche.edu/key-initiatives/knocking-at-the-college-door/>
- <sup>12</sup>*Trends for Higher Education*, Society for College and University Planning, Fall 2020.