

Examining JSU College of Education and Human Development Enrollment Trends and Influencing Factors

Michael Tornes, Ph.D.

Jackson State University - Mississippi Urban Research Center

Background

- ▶ The College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) at JSU has experienced declining enrollment numbers in several of its program/degree areas over the last decade.
- ▶ At present, there is some uncertainty as to whether declining enrollment is a temporal event, or related to larger, more structural issues.
- ▶ To better understand the reasons for this decline, the COEHD leadership tasked the Mississippi Urban Research Center (MURC) to conduct a study on enrollment trends in the college.

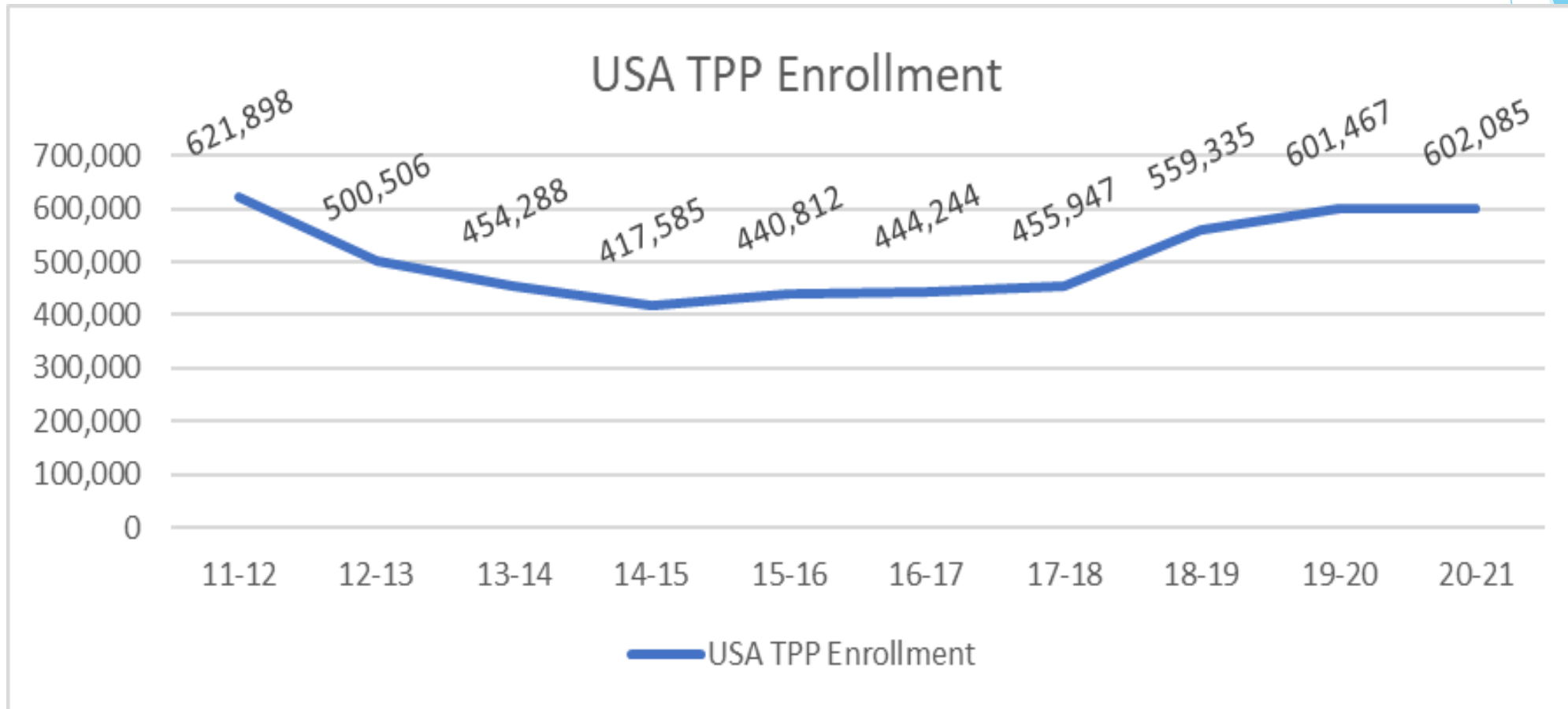
Research Questions

- ▶ RQ1: Is there a substantiated medium-to-long term pattern (as opposed to a short-term occurrence) of declining COEHD student enrollment?
- ▶ RQ2: If there is a substantiated medium-to-long term pattern of COEHD declining enrollment, why are students choosing not to enroll in the College of Education and Human Development?

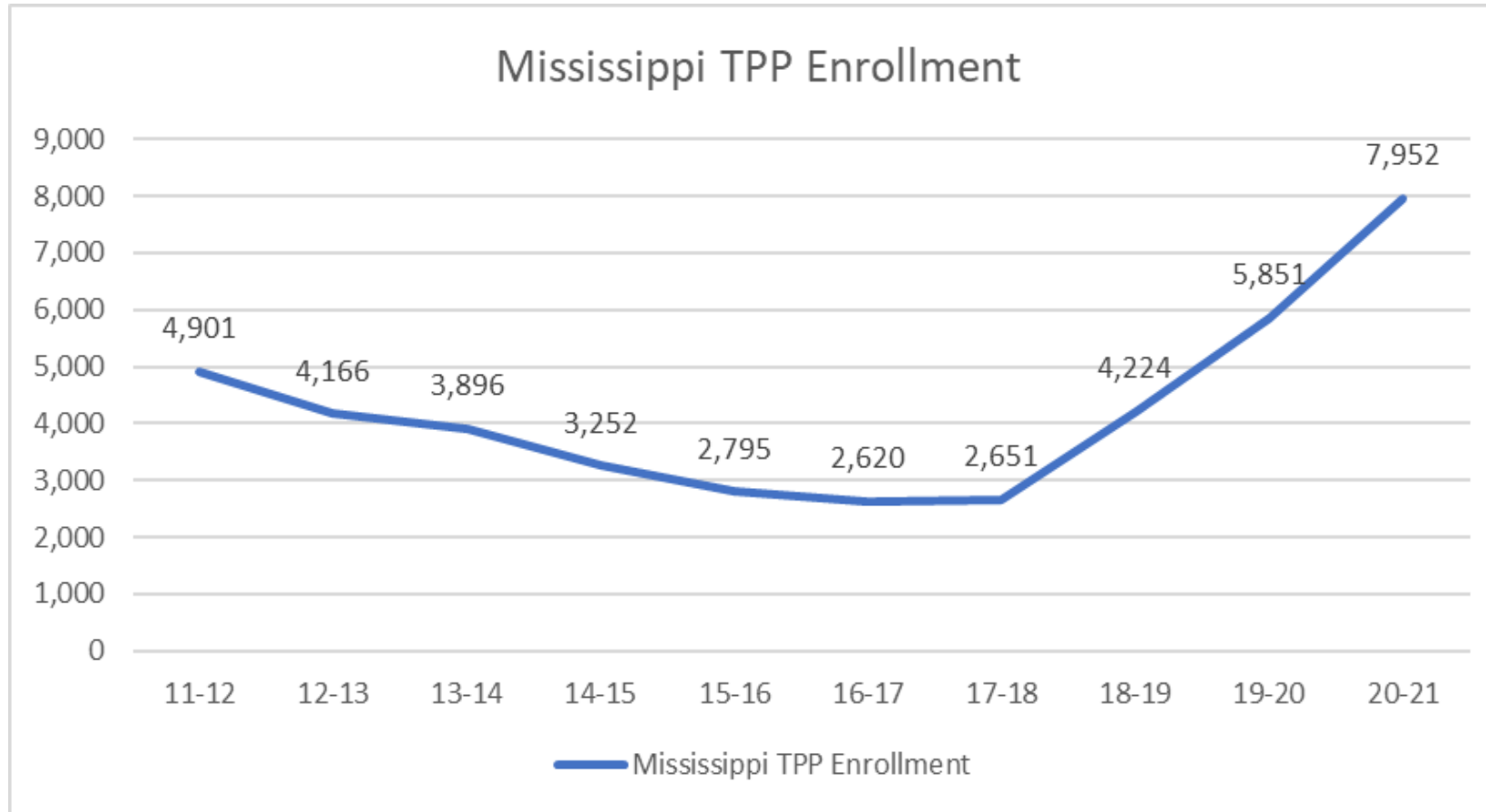
Methods

- ▶ Reviewing reports on declining enrollment in teacher preparation programs (TPP)
- ▶ Reviewing TPP enrollment trends
- ▶ JSU student surveys and informal interviews

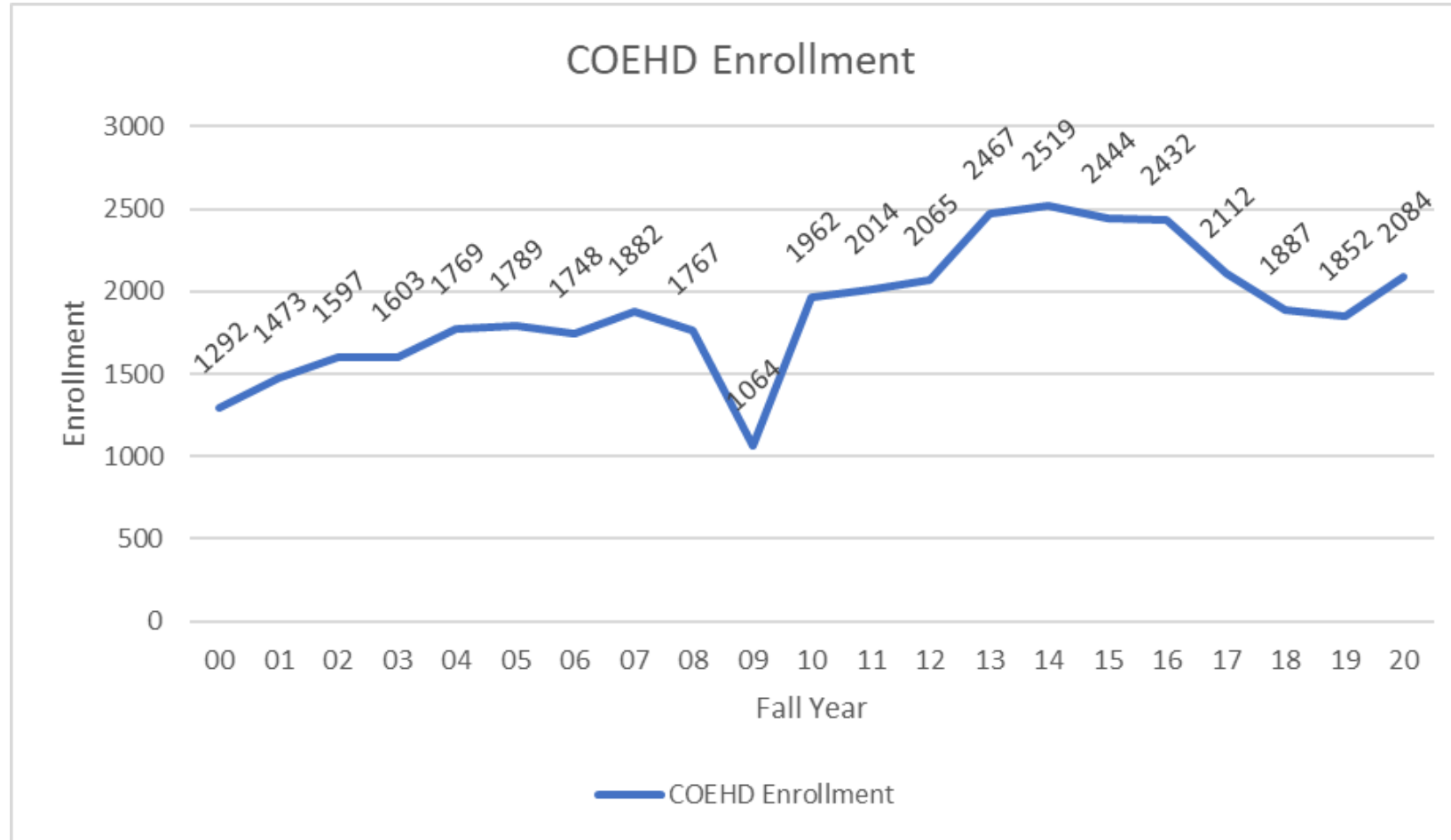
Total TPP Enrollment in USA



Total TPP Enrollment in Mississippi



Overall COEHD Enrollment



Rates of Increase/Decrease

Program	Rate of Increase/Decrease from 2011 to 2020
U.S. TPP Enrollment	-3.19%
Mississippi TPP Enrollment	62.25%
COEHD Enrollment	3.48%

Note on COEHD enrollment

- ▶ A closer examination of COEHD's degree programs indicates there were wide variations in enrollment rates. For example, while some COEHD programs have significantly increased their enrollment numbers for the time period studied, the majority of those program areas (15 out of 23) posted decreases in enrollment.

COEHD MAJOR/DEGREE	RATE OF INCREASE / DECREASE (2011 TO 2020)
TEACHING MAT	359.60%
SPORT SCIENCE MS	82.35%
EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION PHD	54.55%
URBAN HIGHER EDUCATION PH.D.	44.83%
UNIVERSITY STUDIES (C2C) BS (BEGAN IN 2018)	39.39%
EDUCATION EDS	35.34%
SCHOOL COUNSELING MSED (BEGAN IN 2013)	33.33%
CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH MS (BEGAN IN 2013)	26.92%
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION K-3 MSED	-2.86%
CHILD CARE AND FAMILY EDUCATION BS	-13.67%
READING MSED	-22.22%
COUNSELING, REHABILITATION, & PSYCHOMETRIC MS	-24.39%
HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION BS	-37.85%
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION EDD	-41.03%
PROFESSIONAL INTERDISC. STUDIES BS (BEGAN IN 2013)	-42.75%
EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION MS	-52.00%
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BSED	-63.64%
HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION MSED	-70.91%
SPECIAL EDUCATION MSED	-71.43%
SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION BSED	-72.97%
SPECIAL EDUCATION BS	-73.58%
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION MSED	-95.00%
SECONDARY EDUCATION MSED	-100.00%

Potential factors influencing TPP enrollment rates

- ▶ “The Great Recession” which caused wide-spread unemployment that also included local school systems
- ▶ The COVID-19 pandemic which also caused wide-spread unemployment, economic, health, and social disruption impacting local school systems
- ▶ Students growing interest in other majors such as business, health professions, social sciences, history, and STEM programs
- ▶ Sources: Ballard & Canter, 2020; Partelow, 2019; Schmitt & deCourcy, 2022; Wilson & Kelley, 2022

Potential factors influencing TPP enrollment rates

- ▶ Teachers making low salaries compared to other professions
- ▶ The high cost of attending college to become a teacher
- ▶ High stress levels associated with being a teacher
- ▶ Sources: Ballard & Canter, 2020; Partelow, 2019; Schmitt & deCourcy, 2022; Wilson & Kelley, 2022

Survey of students at JSU

- ▶ Surveys were developed to understand why students choose to pursue, or not pursue, an education degree at JSU
- ▶ Both education majors (n = 30) and non-education majors were surveyed (n = 23)

Survey of students at JSU

- ▶ Reasons for pursuing an education major:
 - ▶ Liking teaching
 - ▶ Liking children
- ▶ Reasons for not pursuing an education major:
 - ▶ Interest in other majors
 - ▶ Low teacher pay
 - ▶ High stress levels working as a teacher

Recommendations for increasing enrollment - education majors

- ▶ More investments in social media/advertising
- ▶ Sharing the benefits and opportunities of majoring in education
- ▶ More departmental events for students
- ▶ Encouraging more teaching internships

Recommendations for increasing enrollment - non-education majors

- ▶ Social media marketing
 - ▶ Promote teaching and make it look more appealing
- ▶ More departmental events
- ▶ Increased pay

Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Based on JSU student recommendations, improving COEHD marketing strategies.
 - ▶ Change depictions of how teaching is perceived
 - ▶ Hosting more COEHD events for students
 - ▶ Host more career fairs for education majors
- ▶ Based on JSU student comments regarding teacher pay and previous reports (Ballard & Canter, 2020), increase financial assistance to help off-set the cost of pursuing education as a college major.