

a GOOD JOB starts with the RIGHT EDUCATION

Community colleges beckon career changers, students seeking low-cost options

By REAGAN HAYNES

Special to The Daily Record

Students preparing to enter college have always faced the weight of making potentially life-changing decisions.

They mull over their academic strengths and weigh those against their interests, trying to figure out whether their penchant for art is just a hobby or could turn into a career.

During this prolonged recession, some students are thinking more carefully about the end result — and about whether their degree will help them land a job despite high unemployment. They are also reconsidering whether they want to jump right into a four-year institution or start at community college.

The number of people seeking two-year degrees has grown 20 percent in the last five years, according to Maryland Higher Education Commission spokesman Jon Enriquez.

Half of those associates degrees are designed for people who want to transfer to a four-year institution, and the second-most popular fields of associates degrees are earned in health fields such as radiology and dental hygiene, Enriquez said.

"It's become trendy to refer to community college as the new graduate school for people who already have degrees," said Sandra Kurtinitis, president of Community College of Baltimore County. "Maybe if they majored in philosophy, people come back to us to get associates degrees, or some kind of certification in a field where they will get a job."

The fall 2011 headcount enrollment at the University System of Maryland campuses was up 2 percent at 155,607 students from 2010. While total enrollment increased for USM, the rate at which that growth occurred actually slowed for the third straight year, according to USM spokesman Mike Lurie.

Choosing a major

Regardless of what type of institution students choose, many traditional students are still pursuing their passions, with some schools showing record enrollments in liberal and performing arts. At the same time, business and administration majors remain strong, as well as health care professions, psychology, communications and education.

"It doesn't seem that students are that susceptible to market trends when it comes to choosing majors," Enriquez said. "I think students seem to choose their majors on criteria other than



First-year Community College of Baltimore County student Nicole Tan is observed by Susan Bunting, nursing faculty lab manager, during a recent nursing concepts class.

analysis of workforce demands."

Traditional students — meaning those just leaving high school to go immediately to college — have no experience getting jobs, but they know how to go to school, Enriquez said. Because of that experience, and their ages, Enriquez thinks they tend to focus on what makes them happy in the moment rather than what makes them marketable.

The most popular majors at the undergraduate level are in business and management fields, Enriquez said. Second is a collection of social science disciplines, which vary from economics to criminology.

A handful of concentrations that are tied for third include psychology and other health fields like nursing, medicine and physical therapy, Enriquez said.

Enriquez also points out that, though the commission is changing the way it collects data, the system used now does not include "non-traditional students," or those returning to school, transfers, or part-time students.

Value education

At Community College of Baltimore County, the average age of the 74,000 attendees is around 28, and only 35 percent are full time, Kurtinitis said.

"By and large, the population of students both in credit and non-credited programming will be people, many of whom have full-time jobs, many of whom are retraining, and most of whom have families," so they appreciate the flexibility offered at

community college, Kurtinitis said.

At CCBC, the largest health profession undergraduate school in the state, students gravitate to majors and certifications in health care, Kurtinitis said.

"We are a place that is very attractive to people who already have a degree in something, but realize job security does lie in health care professions," Kurtinitis said.

The top three areas for community college degrees earned are general studies transfers, nursing (RN), and arts and sciences transfers, according to the Higher Education Commission data.

Enrollment in health care profession programs has grown around 70 percent at CCBC since 2007, said spokeswoman Mary De Luca.

The college is also very strong in liberal arts, Kurtinitis said, and has seen a major uptick in performing arts programs, all of which are nationally accredited.

"That is very unusual at a community college," Kurtinitis said. "We have such fine programs and the college has really made an investment in developing them to reach that higher pinnacle."

Fine and performing arts majors have increased from 33 students in 2007 to 284 today, Kurtinitis said.

"These are people for whom we are an incredibly good deal," Kurtinitis said. "You can come to us and spend \$3,000 a year, and then go anywhere you want. There's an economic attraction as well as a quality attraction."

Community colleges today are a different animal than their counterparts of the 1970s, and have shed the stigma of being a last resort for students, Kurtinitis said.

"They're smart investments," De Luca said. "People are savvy with anything they're purchasing in the marketplace. With education being so important, they want to make smart

choices about how they spend their money. We're such a wonderful value, and we offer high-quality education that will get them into jobs, and in many cases more quickly when there are options for shorter-term training."

Overall enrollment at CCBC has risen 40 percent since 2007.

Baccalaureates more than vocational

A newly introduced four-year bachelor of science degree in nursing has gained quick traction at Notre Dame of Maryland University, said Sr. Christine De Vinne, vice president of academic affairs. The undergraduate nursing degree supplements Notre Dame's longstanding co-educational registered nurse (RN) to BSN, RN to MSN (master's of science in nursing) and MSN programs offered in the College of Adult Undergraduate Studies and College of Graduate Studies, De Vinne said.

Still, education remains the most popular degree among undergraduate and graduate students at the university, De Vinne wrote in an email.

Historically, recessions bring an increase in the number of students enrolling in graduate programs, said Joseph Wood, provost at the University of Baltimore, where half of the graduates are earning master's degrees.

But this time, that has not been the case, Wood said.

Education

The most popular degree.



NOTRE DAME OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY

28

The average age of students.



CCBC

in maryland WHERE WILL THE JOBS BE?

Greatest growth projected in health care, finance and IT/computer systems

By REAGAN HAYNES

Special to The Daily Record

Though college students might not always think about what work they might find with their degrees, higher education institutions are increasingly thinking about how to expand offerings so graduates can find careers.

It is an initiative being pushed nationally by President Barack Obama, and at the state level through Gov. Martin O'Malley's Governor's Workforce Investment Board.

The board has identified major areas of growth projected for Maryland, and universities and colleges are doing their best to add curricula in areas that make sense for them to expand. Health professions, cybersecurity and technology, and green jobs top that list.

The Maryland Higher Education Commission has added incentives for students majoring in certain areas, said Jon Enriquez, associate director of research and policy and analysis for the commission.

For instance, a nurse support program offers scholarships and loan forgiveness to people who enroll in nursing programs, particularly graduate nursing programs, so they are qualified to become faculty, Enriquez said.

A loan assistance repay program is for people who enter specific high-need fields determined by the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Enriquez said.

According to a new study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce, "Hard Times" (2012), college degrees give people entering the workforce an edge, but how much of an advantage depends on the type of degree.

It shows that unemployment among job seekers with only a high school degree is 22.9 percent nationwide.

The highest national unemployment rate among degree holders was with architecture majors, who have a 13.9 percent unemployment rate, the study shows, followed by the arts (11.1 percent) and social sciences (8.9 percent).

The study also found that experienced college graduates in health care fields had lower unemployment rates than people with graduate degrees in every other field than life and physical sciences.

Select Maryland occupational growth projections

Occupation	Employment			Net job growth	Total
	2008	2018	Change		
Accountants and Auditors	25,445	32,055	6,610	4,300	10,910
Architecture and Engineering	62,015	70,170	8,160	13,085	21,335
Business & Financial Operations	155,990	181,755	25,765	30,555	56,460
Business Operations Specialists	96,170	110,645	14,475	20,620	35,115
Civil Engineers	7,270	9,490	2,220	1,230	3,445
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	44,455	51,330	6,875	9,430	16,300
Community and Social Services Occupations	36,845	42,505	5,660	8,025	13,730
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	102,850	122,635	19,785	18,860	39,380
Computer Specialists	97,125	116,185	19,060	17,180	36,980
Construction and Extraction Occupations	167,970	178,830	10,865	29,305	40,715
Construction Trades Workers	129,310	136,500	7,190	21,210	28,710
Counselors, Social Workers, and Other Community and Social Service Specialists	35,875	41,565	5,690	7,840	13,535
Customer Service Representatives	37,285	42,525	5,240	11,735	16,975
Education, Training, and Library	169,410	189,570	20,160	38,105	58,270
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	28,420	32,720	4,300	6,465	10,760
Engineers	39,020	44,780	5,760	8,585	14,345
Financial Clerks	63,130	68,105	4,975	12,205	17,405
Financial Specialists	59,820	71,105	11,290	9,935	21,345
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office and Administrative Support Workers	26,615	29,100	2,485	6,005	8,490
Food and Beverage Serving Workers	116,895	129,600	12,700	48,925	61,625
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	205,280	224,900	19,620	76,280	95,910
Grounds Maintenance Workers	24,615	31,035	6,415	2,960	9,380
Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners	99,650	118,910	19,260	18,315	37,575
Health Technologists and Technicians	47,820	56,900	9,080	10,995	20,075
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	150,600	179,310	28,710	30,355	59,070
Healthcare Support Occupations	68,560	84,595	16,035	7,665	23,790
Home Health Aides	10,385	15,150	4,765	1,035	5,795
Information and Record Clerks	94,775	101,870	7,095	27,620	37,585
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	105,090	111,605	6,515	21,210	28,305
Housekeeping Cleaners	48,250	52,685	4,435	9,115	13,555
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	22,035	27,645	5,610	2,650	8,260
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	42,455	50,420	7,960	12,790	20,780
Management Occupations	178,405	188,910	10,500	41,375	52,200
Medical Secretaries	10,190	12,245	2,055	1,375	3,425
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Vocational Education	15,730	18,040	2,310	3,575	5,890
Motor Vehicle Operators	69,295	72,515	3,220	12,345	15,565
Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts	9,915	14,460	4,540	1,780	6,325
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	30,640	36,320	5,680	3,050	8,730
Nursing, Psychiatric, and Home Health Aides	42,440	52,865	10,425	4,225	14,670
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	423,570	447,830	24,260	86,255	120,160
Office Clerks, General	68,550	75,540	6,990	9,340	16,330
Operations Specialties Managers	32,715	35,610	2,895	6,645	9,765
Other Education, Training, and Library Occupations	28,210	30,860	2,650	6,025	8,675
Other Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers	26,035	28,235	2,200	12,845	15,045
Other Healthcare Support Occupations	23,290	27,825	4,535	3,030	7,640
Other Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	52,975	57,805	4,835	10,270	15,370
Other Management Occupations	74,200	80,410	6,210	14,850	21,110
Other Office and Administrative Support Workers	92,660	96,810	4,150	13,580	20,595
Other Personal Care and Service Workers	39,035	46,180	7,145	8,855	16,000
Other Protective Service Workers	30,410	34,720	4,310	7,745	12,055
Personal Care and Service Occupations	84,135	96,780	12,640	20,890	33,655
Postsecondary Teachers	22,830	25,655	2,830	3,975	6,800
Primary, Secondary, and Special Education School Teachers	92,515	104,615	12,105	22,720	34,825
Protective Service Occupations	69,215	77,140	7,920	18,425	26,350
Registered Nurses	51,290	62,745	11,455	8,960	20,415
Retail Sales Workers	167,000	174,935	7,935	59,370	67,455
Retail Salespersons	80,910	86,590	5,680	22,570	28,250
Sales and Related Occupations	291,575	303,860	12,285	86,880	100,605
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	73,085	78,760	5,675	9,845	15,770
Security Guards	25,280	28,975	3,695	5,200	8,895
Social Scientists and Related Workers	13,810	16,585	2,775	4,145	6,940
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	33,905	36,845	2,935	7,810	10,745
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	151,890	154,285	2,395	36,440	41,980
Waiters and Waitresses	44,225	47,345	3,120	24,410	27,530

See LABOR 5

Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation; Office of Workforce Information and Performance; July 2010

Degrees >> Students not as susceptible to market trends when choosing majors

Continued from 3

"It may be in part because this recession is longer and deeper, but I don't know that," Wood said. "What I can say is that we don't seem to have that same effect that historically we used to get in a downturn."

University of Baltimore's students historically have been transfers, and the university only began accepting freshmen and sophomores in 2005.

"We've always been the kind of institution where people finished rather than where they started," Wood said. "Finding people who for any number of reasons — academic, social, financial — did not complete their degree and getting them completed is a great opportunity for the state."

University of Baltimore historically focuses on areas like law and public affairs, and though nationally law schools have "taken it on the chin," that hasn't been the case there, Wood said.

There also hasn't been any decline in those studying design and creative writing, and psychology remains a popular area of study, he said.

A recently added minor in popular culture has been a hit with students, as well, Wood said.

"The point is here, those of us in universities, we've always believed that a baccalaureate is not a vocational degree, but society... has driven people to think about a baccalaureate degree as vocational," Wood said.

Still, like many colleges and universities, the University of Baltimore stays aware of regional occupational opportunities in areas where it makes sense to expand.

For example, the university is developing a program in digital marketing, and already offers a doctoral program in information architecture, a different approach to traditional computer science.

"It's that concept of applied degrees, but without losing track of the liberal education core," Wood said.

Labor >> Colleges adding curricula in areas of expected job growth

Continued from 4

Job seekers with degrees in engineering, science, education and health care did best (5.4 percent) with psychology and social work second (7.3 percent).

Skills2Compete Maryland is O'Malley's vision for Marylanders to gain the skills and credentials they need to get good jobs with family-supporting wages, according to the website. The initiative finds state government working with industry partners from the fields of cybersecurity, environmental technology and aerospace to focus on training that can close skills gaps.

The website helps connect people with training, and offers ways to find money to help pay for it, and offers primers on ways people can pay for higher education.

Skills2Compete also partners with several entities — among them the Maryland Association of Community Colleges and the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

"Much of our curriculum is based on market availability in our region," said Sandra Kurtinitis, president at Community College of Baltimore County, which

Disciplines in which the most associate degrees were awarded by Maryland public and independent institutions

	2006-2007			2010-2011			% Change
	Rank	Number	%	Rank	Number	%	
General Studies Transfer	1	3,260	34%	1	4,433	35%	36%
Nursing (RN)	2	1,122	12%	2	1,531	12%	36%
Arts and Sciences Transfer	3	1,044	11%	3	1,462	12%	40%
Business Administration Transfer	4	877	9%	4	1,225	10%	40%
Teacher Education Transfer	5	334	3%	5	464	4%	39%
Business and Commerce Technologies	8	203	2%	6	242	2%	19%
Data Processing Technologies, General	7	204	2%	7	213	2%	4%
Mechanical and Engineering Technologies	6	218	2%	8	210	2%	-4%
Radiologic Technologies	9	175	2%	9	180	1%	3%
Accounting Technologies	10	161	2%	10	159	1%	-1%
Other, Public Service Related Technologies	11	160	2%	11	96	1%	-40%
All Others (48 disciplines)		1,898	20%		2,319	19%	22%
Total		9,656			12,534		30%

Includes all disciplines in which 2% or more of associate's degrees were granted in 2006-2007.

Dual degree awards have been excluded.

Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission

Disciplines in which the most baccalaureate degrees were awarded by Maryland public and independent institutions

	2006-2007			2010-2011			% Change
	Rank	Number	%	Rank	Number	%	
Business Management and Administration	1	2,018	9%	1	2,253	9%	12%
Psychology, General	2	1,477	7%	2	1,818	7%	23%
Biology, General	3	1,100	5%	3	1,240	5%	13%
Communications, General	6	851	4%	4	1,155	5%	36%
Nursing	4	972	4%	5	1,154	5%	19%
Accounting	9	658	3%	6	1,011	4%	54%
Information Sciences and Systems	5	936	4%	7	971	4%	4%
English, General	7	831	4%	8	883	3%	6%
Physical Education	16t	550	2%	9	751	3%	37%
Political Science and Government	12t	580	3%	10	676	3%	17%
Economics	10t	585	3%	11	662	3%	13%
History	10t	585	3%	12	651	3%	11%
Other Interdisciplinary	8	716	3%	13	647	3%	-10%
Business and Commerce, General	18	395	<2%	14t	615	2%	56%
Sociology	15	554	3%	14t	615	2%	11%
Criminology	16t	550	2%	16	588	2%	7%
Elementary Education, General	12t	580	3%	17	547	2%	-6%
Computer & Information Sciences, General	14	570	3%	18	482	2%	-15%
All Others (123 disciplines)		7,589	34%		8,887	35%	17%
Total		22,097			25,606		16%

Includes all disciplines in which 2% or more of baccalaureate degrees were granted in 2010-2011.

Dual degree awards have been excluded.

Source: Maryland Higher Education Commission

has seen a 40 percent rise in enrollment since 2007.

CCBC offers around 35 programs at different levels of health care profession training, from an eight-week home health aide training course all the way to a nursing or occupational therapy degree, Kurtinitis said.

At the same time that CCBC's enrollment improved, University System of Maryland has seen different trends, according to USM spokesman Mike Lurie.

The number of USM first-year, full-time, full-time undergraduates decreased for the third year in a row, Lurie said, going from a high of 13,213 in fall 2008 to 12,894 in fall 2009 to 12,547 in fall 2010 to 12,222 in fall 2011. That rapid decline means the USM first-time, full-time enrollment is now near the fall 2005 level before the Enrollment Funding Initiative, Lurie said.

The EFI was established by USM in collaboration with the governor's office and General Assembly to meet demands on universities' operating budgets as a result of increasing enrollments.

"Students are overwhelmingly looking for a major that they will be successful in and that will land them a good

job," said Sr. Christine De Vinne, vice president of academic affairs at Notre Dame of Maryland University. "They consider salary potential versus career dreams, looking for a field where they will find fulfillment. We encourage students to look at careers where they will excel, not simply ones where the highest salaries are."

"We always look to where our programs can be initiated or expanded to address an emerging need," De Vinne wrote in an email. "Responding to student interest and regional workforce trends, Notre Dame has introduced the graduate School of Pharmacy and new undergraduate programs focusing on the high-demand fields of environmental sustainability, international business, marketing communications, healthcare, and more."

With such a strong military presence, another area of growth in Maryland is cybersecurity.

"Maryland probably more than any other state is investing in all things that are cyber, including cybersecurity, so lots of us are trying to increase capacity to support student interest," said Joseph Wood, provost at the University of Baltimore, which is part of the USM.

With the help of a \$1.7 million county grant, CCBC has developed an aviation program so extensive that the Federal Aviation Administration sends its employees there for training, Kurtinitis said. The school envisioned about 25 air traffic control majors but has 327.

Notre Dame of Maryland University offers an environmental sustainability program that studies relationships between environmental concerns and social, political and economic institutions, De Vinne said. Students can choose to pursue the bachelor of arts degree with an emphasis on science, public policy, or sustainable entrepreneurship.

Even if students don't start out focusing on what will eventually become their life's work, they should stay open to possibilities.

"When students start college, they only have six possible future career paths in front of them," said Enriquez said. "That includes what their mom and dad do for a living, teachers, because they know teachers, and CSI investigators because they see them on TV. Nobody says, 'I'm going to grow up and be a systems analyst,' because they don't know what a systems analyst is."