

## A-State Enrollment Drops

**ERIC MCGEE**  
STAFF WRITER

Arkansas State University enrollments fell about 1.2%, according to the fall 2019 enrollment numbers. This ends a decade trend of growth in enrollments.

Last fall, Dr. Kelly Dampousse, chancellor, partially attributed the drop to decreasing college-going rates of high school graduates in Arkansas. The decrease in high school graduates attending college is a national trend and not unique to Arkansas.

According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, college enrollment in the U.S. has decreased for eight consecutive years. Arkansas and Missouri are among the top states with the largest enrollment decline. The decrease can be attributed to several factors.

Primarily, there is a rising skepticism as to whether the benefit of a 4-year degree is worth the cost. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, tuition has increased 7.4% per year from 1988 to 2018. That is more than twice the consumer price index during the same period.

Naturally, the rise in tuition leads to increases in student debt. Student loan debt has more than doubled over the last

10 years, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The Institute of College Access and Success says the average student loan debt for students graduating in 2018 was \$29,200.

Some experts point to alternative education paths as a reason why college enrollments are down. Many high school graduates are turning to one- or two-year technical/trade schools to kick start their careers. A certified plumber, welder or heating/air technician can make a lot more money than many college graduates. The cost of going to trade school is a fraction of what a 4-year college would cost.

The economy can have a major affect on college enrollment rates. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, undergraduate college enrollments tend to be

higher when the unemployment rate is high. A 2018 study by the Census Bureau shows that enrollment levels reached their peak in 2010 and 2011 when the unemployment rate was above 8%. By 2015, enrollment rates began to drop dramatically. The unemployment rate in 2015 was under 6%.

Dampousse gave many reasons for the 1.2% drop in enrollments at Arkansas State University. He attributed a 10% drop in international student enrollment to complications in acquiring visas.

However, there was some good news in the enrollment numbers. A-State managed to retain over 90% of the fall 2018 freshman class.



Image courtesy of A-State Instagram  
A student walks across the newly-green campus.

## Queretaro Campus

**DAKOTA MAGGARD**  
STAFF WRITER

About five years ago, A-State was working on creating a project in Mexico. Investors had spent roughly \$100 million to create an American style campus that was in Queretaro, Mexico. The campus contains dorms, athletic facilities, an outdoor swimming pool, a rugby team and even American football.

ASUCQ currently offers courses in biological sciences, biotechnology, chemistry, business administration, electrical engineering, international business, mechanical engineering and strategic communication. These courses work well for the area because Queretaro, Mexico has a large amount of businesses and distribution centers for new graduates to

work at. It also has managed to start off well, with its first year having about 214 students and now it's third year having 533.

This campus is unique in Mexico as it is the only one that offers both American and Mexican degrees. Recently, the campus has been dealing with their vice rector Dr. David Ray stepping down and Dr. Thillainatarajan "Thilla" Sivakumaran being placed as a temporary vice rector. Sivakumaran is to continue acting as a temporary vice rector until someone can be found to perform the role full-time.

Sivakumaran is the executive director of the division of global strategies and outreach. He's worked at A-State for 12 years. When asked what the position of vice rector entailed, Sivakumaran said, "it is similar to being a provost."

Sivakumaran added that

everything he has done in Mexico has been with the help of his team at A-State and on Campus Queretaro.

He also explained that he communicates almost every day and even visits the campus once every month. Until a new permanent vice rector is found, Sivakumaran will continue performing the role.



Image courtesy of A-State  
Dr. Thilla Sivakumaran

## Upcoming Events

<b>Feb. 27</b> Meat lab sale	A-State Meat Lab	12:30-5:30 p.m.
<b>Feb. 28</b> "God of Carnage"	Simpson Theatre	7:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>Feb. 29</b> Up 'Til Dawn benefit	Houlihan's	4-10 p.m.
<b>March 2</b> Blood Drive	Military Science	9 a.m.-6 p.m.
<b>March 3</b> Casino Night	Centennial Hall	7-10 p.m.
<b>March 4</b> Grade Center Cleanup	Dean B. Ellis Library, 301	9-11 a.m.

# CAMPUS CRIME

**MATTHEW WILLIAMS**  
NEWS WRITER

**Feb. 7 | 2:20 a.m.**

University Police officers patrolling the area around the intersection of University Loop and Danner Street noticed a car pull out from a parking lot behind them. As they drove, the officers noticed the car didn't have its headlights on, only the daytime running lamps.

The taillights and other lights weren't on either. They tried to slow down and allow the car to pass, to initiate a traffic stop, but the car switched lanes with them and kept the officers' speed even as they slowed. Calling for backup, another officer pulling out behind them from Dean Street was able to make the stop.

Approaching the vehicle, police noticed how strong the smell of alcohol in the car was. While an officer ran the information through dispatch, another officer tried to talk to the driver. The driver, Daniel Stephens, 19, gave varying responses to the officer's questions, telling them that the

car wasn't his, but rather his friend's. Asked where his friend was, he said, "Huh?" and shook his head. Then, he responded with, "He's right here." Further questions about his behavior were met with equal amounts of confusion from him.

In addition, officers noted that despite the lack of light in his face, and despite it being 2:20 a.m., Stephens was squinting hard through the duration of the conversation, and also slurring his speech. He denied having anything to drink, but was unable to correctly perform the field sobriety tests, and a breathalyzer test confirmed the presence of alcohol in his system.

He was taken to the Craighead County Detention Center, where a BAC exam reported a BAC level of .06 as a final result. He was given a court date and cited for underaged DUI and driving without headlamps. Stephens and his passengers also received University Referrals for alcohol and dishonesty violations.

**Feb. 7 | 11:30 p.m.**

A call was made to Univer-

sity Police in regards to marijuana smells at a room in the Pack Place apartments. Officers were dispatched to the room, where on arrival they were met in the hallway by the roommates of Malcolm Powell, 21.

They let them into the apartment. Upon entering, they noticed strong marijuana smells and they made contact with both Powell and Chelsea Taylor, 22. Powell told officers where to find the marijuana in the room, and he claimed ownership of the drugs.

Officers recovered a black container containing marijuana, as well as a rolled cigarette with marijuana, a grinder, raw papers, some packaged tobacco, and some used roaches (marijuana cigarette butts).

Powell was arrested and taken to the Craighead County Detention Center, where he was booked for possession of controlled substance VI as well as possession of drug paraphernalia, and given a court date. Powell and Taylor both received university referrals for drug violations.

## Racial Minority Discussion

As part of their "Dear A-State" series of discussions, SGA hosted a session geared toward racial minority groups. The purpose of "Dear A-State" is to create a place for students to voice their feelings to elected SGA senators. Students are able to attend and voice their opinions out loud, or write their concerns on an index card. "No problem is too little or too big for your Student Government!"

The next "Dear A-State" session will be March 10 and will be geared toward the LGBTQ+ community.

Images by Suemin Chae

Right: Sara Saucedo, a director of SGA Cultural Diversity, asks how programs can be improved.  
Below: Attendees visit before the meeting.  
Bottom: Attendees discuss issues of race.  
Diagonal Right: An attendee raises her hand to answer a question.

