



Fall Enrollment at Illinois Community Colleges Affected By Ongoing Pandemic; Graduation Rates Continue to Climb

October 16 2020 5:17 PM



SPRINGFIELD – Preliminary fall enrollment data shows fewer students are enrolling in community colleges across Illinois in the latest enrollment report compiled by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), released today.

The 2020 Fall Enrollment Report shows total fall enrollment throughout Illinois' Community College System is down 13.7 percent compared to last year, though three (3) community colleges showed an increase in enrollment for the fall semester. Preliminary data indicates enrollment of students over age 30 decreased at twice the rate as compared to students younger than 30.

While fall enrollments have declined in recent years, a focused commitment from colleges and innovative strategies in improving student success has resulted in a 36

percent increase in the graduation rate for first-time, full-time students since 2009. The number of graduates in the Illinois Community College System has increased considerably since 2001. Approximately 66,000 students graduated in 2020 compared to 38,420 in 2001.

“We’ve seen small but consistent declines in enrollment over the last several years, but 2020 has presented even greater challenges, especially for struggling adults who may have digital access issues and even greater constraints on their time,” said ICCB Executive Director Brian Durham.

Despite the implementation of measures at all Illinois community college campuses to ensure a safe instructional environment and substantial adjustments to instruction by moving many courses to remote or online modalities, the majority of Illinois’ Community Colleges report the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated issues, especially for a high number of at-risk students, ranging from fiscal to technological. Finalization of the student-level data in late-fall will allow ICCB to more fully analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on instructional areas, demographics, and other student characteristics.

SUMMARY OF OPENING FALL ENROLLMENT IN

ILLINOIS PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGES 2016-2020

Year

2016 - 304,173, minus 3.8 percent change
2017 - 293,417, minus 3.5 percent change
2018 - 283,415, minus 3.4 percent change
2019 - 271,336, minus 4.3 percent change
2020 - 234,132, minus 13.7 percent change

To help reduce the professional hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic for thousands of Illinoisans, community colleges are extending fiscal resources to students through Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and philanthropic funding to mitigate financial constraints to the extent possible.

The full report is accessible online at <https://tinyurl.com/y6l2x6bq>.

About the Illinois Community College Board

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state coordinating organization for the Illinois Community College System - the third largest in the country and the leading

public workforce development trainer in the state. The ICCB has statutory responsibility for administering state and federal grants to community college districts and adult education providers and managing high school equivalency testing for Illinois. Illinois community colleges serve over 600,000 residents each year in credit, noncredit, and continuing education courses. Illinois is home to 48 colleges in 39 community college districts which provide high quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities to the entire state.