

Many Illinois Community Colleges See Enrollment Increases In Fall 2021

October 26 2021 3:00 PM



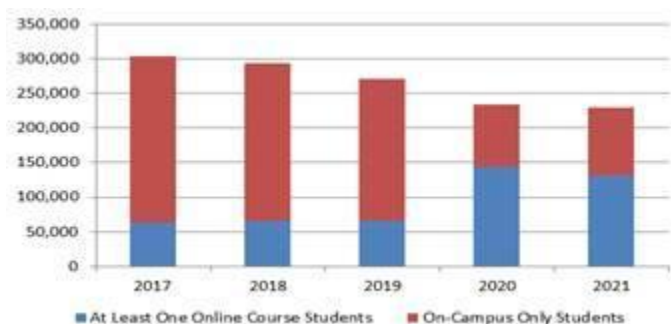
SPRINGFIELD – Despite major impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic to community colleges nationwide in 2020, preliminary data shows enrollment decline at Illinois community colleges is well below the national average with many of Illinois' 48 community colleges seeing enrollment increases in 2021 according to the latest fall enrollment report compiled by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

The 2021 Fall Enrollment Report shows total fall enrollment throughout Illinois' Community College System is down 1.5% overall compared to a 13.7 percent overall decline in 2020. That 1.5% is well below the national average of 5.6% and is the smallest rate decline for the Illinois Community College system overall since Fall 2010. The data also shows 17 Illinois community colleges saw enrollment increases in Fall 2021 compared to just three (3) for the 2020 fall semester.

“We are encouraged by our fall enrollment numbers and what they represent compared to the trends over the last several years where the annual rate of enrollment decline sat between 3%-4%. We believe this data signifies an upward trend in students returning to advance their educations at community colleges throughout Illinois in the years to come,” said ICCB executive director Brian Durham.

The report data suggests an increase in online access to classes as one potential reason for the increased enrollment at many community colleges compared to pre-pandemic years.

Online students accounted for 57% of the overall student population in fall 2021 and 62% of all students in the fall of 2020. In contrast, prior to the pandemic, online enrollments represented only 24% of the population in fall 2019, 22% in fall 2018, and 21% in fall 2017.



While fall enrollments have declined in recent years, the numbers of graduates in the Illinois Community College System have increased considerably since 2001 and 2006. The number of collegiate-level degrees and certificates awarded to Illinois community college students in academic year 2021 totaled 61,774 compared to 38,420 in 2001 and 49,627 in 2006.

The full report is accessible online at <http://www2.iccb.org/data/studies-reports/student-reports>.

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 that provide high-quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities to the entire state.