

Fall Freshmen Enrollment Up 5 Percent At Illinois Public Universities As Illinois Bucks Several National Trends

December 21 2022 9:44 AM



SPRINGFIELD – Today, the Illinois Board of Higher Education released its first look report at enrollment data from the state’s public universities for the fall semester of the 2022-23 academic year. Freshmen enrollment at Illinois’ public universities increased by a noteworthy 5% compared to the fall semester of the 2021-22 academic year. This

bucked the national trend which indicated a 2.4% decrease in freshmen enrollment at all public universities. Of Illinois' 12 public universities, nine reported an increase in freshmen enrollment.

Illinois outpaced national enrollment growth rate of African American and Latino freshmen with enrollment of Latino freshmen in Illinois increasing by a remarkable 12.9%, compared to a decrease of 0.7% at the national level. And while national data show that enrollment of African American freshmen decreased by 4.3%, in Illinois, enrollment of African American freshmen increased by a notable 10.5%.

“Here in Illinois, our universities are bouncing back—bucking national trends and exemplifying excellence at every turn,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “While other states battle dwindling enrollment numbers, our public universities are seeing extraordinary growth—largely driven by Black and Latino incoming freshmen. This just goes to show that when you invest in the young people of our state, the returns are exponential.”

First-Time Full-Time Undergraduates (Freshmen) at Illinois Public Universities (Headcount)

| | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 1-Year Change | 1-Year % Change |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------|-----------------|
| CSU | 181 | 144 | 148 | 157 | 9 | 6.1% |
| EIU | 876 | 890 | 770 | 858 | 88 | 11.4% |
| GSU | 227 | 202 | 189 | 288 | 99 | 52.4% |
| ISU | 3,835 | 3,324 | 3,355 | 3,974 | 619 | 18.5% |
| NEIU | 432 | 352 | 314 | 498 | 184 | 58.6% |
| NIU | 1,877 | 1,998 | 2,147 | 2,377 | 230 | 10.7% |
| SIUC | 1,019 | 1,322 | 1,387 | 1,486 | 99 | 7.1% |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| SIUE | 1,591 | 1,509 | 1,936 | 1,827 | -109 | -5.6% |
| UIC | 4,381 | 3,457 | 4,024 | 4,179 | 155 | 3.9% |
| UIS | 369 | 292 | 260 | 243 | -17 | -6.5% |
| UIUC | 7,660 | 7,474 | 8,273 | 7,946 | -327 | -4.0% |
| WIU | 831 | 1052 | 905 | 1062 | 157 | 17.3% |
| Totals | 23,279 | 22,016 | 23,708 | 24,895 | 1,187 | 5.0% |

“Closing enrollment and completion equity gaps for historically disadvantaged students is the core focus of state's strategic plan for higher education, and we are happy to see our efforts reflected in some of these data points,” said Board Chair John Atkinson. “Seeing increases in African American and Latino freshmen enrollment is crucial in meeting our equity goals and diversifying the state’s workforce, major and urgent tasks for Governor Pritzker and the Board.”

While national public university undergraduate enrollment decreased by 1.6%, undergraduate enrollment at Illinois’ public universities was down by only 1.3% year-over-year. African American and Latino undergraduate enrollment was flat year-over-year, which was better than the 3.5% and 0.8% decrease, respectively, reported for public universities nationally.

Graduate and professional enrollment at Illinois’ public universities increased by 1.3%, while the graduate enrollment for public universities nationally decreased by 0.3%.

“We are encouraged by the increases in freshmen enrollment of African American and Latino students and will work hard to ensure this positive trajectory continues,” said IBHE Executive Director Ginger Ostro. “We continue to work with the state’s public universities to ensure we are supporting and equitably serving students, especially those from underserved backgrounds, so they obtain their degrees, flourish in our state’s workforce and help our communities to thrive.”

The report also highlights trends in dual credit/dual enrollment, new full-time transfer students, and fall-to-fall retention by race/ethnicity for Illinois' public universities.

The report, IBHE First Look – Fall Enrollment 2022-23 – Illinois Public Universities, is available online and can be accessed [here](#).