



Press Release

Contact: José García | garcia@ibhe.org

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Freshmen Enrollment Increases at Illinois Public Universities for Third Consecutive Year

Illinois continues to outpace national enrollment growth rate of African American and Latino freshmen

SPRINGFIELD – Today, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) released its fall enrollment report for the state's public universities for the fall semester of the 2023-24 academic year showing Illinois, again, beat national trends. Total fall 2023 undergraduate enrollment at Illinois public universities increased 0.3 percent compared to the previous year, reversing several consecutive years of decreases, and freshmen enrollment at Illinois public universities increased by a noteworthy 1.5 percent compared to the fall semester of the 2021-22 academic year. This bucked freshmen enrollment at the national level which decreased 6.1 percent at all public universities. Fall 2023 marked the third consecutive year of growth in freshmen enrollment.

Enrollment of African American and Latino students increased in Illinois while enrollment of the same key groups dropped nationally. In Illinois, enrollment of African American freshmen increased by 2.9 percent, and African American undergraduate enrollment was up 0.5 percent year-over-year. This is in stark contrast to the national decrease of 5.1 percent for African American freshmen and decrease of 0.4 percent for African American undergraduate enrollment. Latino freshmen enrollment in Illinois increased by a robust 6.9 percent while it decreased by a sizeable 6.3 percent nationally. And, Latino undergraduate enrollment increased 4.1 percent year-over-year at Illinois public universities, which was higher than the national 2.5 percent increase reported.

"Once again, Illinois is bucking national trends and exceeding expectations with the third consecutive year of freshman enrollment growth at our public universities," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "Our state's higher education systems are bouncing back better than ever—a testament to smart fiscal management and a state budget that includes the largest increase for higher education in twenty-years and an all-time high for in-state scholarships totaling more than \$750 million. College affordability and equity go hand-in-hand, and I couldn't be prouder of the strides we are making to ensure that every student, especially those who have been historically locked out of higher education, has the opportunity to earn a degree."

"We are making Illinois the best state to get an education, which is evident in the increase in both undergraduate and freshman enrollment numbers. Illinois is delivering on our commitment to see a more inclusive and equitable education system and the increase in BIPOC students is only the beginning," **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton**. "We know that access to quality education is our greatest return on investment and our administration has made historic investments in MAP grant and public university funding. Investing in our young people is in an investment in our future."

"African American and Latino freshmen enrollment in Illinois again beat national trends, which tells us that statewide strategies like efforts to simplify admissions processes through the Common App and the governor's commitment to affordability through investment in MAP grants are making an impact," **said IBHE Chair Pranav Kothari**. "These enrollment patterns demonstrate our relentless commitment to equity and to changing the trajectories of all Illinoisans' lives."

“The enrollment increases of African American and Latino students are direct results of the equity work the state’s higher education system as a whole is doing to attract more students of color,” **said IBHE Executive Director Ginger Ostro**. “We are excited for what is ahead for our state’s higher education system as we continue to work with the state’s public institutions to implement strategies from the equity-centered strategic plan.”

Figure 1: Illinois Public University Headcount Enrollments
from Fall of Academic Year 2018-19 to 2023-24

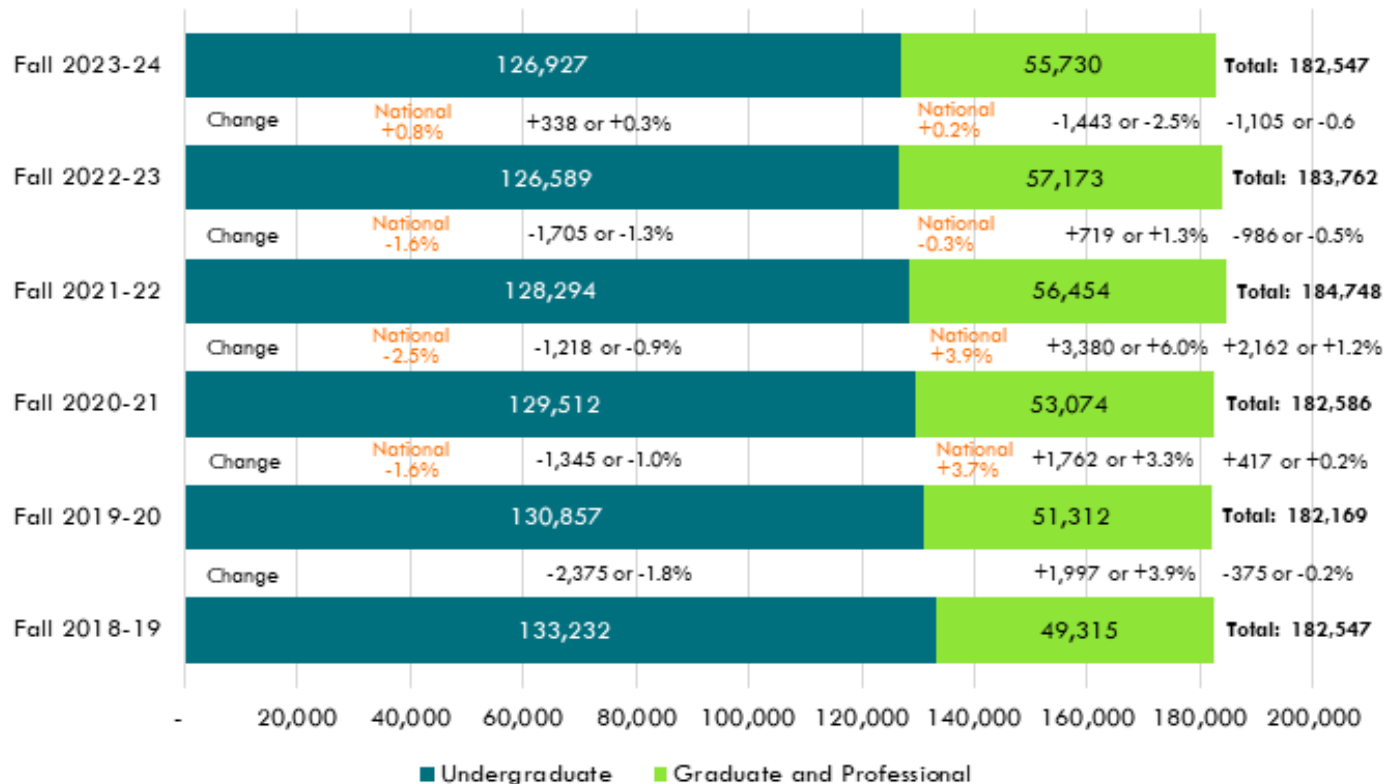


Table 3: First-Time Full-Time Undergraduates (Freshmen) at Illinois Public Universities (Headcount)

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	1-Year Change	1-Year % Change
CSU	181	144	148	157	155	-2	-1.3%
EIU	876	890	770	858	804	-54	-6.3%
GSU	227	202	189	288	247	-41	-14.2%
ISU	3,835	3,324	3,355	3,974	4,133	159	4.0%
NEIU	432	352	314	498	514	16	3.2%
NIU	1,877	1,998	2,147	2,377	2,179	-198	-8.3%
SIUC	1,019	1,322	1,387	1,486	1,580	94	6.3%
SIUE	1,591	1,509	1,936	1,827	1,580	-247	-13.5%
UIC	4,381	3,457	4,024	4,179	4,565	386	9.2%
UIS	369	292	260	243	254	11	4.5%
UIUC	7,660	7,474	8,273	7,946	8,316	370	4.7%
WIU	831	1052	905	1062	951	-111	-10.5%
Totals	23,279	22,016	23,708	24,895	25,278	383	1.5%

More than eight out of every 10 (80.3%) new freshmen at Illinois public universities who were enrolled in the fall of the 2022-23 academic year were still enrolled in the fall semester of 2023-24, continuing a strong retention trend.

The report, *IBHE First Look – Fall Enrollment 2023-24 – Illinois Public Universities*, is available online and can be accessed [here](#).

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