



## IBHE FIRST LOOK – FALL ENROLLMENT 2025-26

Illinois Public Universities

Preliminary Report: November 2025

### Highlights

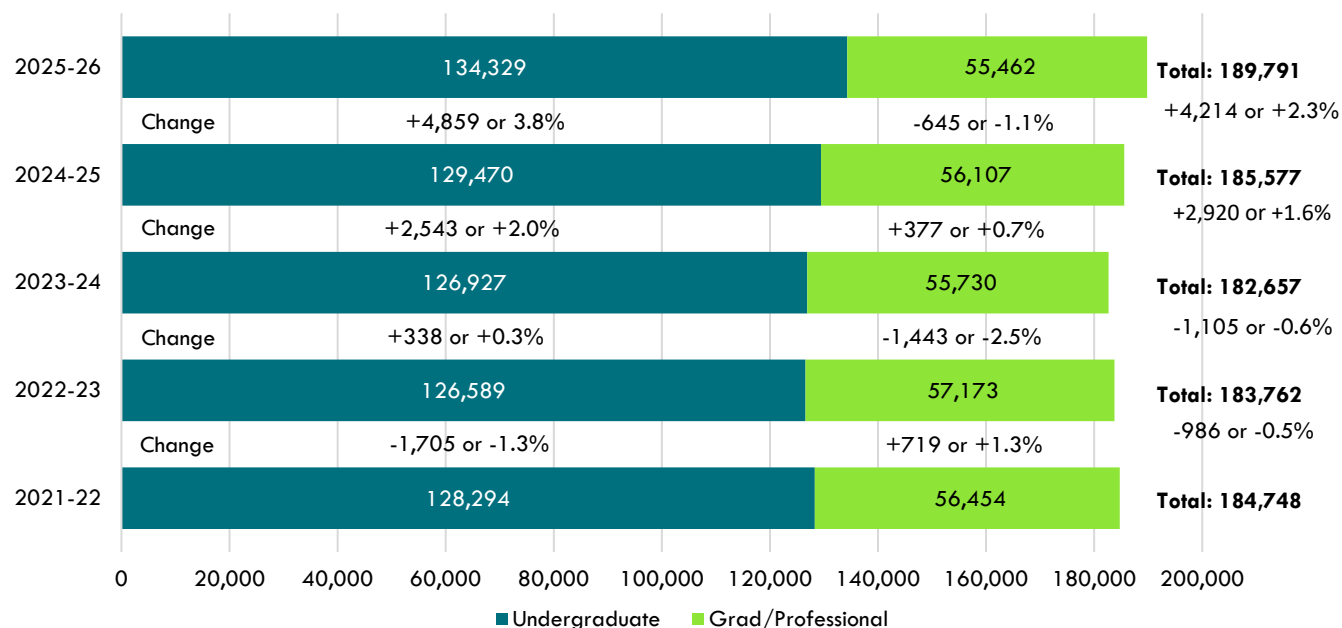
- **Overall Enrollment Growth:** Total enrollment increased by 2.3% (+4,214 students) to 189,791 – the highest number since 2015. This growth was driven entirely by undergraduates, as graduate/professional enrollment saw a slight decline.
- **Strong Undergraduate Increase:** The undergraduate population grew by 3.8% (+4,859 students). This growth was seen across all student types, including a 6.8% increase in first-time, full-time freshmen, a 6.5% increase in new full-time transfers, and a significant 18.1% jump in dual credit/dually enrolled students.
- **Significant Gains for Underrepresented Students:** Enrollment for African American and Latino students saw large increases. Total African American enrollment grew by 9.7% (+2,039 students), and total Latino enrollment grew by 8.3% (+2,491 students).
- **Drop in International Graduate Students:** While undergraduate international enrollment grew by 3.0%, this was overshadowed by a large 14.1% decrease in graduate/professional international students (-2,178 students). This led to an overall 6.5% decline in total international student enrollment.
- **Retention Rate Improvement:** The overall fall-to-fall retention rate for freshmen improved, rising to 82.7%. Retention gaps for underrepresented students narrowed; the gap between African American (65.1%) and White (87.5%) students closed by 3.0 percentage points, and the gap between Latino (80.0%) and White students closed by 4.0 percentage points.

### Overview

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) collaborates with Illinois public universities to provide an early look at fall enrollment. Aligned with IBHE's strong focus on equity as described in the 2021 strategic plan for higher education, [A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth](#), this report provides enrollment and retention data by race and ethnicity, as well as information on more nuanced enrollment types, like dual credit and new undergraduate transfers.

Illinois public universities increased the total number of students to 189,791 or up 2.3%. As shown in Figure 1, there were 4,214 more students in the fall of 2025 compared to fall of 2024. Illinois public universities continued a year-over-year undergraduate enrollment increase of 4,859 (3.8%). Graduate and professional enrollment decreased by 1.1%, losing 645 students. This is mainly due to a -14.1% drop in international graduate students (-2,178).

Figure 1. Illinois Public University Headcount Enrollments from Fall of Academic Year 2021-22 to 2025-26



**Undergraduate Enrollment.** As shown in Table 1, undergraduate enrollment was up 3.8% in the fall of academic year 2025-26. The increase represented 4,859 additional undergraduate students relative to academic year 2024-25.

New first-time, full-time undergraduates (generally freshmen) increased by 6.8% or 1,740 students, which was a larger percentage increase than that of new transfer students (+6.5% or 652 students). There was an 18.1% increase in the number of dual credit/dually enrolled students (+587 students). Continuing undergraduates, the largest category of undergraduate students, increased by 2.1% (+1,786 students).

Table 1. Undergraduate Enrollment Type for Illinois Public Universities (Headcount)

	2024-25	2025-26	1-Year Change	1-Year % Change
Dual Credit/ Dual Enrollment	3,239	3,826	587	18.1%
First-Time, Full-Time Undergrads	25,425	27,165	1,740	6.8%
New Full-Time Transfers	10,039	10,691	652	6.5%
Continuing Undergraduates	85,699	87,485	1,786	2.1%
New Part-Time Undergraduates	5,068	5,162	94	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>129,470</b>	<b>134,329</b>	<b>4,859</b>	<b>3.8%</b>

**Graduate and Professional Enrollment.** As shown previously in Figure 1, graduate and professional enrollment at Illinois public universities decreased by 1.1%, which represents 645 fewer students. The decrease in graduate and professional levels is a reversal from 2024-25 where there was an increase in enrollment (0.7%).

### Institutional Highlights and Detailed Enrollment

**Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment.** In the fall of 2025-26, ten public universities reported dual credit/dual enrollment students. As shown in Table 2, dual credit enrollment was up by 18.1% (+587 students). This was driven by modest year-over-year growth at Eastern Illinois University (EIU) and large proportional growth at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), which experienced an increase of 478 students from 129 in 2024-25 to 607 in 2025-26. The number of students enrolled in dual credit at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) decreased from 50 to 39. Illinois State University (ISU) experienced a decrease from 17 students to 11, and Western Illinois

University (WIU) experienced a decrease from 123 students to 115 students. At nearly 70%, EIU still accounts for the largest proportion (2,673 of 3,826 total) of dual credit enrollment among Illinois public universities.

*Table 2. Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment at Illinois Public Universities (Headcount)*

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	1-Year Change	1-Year % Change
<b>CSU</b>	0	0	62	80	110	126	16	14.5%
<b>EIU</b>	2,228	2,275	2,325	2,447	2,597	2,673	76	2.9%
<b>GSU</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.0%
<b>ISU</b>	16	8	11	7	17	11	-6	-35.3%
<b>NEIU</b>	29	12	98	105	169	156	-13	-7.7%
<b>NIU</b>	0	0	0	0	1	0	-1	0.0%
<b>SIUC</b>	2	3	5	7	0	0	0	0.0%
<b>SIUE</b>	0	0	0	95	129	607	478	370.5%
<b>UIC</b>	0	0	16	41	50	39	-11	-22.0%
<b>UIS</b>	11	0	0	0	0	37	37	0.0%
<b>UIUC</b>	91	94	71	51	43	61	18	41.9%
<b>WIU</b>	86	126	113	86	123	115	-8	-6.5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,463</b>	<b>2,518</b>	<b>2,701</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>3,239</b>	<b>3,826</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>18.1%</b>

**First-Time, Full-Time Undergraduates.** Fall 2025 marked the fifth consecutive year of growth and the highest recent number of full-time freshmen at Illinois public universities, representing 27,165 new freshmen. This reverses the pandemic low from the fall of academic year 2020-21. The year-over-year growth in freshmen enrollment varied across the Illinois public universities and resulted in the recent high-water mark for freshmen enrollment at several Illinois public universities. The top three universities driving this increase with the largest year-over-year growth in student numbers were: UIC with an increase of 975 freshmen, NIU which added 431, and SIUE, which grew by 270 students. With 4,244 freshmen, ISU experienced a decrease in 2025-26. Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) grew its freshmen class and experienced an annual increase of 3.8%. Freshmen enrollment at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC) increased 2.2%, to 9,198 students. Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) enrolled 1,503 new freshmen in 2025-26.

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

	2024-25	2025-26	1-Year Change	1-Year % Change
<b>CSU</b>	135	286	151	111.9%
<b>EIU</b>	784	787	3	0.4%
<b>GSU</b>	243	292	49	20.2%
<b>ISU</b>	4,316	4,244	-72	-1.7%
<b>NEIU</b>	504	523	19	3.8%
<b>NIU</b>	1,979	2,410	431	21.8%
<b>SIUC</b>	1,739	1,503	-236	-13.6%
<b>SIUE</b>	1,556	1,826	270	17.4%
<b>UIC</b>	4,356	5,331	975	22.4%
<b>UIS</b>	257	309	52	20.2%
<b>UIUC</b>	9,000	9,198	198	2.2%
<b>WIU</b>	556	456	-100	-18.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25,425</b>	<b>27,165</b>	<b>1,740</b>	<b>6.8%</b>

**New Full-Time Transfer Students.** New full-time transfer enrollment was up over six percent (+6.5%) from the previous year. Eight of the 12 Illinois public universities experienced year-over-year growth in new transfers. CSU experienced the most growth with an increase of over fifty percent (+50.6%), followed by SIUE with an increase of 20.6%, and NEIU with an increase of 19.6%. UIC also saw measurable increases of 18.7%. NIU, EIU, UIUC, and UIS experienced increases of new transfer students at more modest levels of 7.7%, 5.5%, 4.4%, and 2.5%, respectively.

Table 4. New Full-Time Transfer Students at Illinois Public Universities (Headcount)

	2024-25	2025-26	1-Year Change	1-Year % Change
<b>CSU</b>	160	241	81	50.6%
<b>EIU</b>	380	401	21	5.5%
<b>GSU</b>	354	352	-2	-0.6%
<b>ISU</b>	1,605	1,547	-58	-3.6%
<b>NEIU</b>	424	507	83	19.6%
<b>NIU</b>	1,238	1,333	95	7.7%
<b>SIUC</b>	1,025	894	-131	-12.8%
<b>SIUE</b>	761	918	157	20.6%
<b>UIC</b>	1,773	2,104	331	18.7%
<b>UIS</b>	314	322	8	2.5%
<b>UIUC</b>	1,525	1,592	67	4.4%
<b>WIU</b>	480	480	0	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10,039</b>	<b>10,691</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>6.5%</b>

**Continuing Undergraduate Students** For the 2025-26 academic year, there were 1,786 additional continuing undergraduate students (+2.1% year-over-year).

Table 5. Continuing Undergraduate Students at Illinois Public Universities (Headcount)<sup>1,2</sup>

	2024-25	2025-26	1-Year Change	1-Year % Change
<b>CSU</b>	896	868	-28	-3.1%
<b>EIU</b>	2,948	2,783	-165	-5.6%
<b>GSU</b>	1,850	1,847	-3	-0.2%
<b>ISU</b>	13,432	13,519	87	0.6%
<b>NEIU</b>	2,668	2,680	12	0.4%
<b>NIU</b>	7,896	8,061	165	2.1%
<b>SIUC</b>	4,481	4,775	294	6.6%
<b>SIUE</b>	6,225	6,379	154	2.5%
<b>UIC</b>	15,371	15,932	561	3.6%
<b>UIS</b>	1,512	1,498	-14	-0.9%
<b>UIUC</b>	25,660	26,612	952	3.7%
<b>WIU</b>	2,760	2,531	-229	-8.3%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>85,699</b>	<b>87,485</b>	<b>1,786</b>	<b>2.1%</b>

<sup>1</sup> The decline in continuing student headcount and retention coincides with expanded transfer opportunities introduced by the NCAA's one-time transfer exception in April 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Due to the large enrollment decline between Fall 2024 and Fall 2025, WIU has consolidated academic units (from four to two) for efficiency and financial savings.

**Graduate and Undergraduate Enrollment Summary** As shown in Table 6, total enrollment increased by 2.3%, with a 3.8% increase at the undergraduate level along with a 1.1% decrease in graduate/professional enrollments. Eight of the twelve Illinois public universities experienced undergraduate enrollment growth: CSU (15.0%), SIUE (10.7%), UIC (7.9%), NIU (6.7%), UIUC (3.9%), NEIU (2.5%), GSU (1.6%), and UIS (1.2%).

The largest undergraduate enrollment decreases were demonstrated by WIU (-2.6%) and EIU (-2.5%). Other institutions demonstrated lesser decreases between 0.5% and 1.1%.

At the graduate level, Illinois enrollment decreased by 1.1%. Six of the twelve public universities experienced growth in graduate/professional enrollment compared to Fall 2024-2025. The largest growth was demonstrated by SIUC with a 4.1% increase. CSU, ISU, UIC, NEIU, and UIUC experienced growth between 0.8% and 2.3%.

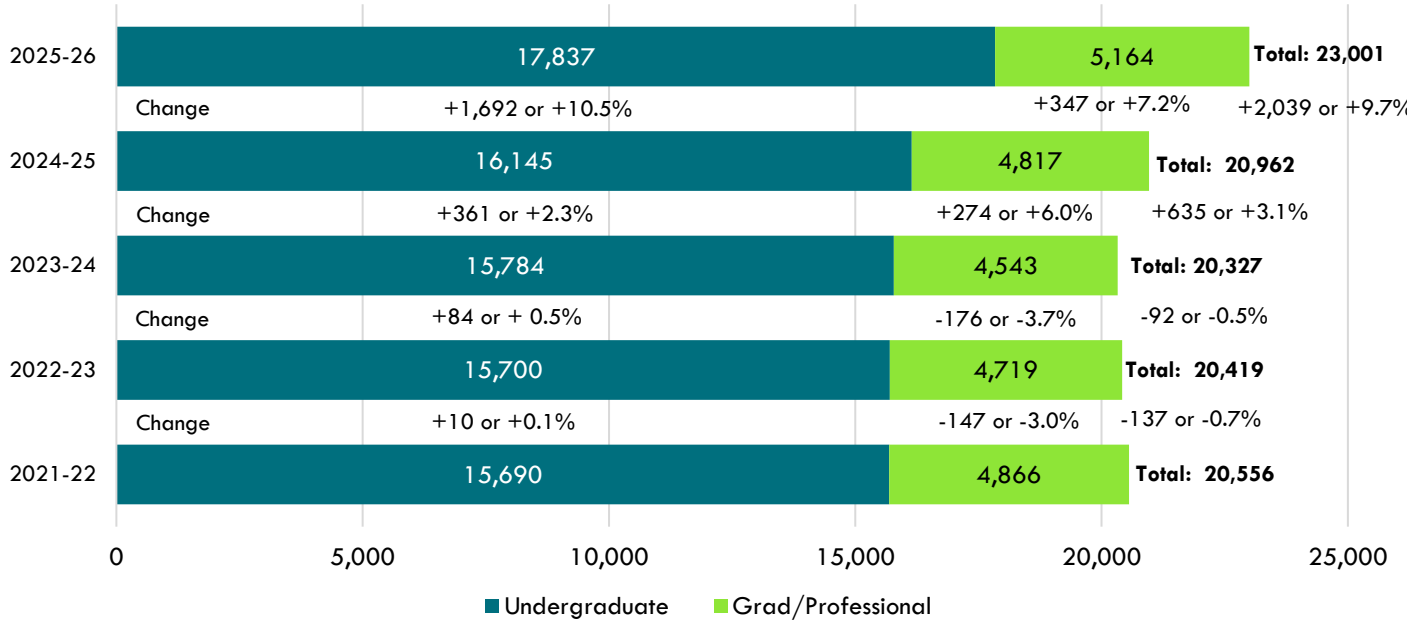
*Table 6. Enrollments and Year to Year Change (Headcount)*

	Fall 2023-24	Fall 2024-25			Fall 2025-26			Year to Year % Change		
	Total	Undergrad	Grad	Total	Undergrad	Grad	Total	Undergrad	Grad	Total
<b>CSU</b>	2,295	1,495	733	2,228	1,719	750	2,469	15.0%	2.3%	10.8%
<b>EIU</b>	8,804	6,799	1,720	8,519	6,631	1,376	8,007	-2.5%	-20.0%	-6.0%
<b>GSU</b>	4,338	2,579	1,826	4,405	2,621	1,733	4,354	1.6%	-5.1%	-1.2%
<b>ISU</b>	20,989	19,597	2,439	22,036	19,500	2,481	21,981	-0.5%	1.7%	-0.2%
<b>NEIU</b>	5,504	4,197	1,508	5,705	4,302	1,532	5,834	2.5%	1.6%	2.3%
<b>NIU</b>	15,504	11,350	4,066	15,416	12,111	3,960	16,071	6.7%	-2.6%	4.2%
<b>SIUC</b>	11,359	8,523	3,237	11,760	8,428	3,369	11,797	-1.1%	4.1%	0.3%
<b>SIUE</b>	12,045	8,967	2,945	11,912	9,925	2,888	12,813	10.7%	-1.9%	7.6%
<b>UIC</b>	33,522	22,491	11,411	33,902	24,260	11,609	35,869	7.9%	1.7%	5.8%
<b>UIS</b>	4,661	2,309	2,319	4,628	2,337	2,027	4,364	1.2%	-12.6%	-5.7%
<b>UIUC</b>	56,563	37,136	22,098	59,234	38,572	22,276	60,848	3.9%	0.8%	2.7%
<b>WIU</b>	7,073	4,027	1,805	5,832	3,923	1,461	5,384	-2.6%	-19.1%	-7.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>182,657</b>	<b>129,470</b>	<b>56,107</b>	<b>185,577</b>	<b>134,329</b>	<b>55,462</b>	<b>189,791</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>

### Enrollment Patterns by Race/Ethnicity

**Enrollment of African American Students.** Overall, African American enrollment increased by 9.7% (+2,039 students) to 23,001 students in 2025-26. Undergraduate enrollment of African American students increased year-over-year by 10.5% (an increase of 1,692 students). See Figure 2. Graduate and professional enrollment of African American students increased by 347 (7.2%) to 5,164 students, continuing the increase from the previous year.

Figure 2. Headcount Enrollment of African American Students at Illinois Public Universities



A breakdown of African American enrollments by each of the public universities can be seen in Table 7. Between academic years 2024-25 and 2025-26, SIUE experienced the largest undergraduate growth with a 37.4% increase, followed by CSU (+23.8%), NEIU (+22.6%), and UIC (+17.1%).

There are 5,164 African American graduate students enrolled in 2025-26, a 7.2% increase. African American graduate data were strengthened by ISU's 20.3% increase followed by SIUC (+16.9%), CSU (+14.3%), and UIC (+11.1%).

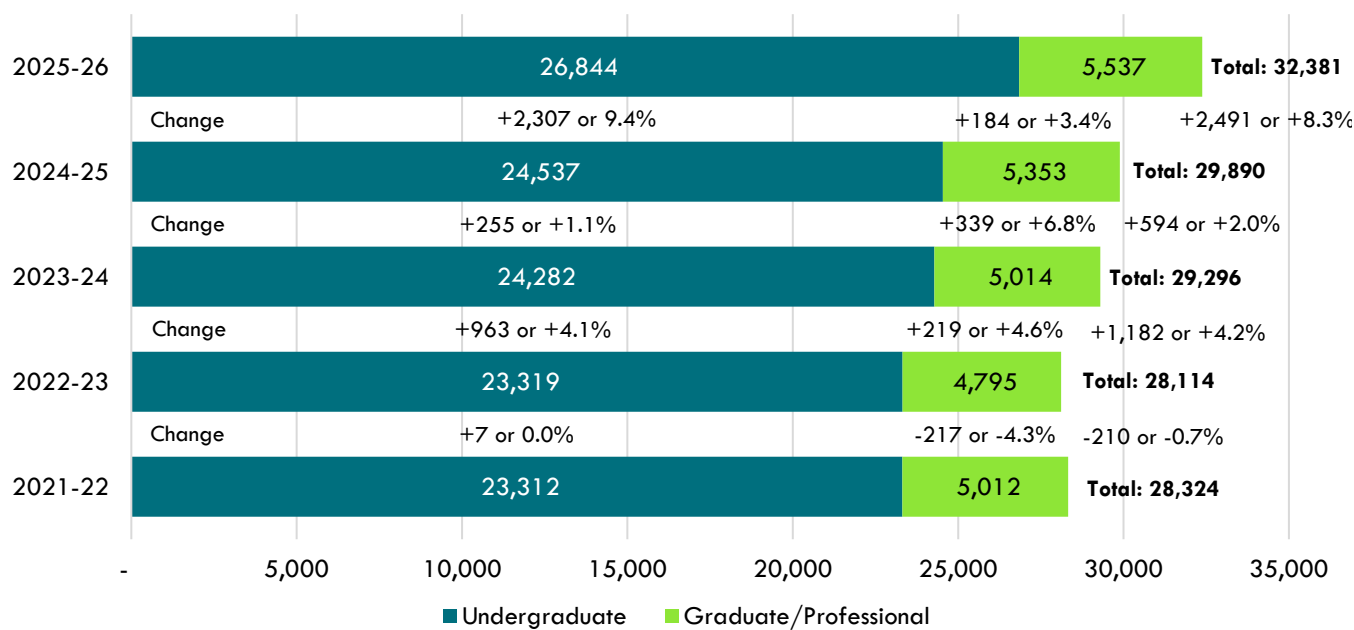
Table 7. African American Enrollments and Year to Year (Headcount)

	Fall 2024-25			Fall 2025-26			Year to Year % Change		
	Undergrad	Grad	Total	Undergrad	Grad	Total	Undergrad	Grad	Total
<b>CSU</b>	1,055	398	1,453	1,306	455	1,761	23.8%	14.3%	21.2%
<b>EIU</b>	869	88	957	879	92	971	1.2%	4.5%	1.5%
<b>GSU</b>	1,030	523	1,553	1,046	562	1,608	1.6%	7.5%	3.5%
<b>ISU</b>	2,598	177	2,775	2,844	213	3,057	9.5%	20.3%	10.2%
<b>NEIU</b>	483	109	592	592	118	710	22.6%	8.3%	19.9%
<b>NIU</b>	2,382	360	2,742	2,712	344	3,056	13.9%	-4.4%	11.5%
<b>SIUC</b>	1,466	379	1,845	1,442	443	1,885	-1.6%	16.9%	2.2%
<b>SIUE</b>	1,357	298	1,655	1,864	324	2,188	37.4%	8.7%	32.2%
<b>UIC</b>	1,829	1,160	2,989	2,141	1,289	3,430	17.1%	11.1%	14.8%
<b>UIS</b>	320	281	601	347	274	621	8.4%	-2.5%	3.3%
<b>UIUC</b>	1,944	904	2,848	2,018	944	2,962	3.8%	4.4%	4.0%
<b>WIU</b>	812	140	952	646	106	752	-20.4%	-24.3%	-21.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,145</b>	<b>4,817</b>	<b>20,962</b>	<b>17,837</b>	<b>5,164</b>	<b>23,001</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>

**Enrollment of Latino Students** As shown in Figure 3, total Latino student enrollment reached a new peak of 32,381, after an increase of 8.3% (+2,491 students). Latino undergraduate enrollment was up by 9.4% or 2,307 additional students, also a new high of 26,844 students.

At the graduate/professional level, enrollment of Latino students increased by 3.4% (+184 students), reflecting the largest graduate enrollment since at least fall of 2021.

*Figure 3. Headcount Enrollment of Latino Students at Illinois Public Universities*



As shown in Table 8, in academic year 2025-26, EIU experienced the largest percentage increase in Latino undergraduates at 83.8%, followed by SIUE at 22.1%, NIU (+11.5%) and UIC (+10.2%).

Latino undergraduate enrollments decreased at CSU and WIU by -17.6% and -10.3% respectively. NEIU and UIS also showed declines (-5.8% and -3.3%).

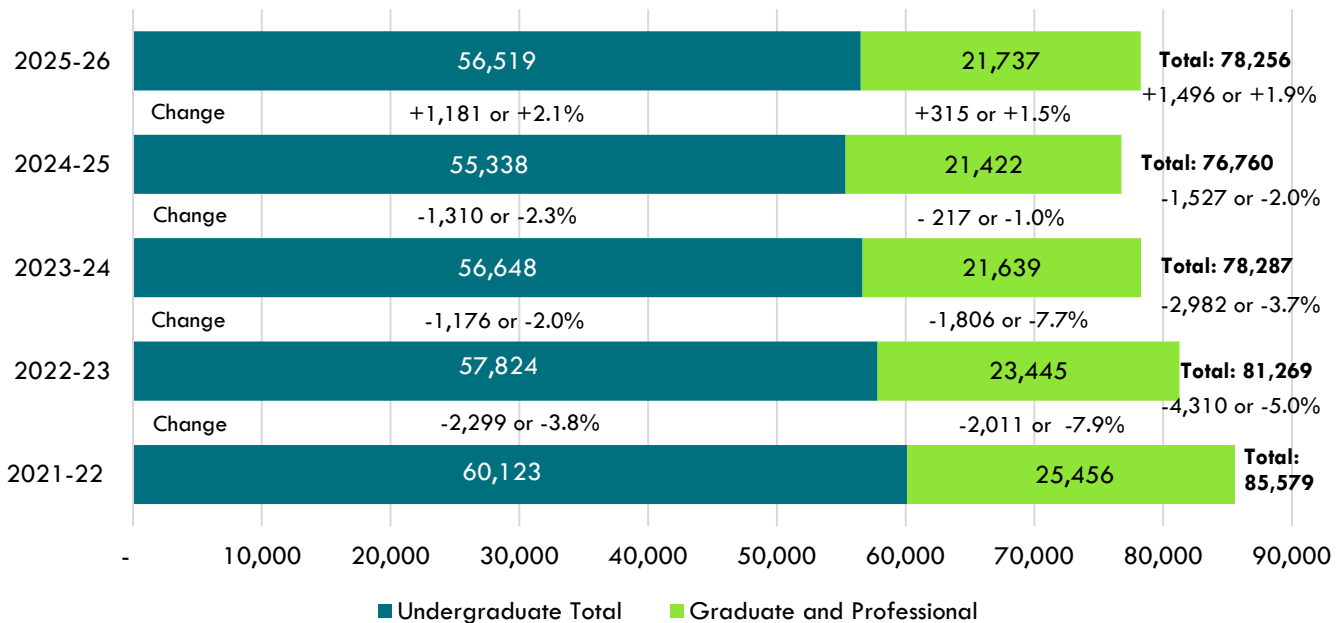
Latino total enrollments (undergraduates and graduates) showed strong student increases with EIU (+80.3%), SIUE (+17.9%) and SIUC (+13.9%) leading the way.

Table 8. Latino Enrollments and Year to Year (Headcount)

	Fall 2024-25			Fall 2025-26			Year to Year % Change		
	Undergrad	Grad	Total	Undergrad	Grad	Total	Undergrad	Grad	Total
<b>CSU</b>	74	24	107	61	19	80	-17.6%	-20.8%	-25.2%
<b>EIU</b>	660	71	714	1,213	74	1,287	83.8%	4.2%	80.3%
<b>GSU</b>	506	211	709	500	219	719	-1.2%	3.8%	1.4%
<b>ISU</b>	2,721	174	2,895	2,909	209	3,118	6.9%	20.1%	7.7%
<b>NEIU</b>	2,142	624	2,788	2,017	533	2,550	-5.8%	-14.6%	-8.5%
<b>NIU</b>	2,917	490	3,407	3,253	514	3,767	11.5%	4.9%	10.6%
<b>SIUC</b>	855	182	1,020	936	226	1,162	9.5%	24.2%	13.9%
<b>SIUE</b>	579	126	705	707	124	831	22.1%	-1.6%	17.9%
<b>UIC</b>	8,023	1,679	9,702	8,844	1,777	10,621	10.2%	5.8%	9.5%
<b>UIS</b>	271	132	403	262	133	395	-3.3%	0.8%	-2.0%
<b>UIUC</b>	5,266	1,513	6,779	5,673	1,597	7,270	7.7%	5.6%	7.2%
<b>WIU</b>	523	127	661	469	112	581	-10.3%	-11.8%	-12.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,537</b>	<b>5,353</b>	<b>29,890</b>	<b>26,844</b>	<b>5,537</b>	<b>32,381</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>

**Enrollment of White Students** As shown in Figure 4, overall, there was an increase of 1,496 white students enrolled in academic year 2025-26, representing a 1.9% gain. Undergraduate enrollment of white students increased by 2.1%, an increase of 1,181 students, while white graduate enrollment increased by 315 students (+1.5%).

Figure 4. Headcount Enrollment of White Students at Illinois Public Universities

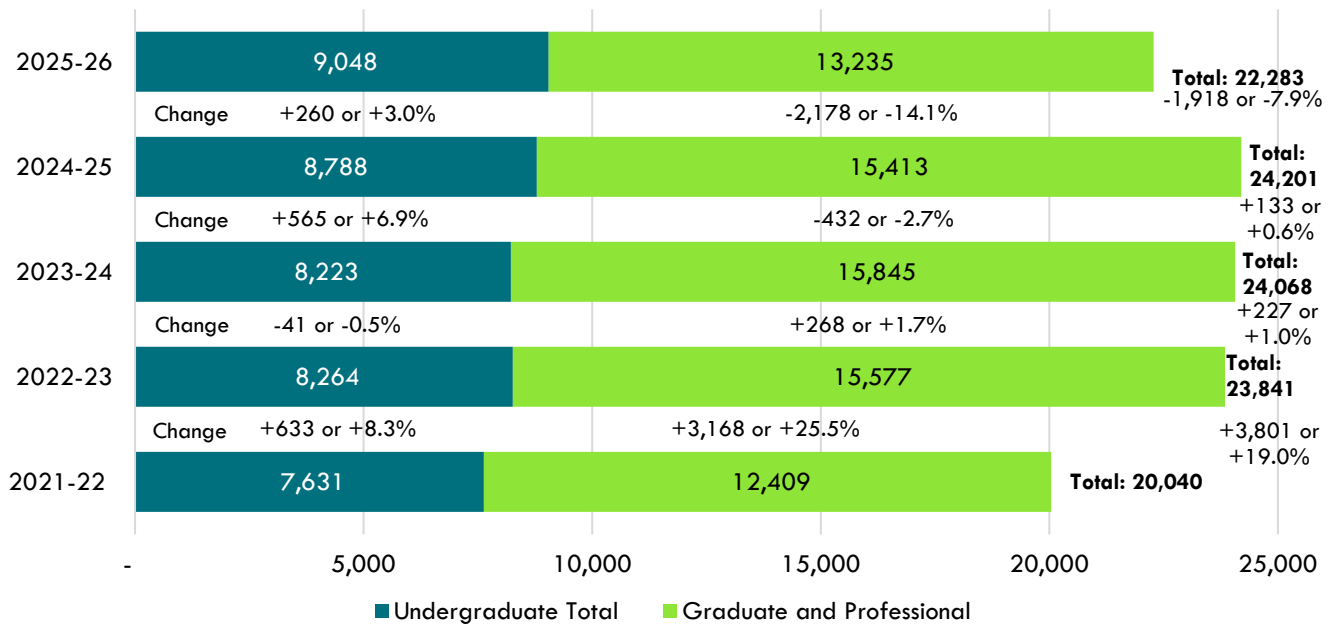


**Enrollment of International Students** As shown in Figure 5, overall enrollment of international students decreased by 1,918 to 22,283 students (-7.9%) in 2025-26. Undergraduate levels continued last year's increase with an increase of 3.0% (260 students).

However, enrollment of international graduate/professional students decreased by 14.1%, or 2,178 fewer graduate international students in fall of 2025-26.



Figure 5. Headcount Enrollment of International Students at Illinois Public Universities



**Fall to Fall Retention by Race/Ethnicity.** As shown in Table 9, more than eight out of every 10 (82.7%) new freshmen at Illinois public universities who were enrolled in the fall of 2024-25 were still enrolled in the fall semester of 2025-26 (reported as 2025). This rate was close to that of the prior year, which was 81.3%. When retention rates were disaggregated by race/ethnicity, clear disparities emerged. Institutions retained African American undergraduates at 65.1%, which was 22.4 percentage points below the rate for white peers (87.5%). However, this gap narrowed by 3.0 percentage points from the previous year. Institutions retained Latino undergraduates (80.0%) at 7.5 percentage points below white undergraduates. After Asian undergraduates (93.0%), white students had the third-highest rate (87.5%) of retention among all groups. The drop in retention rates for American Indian / Alaska Native students represented the most significant equity concern, with a 12.7 percentage point decline (from 78.3% to 65.6%). As a side note, the increase for students who are Missing / Not Reported would make them the second highest retained ‘group’ with a jump of 9.7 percentage points. Since 2023, retention rates have increased overall by 2.4 percentage points. African American and Latino students have experienced the largest gains in retention, with increases of 5.9 and 4.7 percentage points respectively.

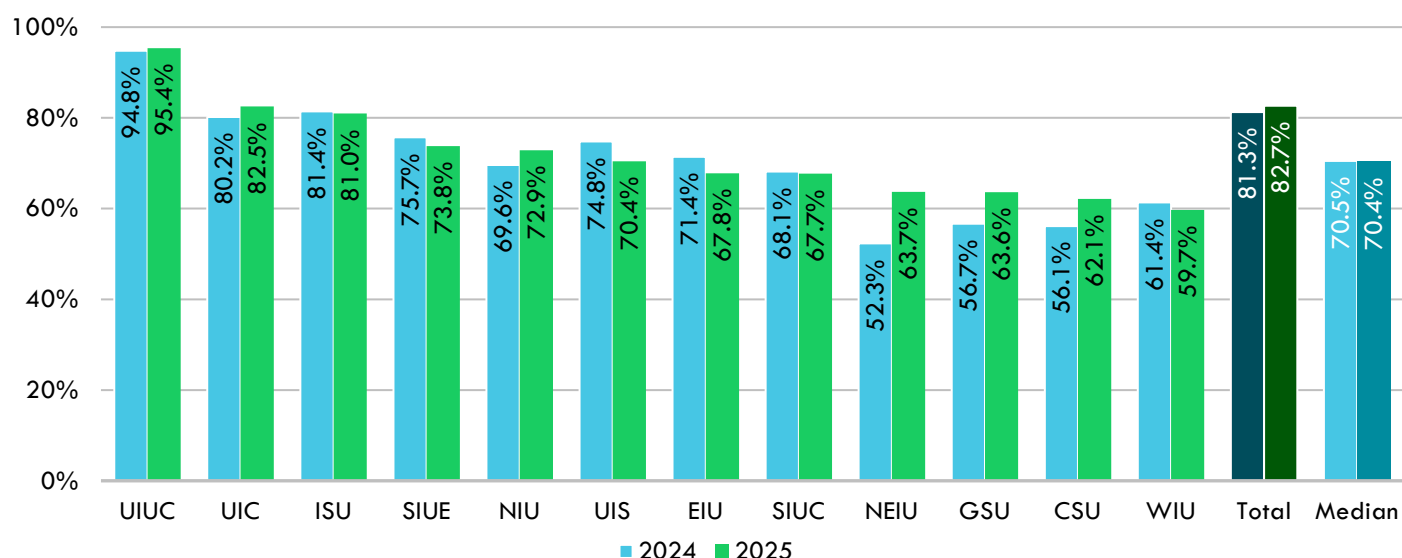
Table 9. Fall to Fall Retention by Race / Ethnicity at Illinois Public Universities

	2023	2024	2025	Annual Change
<b>All</b>	<b>80.3%</b>	<b>81.3%</b>	<b>82.7%</b>	<b>↑ +1.4%</b>
African American	59.2%	61.8%	65.1%	↑ +3.3%
American Indian / Alaska Native	62.5%	78.3%	65.6%	↓ -12.7%
Asian	91.9%	93.3%	93.0%	↓ -0.2%
Latino	75.3%	75.7%	80.0%	↑ +4.3%
White	86.5%	87.2%	87.5%	↑ +0.3%
2+ Races	80.5%	85.2%	83.6%	↓ -1.6%
International Students	85.8%	85.4%	83.2%	↓ -2.2%
Missing / Not Reported	81.1%	80.9%	90.6%	↑ +9.7%

**Fall to Fall Retention by Institution.** As shown in Figure 6, there was variation across the 12 Illinois public universities in retention of new freshmen from fall of academic year 2023-24 to fall of 2025-26 (reported as 2025). UIUC continued to have the highest retention rate at 95.4% followed by UIC at 82.5%. WIU had the lowest

rate at 59.7%, but NEIU experienced the largest positive change of 11.4 percentage points from the previous year.

Figure 6. Fall to Fall Retention by Illinois Public University<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The decline in continuing student headcount and retention coincides with expanded transfer opportunities introduced by the NCAA's one-time transfer exception in April 2021.

## Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

**African American:** African American undergraduate enrollment increased by 10.5% at Illinois public universities, with males experiencing 11.2% growth and females 10.0% growth (See Table 10). Enrollment of African American freshmen increased by 12.0% year-over-year, with African American females and males both driving the growth (12.0% and 12.0%, respectively). Enrollment of African American transfer students increased dramatically by 21.5%, with both African American males and females demonstrating large increases of 34.1% and 13.9%, respectively.

**Asian:** Undergraduate enrollment of Asian students at Illinois public universities increased by 4.2%. Asian female students increased by 3.4% and Asian males increased by 4.9%. However, freshmen Asian students saw negative growth, with Asian males decreasing the numbers to -0.6% and a total decrease of -2.5%. New transfer students experienced an overall 2.1% surge, with Asian male transfer students (11.9%) boosting the total numbers.

**Latino:** Enrollment of Latino students increased across all enrollment types for both males and females (9.4%). Unlike the previous year, enrollment of freshmen Latinos increased by 14.3% in 2025-26. New Transfers of Latino females and males increased by 11.8% and 15.7%, respectively.

**White:** Enrollment of white students increased across nearly all enrollment types, with an increase in freshmen enrollment (2.8%), especially females (3.4%). Total new transfer white students increased by 1.0%.

**International:** International students demonstrated different numbers with an overall undergraduate enrollment of 3.0%. Total freshmen international students had 0.0% growth. Enrollment of international new transfer students decreased by 19.0%.

**Professional/Graduates:** Professional student enrollment grew between 3.4% and 8.5% for all racial/ethnic groups, except for white and international students. Enrollment of African American graduate students increased by 7.2%. Similarly, enrollment of Latino graduate students increased by 3.4%, as did enrollment of Asian graduate students with an 8.5% increase. Enrollment of white graduate students increased, and the gap is smaller in 2025-

26 (total: 1.5%) than in 2023-24 (-7.7%). Enrollment of international professional students decreased year-over-year 1.7% in the previous year to -14.1% in 2025-26.

Table 10. Gender and Race Headcounts from 2024-25 to 2025-26

		Undergraduates		Freshmen		New Transfers		Grad/ Professional	
African American	Female		10.0%		12.0%		13.9%		6.4%
	Male		11.2%		12.0%		34.1%		9.1%
	Total		10.5%		12.0%		21.5%		7.2%
Asian	Female		3.4%	-4.6%		-8.3%			4.6%
	Male		4.9%	-0.6%			11.9%		12.7%
	Total		4.2%	-2.5%			2.1%		8.5%
Latino	Female		8.8%		14.3%		11.8%		2.7%
	Male		10.2%		14.4%		15.7%		4.7%
	Total		9.4%		14.3%		13.6%		3.4%
White	Female		2.3%		3.4%		0.2%	-0.6%	
	Male		2.0%		2.0%		1.9%		4.6%
	Total		2.1%		2.8%		1.0%		1.5%
International	Female		5.2%		0.8%	-19.8%		-11.3%	
	Male		1.6%	-0.5%		-18.4%		-6.1%	
	Total		3.0%	0.0%		-19.0%		-14.1%	
Total	Female		3.7%		7.2%		4.2%	-0.9%	
	Male		3.8%		6.4%		9.1%	-1.4%	
	Total		3.8%		6.8%		6.5%	-1.1%	

**Conclusion.** For Academic Year 2025-26, the data points to significant increases in creating and strengthening pathways for all Illinois students at public universities. Enrollment growth is not isolated to one or two flagships. Instead, eight of the twelve public universities reported growth in their undergraduate populations.

The robust 18.1% growth in dual credit enrollment and the 6.5% growth in new transfers demonstrate a healthy and expanding pipeline from K-12 and community colleges. The impressive 9.7% growth for African American students and 8.3% growth for Latino students – coupled with the measurable narrowing of the freshman retention gaps for both groups – signals meaningful progress toward the goals outlined in the *A Thriving Illinois* strategic plan.

### Appendix: Methodology

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) collects fall enrollment data with a standardized, statewide process involving the Illinois Higher Education Information System (IHEIS) and the annual IBHE Fall Enrollment Survey. All 12 public universities in Illinois participate in this process by reporting official student enrollments as measured on the 10th day of the fall semester, commonly referred to as the census date. The 10-day census count provides a consistent and comparable institutional snapshot for enrollment trends and is widely recognized and used as a benchmark both within Illinois and nationally. Data is submitted for every student enrolled for credit, including undergraduates, graduates, dual credit participants, transfers, and non-degree students. IBHE specifies that participating universities must include students regardless of modality (in-person or online), degree-seeking status, or program level.

The IHEIS system, administered by IBHE as part of Illinois' Longitudinal Data System (ILDS), forms the core of data collection for degree-granting postsecondary institutions. Each institution designates a Research Analyst responsible for secure, timely, and accurate submissions. Data are collected three times per year (fall, spring, summer), with the fall submission being the official census used for annual reporting. These data undergo validation and error-checking prior to final confirmation by IBHE staff. Institutions submit detailed student-unit records following strict data specifications, including race/ethnicity, residency, program, and unique identifiers, per Public Act 096-1249 and related statutes. The IHEIS process is designed to align with federal data standards (IPEDS) and allow for

detailed disaggregation and longitudinal research on enrollment, completion, and student movement patterns in Illinois public higher education.