



ENROLLMENT SUMMARY REPORT FOR FALL 2025 FES 1 DATA COLLECTION

Introduction

This report presents an early view of Fall 2025 enrollment across Illinois higher education using preliminary Fall Enrollment Survey 1 (FES 1) data from 93 degree-granting institutions. Overall enrollment increased modestly, reflecting continued stabilization and growth across key sectors of the system.

Enrollment gains were driven primarily by undergraduate growth at public universities and Independent For-Profit (FP) institutions, while graduate/professional enrollment declined modestly. These trends point to shifting enrollment patterns and highlight areas where institutions are adapting program offerings and recruitment strategies to meet student demand.

Because FES 1 data are preliminary and reported at an aggregate level, figures are subject to revision following submission of official student-level enrollment data later in 2026.

Key Takeaways

- Modest Statewide Growth
 - Total enrollment in Illinois higher education increased by 1.2% (n = 5,224), reaching a headcount of 450,998 students in Fall 2025, suggesting continued stabilization following recent enrollment volatility.
 - FTE enrollment grew at a nearly identical rate of 1.1% (n = 4,303).
- Divergence by Degree Level (there is a clear "split" in enrollment trends)
 - Undergraduate growth alongside graduate declines indicates shifting student demand that may affect institutional revenue models and workforce alignment.
 - Undergraduate headcount grew by 2.4% (n = 6,821) statewide.
 - Graduate/professional enrollment declined by 1.0% (n = -1,597).
- Sector Performance Variances
 - Independent FP institutions experienced the strongest percentage growth at 6.5% (n = 3,897), driven largely by a 12% (n = 2,355) surge in graduate/professional enrollment, the only sector to see gains at that level. This was driven by enrollment gains at Chamberlain University (see Appendix B for more detail).
 - Public universities grew by 2.3% (n = 4,201), fueled by undergraduate gains that offset graduate losses (n = -650).
 - Independent Not-for-Profit (NFP) institutions were the only sector to see an overall decline in FTE, dropping 1.4% (n = -2,874). See Appendix B for more detail about some of the drivers impacting this sector.

Statewide Overview

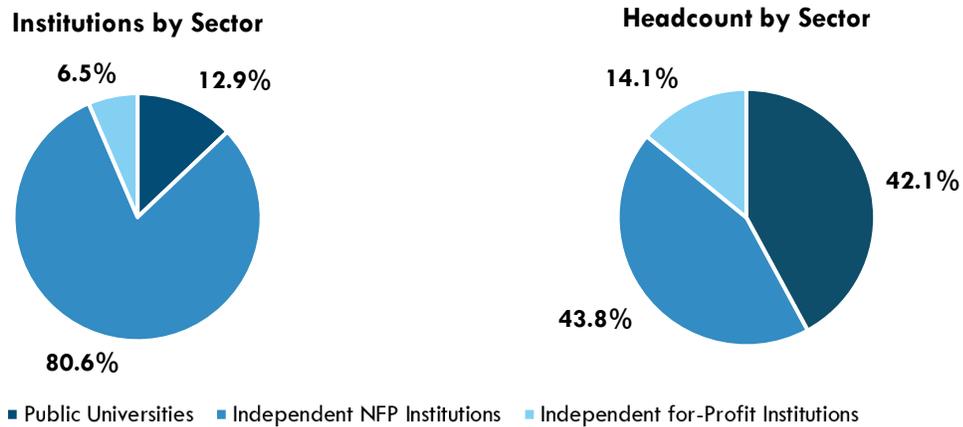
Public universities and Independent FP institutions demonstrated growth from FA24 to FA25, while Independent NFP institutions experienced a slight decline in enrollment.

Table 1. Enrollment Overview

Institution Sector	# of Institutions	FA24 Headcount	FA25 Headcount	Headcount % Change	FA24 FTE	FA25 FTE	FTE % Change
Public Universities	12	185,590	189,791	2.3%	167,537	171,922	2.6%
Independent NFP	75	200,472	197,598	-1.4%	181,361	178,830	-1.4%
Independent FP	6	59,712	63,609	6.5%	35,424	37,873	6.9%
Grand Total	93	445,774	450,998	1.2%	384,322	388,625	1.1%

As shown in Figure 1, the 12 Public universities in Illinois represent 13% of institutions in this analysis, but account for 42% of all enrollments in the state. This figure is nearly equivalent to the 44% enrolled at the 75 Independent NFP institutions. This concentration reflects the scale at which public universities operate, with several flagship and regional institutions each serving tens of thousands of students.

Figure 1. Institution Counts and Headcounts by Sector



Public Universities

Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of enrollment patterns at the 12 public Illinois institutions. The Public Universities in Illinois collectively enrolled 189,791 students in Fall 2025. This represents a 2.3% increase from Fall 2024. This growth was driven primarily by undergraduate headcount which increased by 3.7%. Graduate/professional headcounts experienced a modest decline of 1.2%. These figures are consistent with national trends reported by the [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#), which found undergraduate enrollment at public four-year institutions up 1.9% nationally and graduate enrollment nearly flat at 0.1% growth.

Institutional enrollment trends varied widely across the public universities. While several smaller institutions posted double-digit percentage gains, most of the statewide enrollment growth in absolute terms was driven by larger public universities. Notably, Chicago State University – though smaller in overall size – recorded the highest percentage growth (12.1%, n = 266), reflecting gains at both the undergraduate (16.9%, n = 249) and graduate/professional (2.3%, n = 17) levels. Among institutions with enrollments exceeding 10,000 students, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville demonstrated the strongest percentage growth at 7.7% (n = 920). The University of Illinois Chicago recorded the largest absolute increase in headcount among public universities, adding 1,963 students, driven primarily by a 7.8% increase (1,765 students) in undergraduate enrollment.

In contrast, several regional universities experienced enrollment declines compared to Fall 2024. Western Illinois University recorded the largest reduction in total headcount, decreasing by 995 students (-15.7%). The University of Illinois Springfield and Eastern Illinois University each experienced overall headcount declines of approximately five percent, with enrollment decreases of 264 students (-5.7%) and 398 students (-4.7%), respectively. At both institutions, these declines were driven primarily by decreases in graduate/professional enrollment (UIS: -12.6%; EIU: -20.0%), consistent with broader statewide trends affecting graduate enrollment.

Taken together, these patterns suggest sustained undergraduate demand at Illinois public universities alongside emerging challenges in graduate enrollment, pointing to potential implications for program mix, recruitment strategies, and long-term enrollment planning.

Table 2. Public University Enrollment Detail

Institution	FA25 UG Headcount	UG PY Change	UG % Change	FA25 GR Headcount	GR PY Change	GR % Change	Total PY Change	Total % Change
CSU	1,719	249	16.9%	750	17	2.3%	266	12.1%
SIUE	9,925	980	11.0%	2,888	-60	-2.0%	920	7.7%
UIC	24,260	1,765	7.8%	11,609	198	1.7%	1,963	5.8%
NIU	12,118	769	6.8%	3,960	-106	-2.6%	663	4.3%
UIUC	38,572	1,432	3.9%	22,276	178	0.8%	1,610	2.7%
ISU	19,513	406	2.1%	2,481	42	1.7%	448	2.1%
NEIU	4,246	20	0.5%	1,532	24	1.6%	44	0.8%
SIUC	8,416	-137	-1.6%	3,369	132	4.1%	-5	0.0%
GSU	2,616	42	1.6%	1,733	-93	-5.1%	-51	-1.2%
EIU	6,731	-54	-0.8%	1,376	-344	-20.0%	-398	-4.7%
UIS	2,337	28	1.2%	2,027	-292	-12.6%	-264	-5.7%
WIU	3,876	-649	-14.3%	1,461	-346	-19.1%	-995	-15.7%
Grand Total	134,329	4,851	3.7%	55,462	-650	-1.2%	4,201	2.3%

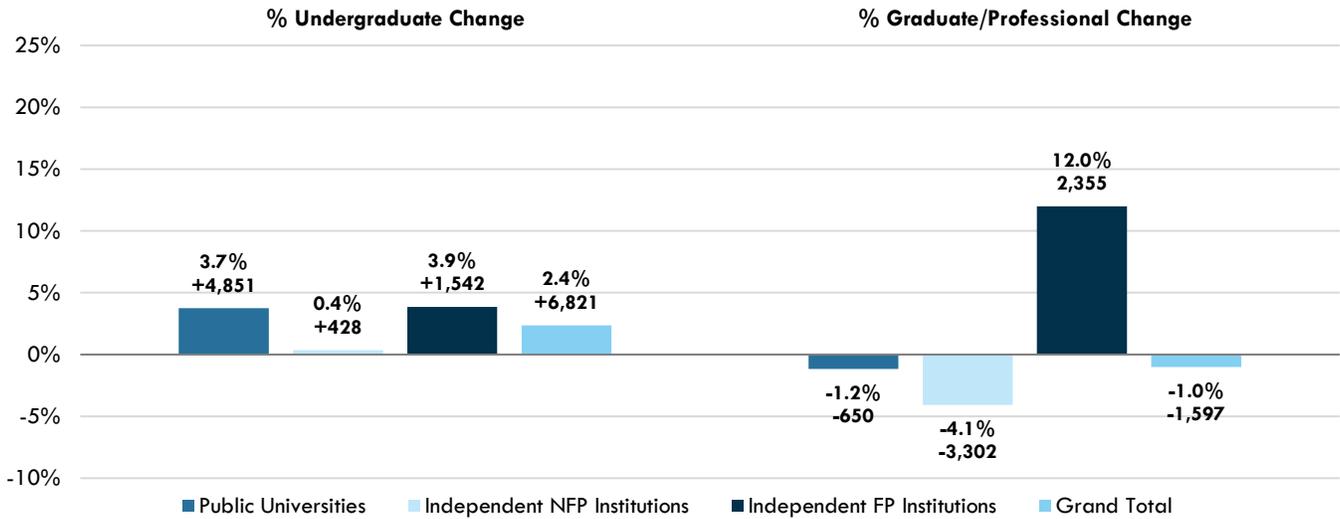
Note: See Appendix C and Appendix D for the Independent NFP and Independent FP institutions enrollment detail.

Degree Level Trends

Figure 2 shows the divergence between undergraduate and graduate/professional enrollments. Statewide, undergraduate headcount grew by 2.4%, adding a total of 6,821 students. In contrast, graduate/professional enrollments declined by 1.0%, losing a total of 1,597 students.

This divergence between undergraduate and graduate/professional enrollments was most notable when looking at the data by sector. Public Universities (3.7% increase) and Independent FP institutions (3.9% increase) drove the gains at the undergraduate level. However, only Independent FP institutions (12.0%) saw gains at the graduate/professional level. Both Public Universities (-1.2%) and Independent NFP institutions (-4.1%) saw losses at the graduate/professional level.

Figure 2. Enrollment Changes by Degree Level



Summary

Illinois higher education grew modestly in Fall 2025 (1.2%). Public universities experienced healthy growth among their undergraduate enrollments (3.7%), but that was offset by a decline in their graduate/professional enrollments (-1.2%). Particularly notable is the declining trend in graduate/professional enrollments at the public and NFP institutions, while the Independent FP sector observed a substantial increase (12.0%) at that level.

Going forward, these trends raise important questions about how institutions and the state can support graduate enrollment recovery, align program offerings with labor market demand, and sustain undergraduate momentum.

APPENDIX A. DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The enrollment figures presented in this report are derived from the Illinois Board of Higher Education's Fall Enrollment Survey 1 (FES 1) data collection. Institutions receive the FES 1 data request in September and submit aggregate undergraduate and graduate/professional headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment figures to IBHE in October. Reported figures should be based on each institution's 10-day census counts.

It is important to note that FES 1 data are preliminary. The official IBHE Fall enrollment data collection, which captures detailed student-level records rather than institutional aggregates, is due in March of the following calendar year (e.g., official Fall 2025 figures are due in March of 2026). Accordingly, the figures presented in this report should be considered *preliminary estimates* and are subject to revision once official Fall enrollment data are received and validated.

APPENDIX B. NOTABLE INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY TRENDS

The examples below illustrate how enrollment changes are shaped by a mix of institutional strategy, program mix, and external factors. These cases provide context for interpreting enrollment gains and losses and underscore the importance of situating percentage changes within broader institutional circumstances.

McKendree University (+440 students, +21.0%)

McKendree University achieved 21.0% enrollment growth in Fall 2025. The university cites the Class of 2029 as their second largest in university history and identifies their Clear Path Initiative as a driver to their enrollment gains.

DePaul University (-723 graduate students, -10.3%)

DePaul University's graduate student enrollment declined by 723 (-10.3%). This decline is largely attributable to a 62% drop in new international graduate student enrollment following federal immigration policy changes affecting visa processing and eligibility.

Bradley University (-531 students, -11.1%)

Bradley University's enrollment fell by 531 students (-11.1%), continuing a multi-year decline that brought total enrollment below 5,000 for the first time since 1990. The university faced a \$13 million budget deficit that led to elimination of 15 academic programs and 61 faculty positions, which likely accelerated enrollment declines.

Chamberlain University (+4,047 students, +14.0%)

Chamberlain University experienced the largest absolute enrollment gain among Independent FP institutions, adding 4,047 students for a 14.0% increase. This growth reflects the strong demand for nursing programs.

APPENDIX C. INDEPENDENT NFP INSTITUTIONS ENROLLMENT DETAIL

<u>Institution</u>	<u>FA25 UG Headcount</u>	<u>UG PY Change</u>	<u>UG % Change</u>	<u>FA25 GR Headcount</u>	<u>GR PY Change</u>	<u>GR % Change</u>	<u>Total PY Change</u>	<u>Total % Change</u>
American Islamic College	28	10	55.6%	27	14	107.7%	24	77.4%
Trinity College of Nursing & Health Sciences	84	26	44.8%	14	6	75.0%	32	48.5%
Catholic Theological Union	0	0		244	43	21.4%	43	21.4%
McKendree University	1,869	183	10.9%	662	257	63.5%	440	21.0%
Methodist College	297	53	21.7%	28	3	12.0%	56	20.8%
Generations College	344	34	11.0%	0	0		34	11.0%
St. Johns College	140	14	11.1%	6	0	0.0%	14	10.6%
St. Francis Medical Center College of Nursing	304	29	10.5%	366	34	10.2%	63	10.4%
Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing	258	26	11.2%	12	-2	-14.3%	24	9.8%
Blackburn College	508	44	9.5%	0	0		44	9.5%
National University of Health Sciences	13	1	8.3%	379	27	7.7%	28	7.7%
Illinois College	1,011	74	7.9%	3	-2	-40.0%	72	7.6%
Roosevelt University	3,272	415	14.5%	1,328	-96	-6.7%	319	7.5%
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary	0	0		334	22	7.1%	22	7.1%
University of St. Mary of the Lake	0	0		125	8	6.8%	8	6.8%
VanderCook College of Music	87	-20	-18.7%	244	40	19.6%	20	6.4%
Illinois Wesleyan University	1,683	101	6.4%	0	0		101	6.4%
Monmouth College	759	44	6.2%	0	0		44	6.2%
North Central College	2,632	178	7.3%	547	-2	-0.4%	176	5.9%
Benedictine University	2,133	171	8.7%	823	-24	-2.8%	147	5.2%
NorthShore University HealthSystem School of Nurse Anesthesia	0	0		84	4	5.0%	4	5.0%
Moody Bible Institute	1,678	97	6.1%	663	9	1.4%	106	4.7%
Loyola University of Chicago	12,640	758	6.4%	4,892	22	0.5%	780	4.7%
Eureka College	550	23	4.4%	0	0		23	4.4%
St. Anthony College of Nursing	160	-12	-7.0%	113	22	24.2%	10	3.8%
University of St. Francis	1,299	80	6.6%	1,461	19	1.3%	99	3.7%
St. Xavier University	3,198	100	3.2%	412	25	6.5%	125	3.6%
Greenville University	1,034	42	4.2%	113	-3	-2.6%	39	3.5%
Telshe Yeshiva	80	2	2.6%	14	1	7.7%	3	3.3%

<u>Institution</u>	<u>FA25 UG Headcount</u>	<u>UG PY Change</u>	<u>UG % Change</u>	<u>FA25 GR Headcount</u>	<u>GR PY Change</u>	<u>GR % Change</u>	<u>Total PY Change</u>	<u>Total % Change</u>
Aurora University	4,230	121	2.9%	1,891	74	4.1%	195	3.3%
Illinois College of Optometry	0	0		488	14	3.0%	14	3.0%
McCormick Theological Seminary	0	0		128	3	2.4%	3	2.4%
Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine & Science	0	0		2,052	47	2.3%	47	2.3%
Quincy University	1,098	31	2.9%	87	-5	-5.4%	26	2.2%
Midwestern University	0	0		2,604	38	1.5%	38	1.5%
National Louis University	4,643	116	2.6%	4,399	-35	-0.8%	81	0.9%
Rush University	150	13	9.5%	2,630	-2	-0.1%	11	0.4%
Lewis University	4,914	581	13.4%	2,105	-572	-21.4%	9	0.1%
Augustana College	2,536	14	0.6%	34	-14	-29.2%	0	0.0%
Morrison Institute of Technology	60	0	0.0%	0	0		0	0.0%
Urbana Theological Seminary	0	0		18	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Dominican University	2,642	-48	-1.8%	1,161	47	4.2%	-1	0.0%
Northwestern University	9,524	7	0.1%	14,379	-134	-0.9%	-127	-0.5%
University of Chicago	7,616	-291	-3.7%	11,524	144	1.3%	-147	-0.8%
Elmhurst University	3,170	0	0.0%	717	-67	-8.5%	-67	-1.7%
Lake Forest College	1,796	-29	-1.6%	16	-7	-30.4%	-36	-1.9%
School of the Art Inst. Chicago	2,738	-68	-2.4%	585	-5	-0.8%	-73	-2.1%
Knox College	1,110	-26	-2.3%	0	0		-26	-2.3%
Olivet Nazarene University	2,635	-69	-2.6%	613	-15	-2.4%	-84	-2.5%
DePaul University	14,338	150	1.1%	6,299	-723	-10.3%	-573	-2.7%
Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership	0	0		88	-3	-3.3%	-3	-3.3%
Millikin University	1,427	-80	-5.3%	105	14	15.4%	-66	-4.1%
Rockford University	950	-34	-3.5%	233	-25	-9.7%	-59	-4.8%
North Park University	1,827	-15	-0.8%	603	-113	-15.8%	-128	-5.0%
Lake Forest Graduate School of Mgmt.	0	0		164	-9	-5.2%	-9	-5.2%
Judson University	812	-33	-3.9%	195	-47	-19.4%	-80	-7.4%
Concordia University Chicago	1,300	-68	-5.0%	3,096	-307	-9.0%	-375	-7.9%
Erikson Institute	0	0		290	-25	-7.9%	-25	-7.9%
Bexley Hall Seabury Western Theological Seminary Federation	0	0		91	-9	-9.0%	-9	-9.0%
Trinity International University	40	-15	-27.3%	754	-72	-8.7%	-87	-9.9%

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Toyota Technological Institute at Chicago	0	0		35	-4	-10.3%	-4	-10.3%
Bradley University	3,262	-334	-9.3%	984	-197	-16.7%	-531	-11.1%
Principia College	300	-39	-11.5%	0	0		-39	-11.5%
Hebrew Theological College	186	-27	-12.7%	0	0		-27	-12.7%
Chicago Theological Seminary	0	0		200	-30	-13.0%	-30	-13.0%
Illinois Institute of Technology	3,190	55	1.8%	4,309	-1,390	-24.4%	-1,335	-15.1%
Meadville - Lombard Theo. School	0	0		58	-12	-17.1%	-12	-17.1%
Adler University	0	-9	-100.0%	1,024	-205	-16.7%	-214	-17.3%
Northern Baptist Theo. Seminary	0	0		166	-35	-17.4%	-35	-17.4%
East-West University	489	-110	-18.4%	0	0		-110	-18.4%
Wheaton College	2,181	-693	-24.1%	736	12	1.7%	-681	-18.9%
Columbia College Chicago	4,346	-1,099	-20.2%	115	-34	-22.8%	-1,133	-20.3%
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago	0	0		96	-26	-21.3%	-26	-21.3%
Lakeview College of Nursing	44	-23	-34.3%	0	0		-23	-34.3%
Graham Hospital School of Nursing	17	-23	-57.5%	0	0		-23	-57.5%
Grand Total	119,632	428	0.4%	77,966	-3,302	-4.1%	-2,874	-1.4%

APPENDIX D. INDEPENDENT FP INSTITUTIONS ENROLLMENT DETAIL

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Chamberlain University	14,041	1,827	15.0%	18,903	2,220	13.3%	4,047	14.0%
Chicago College of Oriental Medicine	0	0		14	9	180.0%	9	180.0%
DeVry University, Inc.	25,228	-470	-1.8%	3,104	126	4.2%	-344	-1.2%
Fox College	225	13	6.1%	0	0		13	6.1%
Lincoln College of Technology	1,504	132	9.6%	0	0		132	9.6%
Midwestern Career College	590	40	7.3%	0	0		40	7.3%
Grand Total	41,588	1,542	3.9%	22,021	2,355	12.0%	3,897	6.5%