UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE PRODUCTIVITY
AT ILLINOIS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Why examine degrees/certificates per 100 FTE?

“Degrees/Certificates per 100 FTE” has traditionally been used as an institutional productivity/efficiency measure indicating how many postsecondary awards are conferred by a college in a year relative to the number of full-time equivalent students. As noted in the Aspen Institute’s report on using comparative information to improve student success (2014), the measure illustrates a college’s total “outputs” (degrees/certificates) relative to its total “inputs” (students). As a metric, degrees and certificates per 100 FTE takes into consideration all students including part-time and transfer students, two groups that traditionally are not included in the calculation of graduation rates. Graduation rates are typically calculated using cohorts of first-time/full-time undergraduate students. As colleges can vary substantially in terms of the composition of their study body, first-time/full-time students may only represent a small proportion of the overall students; and therefore, graduation rates may not be the best measure of the overall performance of schools that focus more heavily on enrolling part-time students or students transferring from other colleges. As highlighted in previous IBHE analyses, the state of Illinois is the national leader in metrics that are inclusive of transfer students and students that enroll part-time, such as the completion rates at four-year institutions among all community college students (IBHE, 2019).

It has been argued that productivity and efficiency metrics such as degrees per 100 FTE are most meaningful when shown in comparison to other institutions, as was done here (Aspen Institute, 2014). The current analysis compares each Illinois public university with the national average, as well as the average of its respective peers. The peers included in this analysis were purposefully selected to account for programmatic offerings and student body composition (see list).

How do Illinois Public Universities perform relative to their peers and all other public universities?
Specific to undergraduate degrees and certificates per 100 FTE, all Illinois public universities, except UIC and UIUC, outperformed their out-of-state peers. Illinois public universities, in aggregate, performed better than the national average (27.4 compared to 24.7) and the combined peer average (27.4 compared to 23.6). GSU, EIU, SIUC, NEIU and UIS had the highest number of undergraduate awards per 100 FTE and all conferred around 30 or more degrees per 100 FTE. NIU, CSU, and WIU also performed well above the national and peer averages.

It should be noted that in 2017, not a single Illinois public university awarded an undergraduate certificate of any length and only SIUC conferred associate degrees; therefore, nearly all (99.7%) the undergraduate degree/certificates awarded in 2017
were at the baccalaureate level. At the peer institutions, bachelor’s degrees accounted for a slightly lower proportion of total undergraduate degrees and certificates awarded (97.8%). In other words, the Illinois public universities, in aggregate, substantially outperformed the peer average even through nearly all the undergraduate awards the Illinois public universities conferred were bachelor’s degrees, which by default take longer to complete than certificate programs (some of which can be finished in less than a semester).

**Figure 1:** Undergraduate Degrees/Certificates Awarded per 100 FTE

![Bar chart showing undergraduate degrees/certificates awarded per 100 FTE for Illinois public universities, peer average, Illinois public university average, US average, and combined peer average.](chart.png)

Data Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)-12-month FTE enrollment for 2017 and total degrees (Associate’s, Bachelor’s) and certificates (less than 1 year, 1 year to 2 years, 2 to 4 years) for 2017.

Work Cited:


List of Peer Groups Selected by Each Illinois Public University

**Chicago State University**
- Auburn University at Montgomery
- Bowie State University
- California State University, Dominguez Hills
- Coppin State University
- CUNY Lehman College
- Fayetteville State University
- Framingham State University
- Georgia College and State University
- Jacksonville State University
- New Jersey City University
- Texas A & M International University
- University of Houston – Clear Lake
- University of North Alabama

**Eastern Illinois University**
- Appalachian State University
- College of Charleston
- Eastern Washington University
- Georgia Southern University
- Kean University
- Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
- Murray State University
- Saint Cloud State University
- Sam Houston State University
- University of North Carolina Wilmington
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse
- University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
- Western Washington University
- William Paterson University of New Jersey

**Governors State University**
- Austin Peay State University
- Bridgewater State University
- California State University San Marcos
- CUNY Brooklyn College
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- Montclair State University
- University of Baltimore
- University of Houston – Clear Lake
- University of Maryland, Baltimore
- University of Michigan – Dearborn
- University of Missouri – St. Louis
- University of North Florida

**Illinois State University**
- Ball State University
- Bowling Green State University

**Central Michigan University**
- Miami University
- Old Dominion University
- Portland State University
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- Western Michigan University
- Wichita State University

**Northeastern Illinois University**
- Auburn University at Montgomery
- California State University, Stanislaus
- CUNY Lehman College
- Indiana University – Northwest
- New Jersey City University
- Purdue University Calumet
- Texas A & M University – Corpus Christi

**Northern Illinois University**
- Ball State University
- Central Michigan University
- Kent State University
- Ohio University
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Toledo
- Western Michigan University

**Southern Illinois University Carbondale**
- East Carolina University
- Kent State University
- University of Louisville
- University of Missouri – Kansas City
- University of North Dakota
- University of Northern Colorado
- West Virginia University
- Wright State University

**Southern Illinois University Edwardsville**
- East Tennessee State University
- Grand Valley State University
- Marshall University
- Oakland University
- University of Missouri – Kansas City
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- University of South Alabama
- Western Carolina University

**University of Illinois at Chicago**
- University at Buffalo
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Connecticut
- University of Louisville
- University of South Florida
- University of Utah
- Virginia Commonwealth University

**University of Illinois at Springfield**
- Auburn University at Montgomery
- College of Charleston
- Georgia College and State University
- Lake Superior State University
- Northern Michigan University
- Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania
- SUNY College at Brockport
- University of South Dakota
- University of Wisconsin – Green Bay

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, San Diego
- University of Michigan
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Virginia
- University of Washington
- University of Wisconsin – Madison

**Western Illinois University**
- Appalachian State University
- Central Washington University
- Grand Valley State University
- James Madison University
- Montclair State University
- Truman State University
- University of Central Missouri
- University of Nebraska at Kearney
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Wisconsin – La Crosse
- University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
- University of Wisconsin – Whitewater
- William Paterson University of New Jersey