



ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION IS TRUE TO ITS MISSION

Though we are in the midst of perhaps the most difficult of fiscal circumstances for Illinois higher education in its history, we must not lose sight of the tens of thousands of graduates successfully embarking on their futures after attending Illinois colleges and universities. Illinois higher education's successful record for college graduates was presented by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC), a highly regarded center for analyzing outcomes from national college data by tracking students longitudinally and nationally throughout their academic journey.¹

The report places Illinois among the top performing states in several categories and **above the national average in nearly all of the completion outcomes** that were measured for students who started at Illinois's public and private colleges and universities in 2009.

- Over **87%** of students who full-time enrolled at an Illinois public university had completed a degree within six years. This was seven percentage points higher than the national average (80%).
- Illinois was **first in the nation** in completion rates for students starting part-time at public universities. Its completion rate of 46% was over two times the national average (19%).
- Illinois was also **first in the nation** in completion rates for adult learners² at public universities and about 50% higher than the national average (63% to 43%).
- Illinois was **third in the nation** for full-time community college students completing bachelor's degrees at four-year colleges.
- Illinois was **fourth in the nation** in completion rates for full-time community college students and roughly 13 percentage points higher than the national average.
- Illinois was **eighth in the nation** in terms of completion rates for adult learners at community colleges (15% higher than the national average).
- Illinois was also **above the national average** in terms of completion for students enrolling at private universities (87%). In fact, there was little difference between full-time students at public and private colleges (see above).
- Illinois was **among ten states** in which at least one in five women who started at a community college completed a bachelor's degree regardless of enrollment status (full-time/ part-time).

Illinois' higher education system is carrying out its noble mission of educating our citizens for good work and good lives. Our community colleges and universities are teaching well our children and grandchildren, and thousands of adults returning to college several years after high school.

The graduates described in this most recent report are our family members, neighbors, and co-workers. Illinois taxpayers have invested in their futures. Now they are investing in Illinois' future. We should be grateful for them, and for the colleges in Illinois whose alumni they are.

¹ The Clearinghouse's robust data resources cover 96% of the currently enrolled college students and 98% of all public and private institutions in the U.S.

² Defined as students who started college who were older than 24.