



# INDIANA COMMISSION *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

## AGENDA

Thursday, January 12, 2023

101 West Ohio Street, Suite 300  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-4206

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**INDIANA COMMISSION** *for*  
**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**AGENDA**

**Indiana Commission for Higher Education Meeting**

**Thursday, January 12, 2023**

Call to Order – 9:00 A.M. ET

**MADE @ Plainfield**

1610 Reeves Road

Plainfield, IN 46168

*Parking available in adjacent lot*

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-or-

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DIAL: +1 317-552-1674

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- I. **Call to Order**  
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**VIII. Old Business**  
**New Business**

**IX. Adjournment**

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The next meeting of the Commission will be on **March 9, 2023, in Kokomo, Indiana.**

**State of Indiana  
Commission for Higher Education**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Thursday, December 8, 2022**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Commission for Higher Education met in regular session starting at 9:00 a.m. ET at Ivy Tech Community College Indianapolis, 2820 North Meridian Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46208, with Chairman Jud Fisher presiding.

**ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

*Members Present:* Mike Alley, Dennis Bland, Anne Bowen, Jud Fisher, Bill Hanna, Al Hubbard, Nancy Jordan, Chris LaMothe, Pepper Mulherin, Dan Peterson, Gen. Erika Steuterman, Tom Saunders

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us today. I'll call the meeting to order.

I'd like to thank Ivy Tech Community College President Sue Ellspermann and the Ivy Tech team for being gracious hosts for us, for the reception and dinner last night, and for hosting our meeting today.

I want to remind everyone that registration is still open for the Commission's virtual Education Value Convening to be held on December 14. This convening will share the best practices and new information with our community partners and higher ed practitioners.

This concludes my mark remarks for the day.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning and welcome everyone. I said last night at the event of feeling good about homecoming, and we're so grateful to president Ellspermann and the Ivy Tech trustees who are actually in the house today too. And the staff were making us feel like the friends we are.

We're not going to have a really heavy agenda this time around and also in hopes of getting everyone out here a little bit sooner, maybe then that what we have at least in recent months. It wouldn't be a Commission meeting without revising some of our key priorities. This slide and the next one really serve as predicates to the four-month marathon that we're about to start – the legislative session. We know these realities and we're not going to take them out of the view of any of our policymaker friends, the fact of the matter is we have a declining college-going rate from 65% to 53%. It's now 44% for Hispanic students, 43% for Black students, 46% for males.

The part I think is so significant about that is in each of those instances, it's the first time since Commission has tracked that data that any one of those three that I just referenced have been below 50%. We are concerned about it, but it's also leading to policy development suggestions, recommendations that we think will matter.

The Senate put out Enrolled Act 366. You can see the things are in that, but this was the Legislature signaling to us that they wanted to work with us and think it with us about performance funding formula. The Legislature is keenly interested and knows this is the lever to move improvements in our state. Yesterday, there was the State Budget Committee hearing. It's the one, the first one in which I have formally interacted in this role. A handful of you were able to attend. I talked to several legislators late in the day and they were delighted that some of you were able to make it. It was a robust discussion. It was thoughtful and we were pressed. And frankly we should be because we have work to do.

We're focusing on the pipeline, from enrollment – not just the college-going rate, though, but our adults. We're 48.3% educational attainment today versus the 60% Big Goal that was adopted. On the economic output side of it, whether it's graduate retention or degree to which we lean into research in the state, it's really partnering with business and that's all leading to the economic, the human capital and economic outcomes.

It is my pleasure to introduce to you today our new Assistant Commissioner for Strategic Partnerships and Events, Madison Prillwitz. She was serving as corporate partnership development coordinator for Pacers Sports and Entertainment. You might have heard of them.

**Madison Prillwitz addressed the Commission.**

Speaking of teams, we've been talking about the Pentagon for a while and I continue to be even more convinced than ever that the work we have in front of us, some of it consisting of a heavy lift. It's going to require a bigger shift. We have had folks step up and say that they are delighted to join us in this work, including USI President Ron Rochon leading the education team, Dan Peterson leading the employer side, Marlene Dotson leading the community organization work, Claire Fiddian-Green leading the philanthropy sector.

Thank you. Forward to a good day, Mr. Chairman.

**II. CONSIDERATION OF THE MEETING MINUTES**

**R-23-1.1 RESOLVED:** That the Commission for Higher Education hereby approves the Minutes of the November 2022 regular meeting. (Motion – Hubbard, second – Jordan, unanimously approved)

**III. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. 2023 Legislative and Policy Preview**

Josh Garrison and Greg Harrell provided the Commission's legislative and policy preview.

**B. Commission Meeting Calendar for 2023 and 2024**

Josh Garrison presented this item and provided updated calendar dates and locations.

**C. Indiana Chamber Workforce Survey and Legislative Preview**

Jason Bearce, Indiana Chamber of Commerce vice president of education and workforce, presented this item.

**IV. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ITEMS**

**A. NGA Learning and Employment Record Grant**

Dr. Ken Sauer presented this item.

**B. Academic Degree Programs for Expedited Action\***

1. Bachelor of Science in Emergency Management to be offered by Purdue University Global

**R-23-1.2 RESOLVED:** That the Commission for Higher Education hereby approves the following academic degree program, in accordance with the background information provided in this agenda item. (Motion – Hubbard, second – Saunders, unanimously approved)

**V. INFORMATION ITEMS**

- A. Academic Degree Programs Awaiting Action
- B. Academic Degree Program Actions Taken by Staff
- C. Media Coverage

**VI. OLD BUSINESS  
NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 P.M. ET

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Jud Fisher, Chair

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Anne Bowen, Secretary



**COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Thursday, December 12, 2023

**Academic Affairs Item A:**

**Update on Board For Proprietary Education Activities**

**Background**

In 2012, the General Assembly eliminated the Commission on Proprietary Education (COPE), whose responsibilities and appropriations were split between the Department of Workforce Development and Board for Proprietary Education (BPE), which is administered, led, and staffed by the Commission for Higher Education. Credit-bearing, degree-granting institutions, with or seeking accreditation from a body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, became the responsibility of BPE.

BPE currently authorizes 31 institutions, with 36 campuses, in Indiana. Of these 31 institutions, 21 are private, for-profit, while the remaining 10 are private, not-for-profit. Twenty-seven are accredited by national, institutional, or specialized, programmatic accreditors, while four are still seeking accreditation.

BPE institutions offer programs at all levels, ranging from undergraduate certificates to doctoral programs. The majority of degree programs are offered in education or health-related fields.

**Supporting Document**

To be distributed.





**COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Thursday, December 12, 2023

**Academic Affairs Item B:**

**Update on Dual Credit Faculty Qualifications**

**Background**

The Commission’s goal of having every one of Indiana’s 521 high schools meet its criteria for being designated as a delivery site for the Indiana College Core cannot be achieved without having enough fully qualified high school faculty to teach dual credit courses.

Soon after the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) issued policies on qualifications for dual credit teachers, the Commission began tracking the extent to which existing dual credit high school faculty had already met HLC qualifications or, if they hadn’t, how far they fell from doing so. The Commission has just completed collecting data for 2022 and will compare that to data from 2016, the first year these data were collected.

Much progress has been made in recent years, thanks to initiatives to support high school faculty becoming fully qualified, such as STEM Teach and Teach Dual Credit Indiana administered by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at the University of Indianapolis in partnership with the Commission. However, challenges remain if the Commission is to achieve its goal.

**Supporting Document**

To be distributed.



**COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Thursday, January 12, 2023

**DISCUSSION ITEM A:**

**Adult Learner Report Preview**

**Background**

Lee Rathbun and Dr. Stacy Townsley will share key findings and takeaways from the Commission’s first adult learner-specific report to be published in early 2023.

**Supporting Documents**

To be distributed.



**COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Thursday, January 12, 2023

**DISCUSSION ITEM B:**

**Indiana Department of Education GPS Dashboard Update**

**Background**

Indiana Secretary of Education Dr. Katie Jenner will address the Commission about the Department's recently released Graduates Prepared to Succeed (GPS) Dashboard.

**Supporting Documents**

To be distributed.



**COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Thursday, January 12, 2023

**BUDGET ITEM A:**

**2023-2025 Budget Update**

**Background**

Seth Hinshaw will share analysis from the state’s December 2022 revenue forecast as well as highlights and takeaways from the Governor’s 2023-2025 recommended budget.

**Supporting Document**

To be distributed.





**COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Thursday January 12, 2023

**BUDGET ITEM B:**

**2023-2025 Outcomes-Based Performance Funding Metrics**

**Staff Recommendation**

That the Commission for Higher Education adopt the Outcomes-Based Performance Funding Metrics recommendations for the 2023-2025 biennium, and that the Commission staff make any necessary technical corrections to the recommendations adopted today.

**Background**

The Commission for Higher Education’s recommended budget includes funding for performance incentives to state educational institutions that will further the state’s efforts to grow postsecondary attainment primarily through metrics driven by:

1. The college-going rate of high school students and adults,
2. Degree completions, and
3. Graduate retention

The approval of these metrics will enable Commission staff to work with each institution to identify unique goals for each metric that will assist the state in reaching its postsecondary completion goals.

**Supporting Document**

To be distributed.



**COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Thursday January 12, 2023

**BUDGET ITEM C:**

**Purdue University West Lafayette – Mechanical Engineering Building Renovation**

**Staff Recommendation**

That the Commission for Higher Education recommends approval to the State Budget Agency and the State Budget Committee of the following projects:

- Purdue University Mechanical Engineering Building Renovation

**Background**

By statute, the Commission for Higher Education must review all projects to construct buildings or facilities costing more than two million dollars (\$2,000,000), regardless of the source of funding. Each repair and rehabilitation project must be reviewed by the Commission for Higher Education and approved by the Governor, on recommendation of the Budget Agency, if the cost of the project exceeds two million dollars (\$2,000,000) and if any part of the cost of the project is paid by state appropriated funds or by mandatory student fees assessed all students. Such review is required if no part of the project is paid by state appropriated funds or by mandatory student fees and the project cost exceeds two million dollars (\$2,000,000). A project that has been approved or authorized by the General Assembly is subject to review by the Commission for Higher Education. The Commission for Higher Education shall review a project approved or authorized by the General Assembly for which a state appropriation will be used. All other non-state funded projects must be reviewed within ninety (90) days after the project is submitted to the Commission.

**Supporting Document**

Mechanical Engineering Building Renovation

**Purdue University West Lafayette – Mechanical Engineering Building Renovation**

Thursday, January 12, 2023

**B-1-23-2-14: Purdue University Mechanical Engineering Building Renovation**

The Purdue University Board of Trustees requests authorization to proceed with renovating approximately 41,000 GSF of existing space on the West Lafayette campus within the Mechanical Engineering Building. This project includes added collaboration space and improves instructional labs and classrooms to allow for further enrollment growth. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems will all be upgraded, including the addition of a new elevator.

**Funding:** The estimated cost of this project is \$25,000,000 and will be funded through gift funds.

**Additional Staff Notes:** Staff recommends approval of the project.

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**STUDENT SUCCESS ITEM A: Goals for K-12 and Adult Learners**

**Background** Michelle Ashcraft and Dr. Stacy Townsley presented in October regarding plans of action for expanding the Indiana College Core to all Indiana high schools and development of a Veterans’ Educational Pathway taskforce. Now four months into their new roles, Michelle and Dr. Townsley will share high-level goals, strategies and timelines for key projects and initiatives for 2023.

**Supporting Documents** To be distributed.



**COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Thursday, January 12, 2023

**INFORMATION ITEM A:**

**Media Coverage**

Staff has selected a compilation of recent media coverage related to the Commission from December. Please see the following pages for details.



**Inside Higher Ed**  
**New Campaign Wants to Prove ‘College Is Worth It’**  
**By Liam Knox**  
**December 9, 2022**

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md.—A coalition of dozens of public university systems across the country is launching a campaign aimed at improving public perception of the value of higher education—in part by measuring those institutions’ current contributions and committing to improve their performance.

The National Association of System Heads, which represents the leaders of 65 university systems, unveiled the “College Is Worth It” campaign Wednesday to a room of university system leaders and other higher education luminaries at NASH’s “superconvening” just outside of Washington, D.C. The campaign aims to push back on years of declining public confidence in the value of higher education, and their negative impact on enrollment, by setting concrete goals for institutions to increase credential attainment, improve social mobility, and reduce student debt.

As part of the campaign, NASH developed a unique data set to gauge its member institutions’ collective impact on improving the value and equity of higher education—and how much work still needs to be done.

“We’re battling a crisis of confidence in higher ed,” David Belsky, a spokesperson for NASH, wrote in an email to Inside Higher Ed. “We know the value of a degree—graduates earn more, live longer, vote often, and are better prepared for the jobs we need. So we’re launching this campaign, with the data to back it up, to improve public perception.”

The initiative seems to be a recognition from higher education leaders that the belief in a college degree as a stepping-stone to social mobility, once nearly universal, is fading.

The initiative comes on the heels of NASH’s “Power of Systems” campaign, launched at last year’s convention, which focused on similar issues. But the scope of “College Is Worth It” goes beyond its predecessor’s: it is both a public relations campaign and a material effort to increase the economic return on investment in a college degree.

While light on specific action plans, the campaign’s goals are ambitious. Currently, about half of all students at NASH institutions who come from families in the bottom 40 percent of income earners end up in the top 40 percent, according to data provided by NASH. Through the College Is Worth It campaign, NASH hopes to increase that rate to 65 percent by 2040.

To put it in the organization’s terms, the institutions want to move 1.5 million people “from poverty to prosperity” and demonstrate that higher education is the driving force in that movement.

“The impact of higher education is incredibly powerful, but that’s not the narrative in the discourse today,” said Jason Lane, a senior fellow at NASH and dean of Miami University of Ohio’s College of Education, Health and Society. “We’ll not only be promoting the idea that college is, in fact, worth it. We’ll be collecting data to prove that.”

Some experts and system leaders at the convention remained bullish on higher education’s worth. At Wednesday’s event, Jay Perman, chancellor of the University System of Maryland, stressed the “intrinsic

value” of higher education and emphasized the importance of critical thinking and communication skills, which, he said, were part of a college degree’s inherent worth.

But in launching the College Is Worth It initiative, NASH leaders acknowledged that the higher education sector has struggled to demonstrate its broad financial benefits—and that paeans to higher education’s societal and individual contributions may not be a sufficient defense in the face of mounting student debt and the diminishing role of degrees in the job market.

“There is a lot more to the value of higher education than salary. But also ... salary [matters],” Tristan Denley, deputy commissioner for academic affairs and innovation at the Louisiana Board of Regents, told the audience Wednesday. “How can we enable students not only to shake their presidents’ hands at graduation but to shake their employers’ hands as well?”

### **‘What Gets Measured Gets Done’**

A large component of the College Is Worth It campaign will be collecting data on the investment return for college degrees. By putting a metric around social mobility and its connection to college degrees and credentials, Denley said, NASH would be able to make a more convincing case for higher education’s value—to policy makers, students and parents alike.

“We live in an age of evidence,” Denley said. “What gets measured gets done.”

Leaders also said NASH would focus on reducing the debt held by its member systems’ collective five million-plus students by \$7 billion by 2030. The average debt per student at NASH institutions is currently just under \$20,000, and the systems aim to reduce that by 25 percent by 2030, with a focus on cutting in half the gap in loan repayment rates for students who receive Pell Grants for needy students and those who do not.

“The story of higher ed in the past few decades is the movement of debt from states to families,” Denley said. “The reality is that costs will increase, and as they do, we need to find ways to be more efficient and effective and not just pass that cost on to the student.”

NASH also highlighted failures to address persistent equity gaps in its own efforts. The organization’s member institutions awarded over 900,000 degrees and awards in 2021—up from 664,000 in 2009, or about a 35 percent increase. And yet that growth was not at all evenly distributed across the award types: bachelor’s degree programs grew by 30 percent, while associate degrees and other credentials barely increased at all. Moreover, despite the general rise in degree completion among its member systems, the completion gap between white students and students of color stayed at 10 percent.

“That gap did not close one iota,” Denley said.

Through the College Is Worth It initiative, NASH wants its member systems to increase their credential production by another 35 percent by 2030, but in such a way that the equity gap is closed by 50 percent over the same period.

The campaign isn’t purely focused on NASH institutions, either. Lane told the audience that the organization’s goal applied to all of higher education. But aside from a \$55,000 initial investment from NASH, the organization was relying on its members to support the effort.

“There’s some checkbooks and pens in the back of the room, I think,” Lane quipped to the system leaders.

Nancy Zimpher, director of NASH’s Power of Systems campaign and the former chancellor of the State University of New York System, is confident in public systems’ power to reverse the larger narrative around higher education.

“Graduates are three and a half times more likely to significantly improve their income than those who don’t attend college. By moving beyond competition and toward collaboration, systems will ensure that the value proposition is even greater,” she wrote in a statement. “College is worth it, and we’re going to prove it.”

**WFYI**  
**Indiana colleges, universities make pitches to lawmakers amid funding formula debate**  
**By Brandon Smith**  
**December 9, 2022**

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education wants state lawmakers to rethink the formula for funding higher ed.

But that proposal isn’t being met with universal praise.

The issue was debated in hearings at the State Budget Committee this week.

The old funding formula prioritized improvements in completing degrees. The commission said the new formula should be broader. Commissioner Chris Lowery said it should include improvements in the percentage of high schoolers who go to college, degree completion and keeping graduates in Indiana.

“Having those students be in front of employers, employers in front of those students, to help them stay here instead of going to neighboring or other states when they’re completing,” Lowery said.

Ivy Tech President Sue Ellspermann said she welcomes the new model. But she urged lawmakers not to completely forget the emphasis on degree completion – which has what Ivy Tech has focused on.

“We would hope to be held harmless because we did the work these last years,” Ellspermann said.

Join the conversation and sign up for the Indiana Two-Way. Text "Indiana" to 73224. Your comments and questions in response to our weekly text help us find the answers you need on statewide issues and throughout the legislative session.

Indiana University President Pamela Whitten said she welcomes greater transparency in how colleges and universities are funded by the state.

“I really had a hard time understanding the last formula,” Whitten said. “Hopefully, I was not the only one in that situation.”

Whitten became IU's president in July 2021, but this is her first legislative session working on a new state budget.

Many of the schools made critical workforce needs a key part of their pitches to state lawmakers for new funding.

Inflation was a common theme among several presentations. University presidents like Ball State's Geoffrey Mearns touted their efforts to keep school costs as low as possible while lamenting a seeming lack of help from the state.

"There has been a disparity for at least a decade between inflation and the very modest increase in operating appropriations for each institution," Mearns said.

The universities' funding pitches were also geared towards addressing workforce shortages – like outgoing Purdue President Mitch Daniels asking lawmakers for \$89 million to build a new nursing and pharmacy education facility.

"We have grown our nursing program as fast as we could within the space available," Daniels said. "But I think everyone knows the need for nurses. Our program is top-rated."

**Indiana Capital Chronicle**  
**Innovation on behalf of first-generation college students**  
**By Addie Angelov**  
**December 13, 2022**

I am a first-generation college student. Two generations of my family worked extremely hard to get me to college. I remember watching my grandmother study every night at the kitchen table to earn her GED while I was in high school. I am proud to be the beneficiary of their efforts and hope to honor them in the work I do to support others in making a similar jump.

As a student-athlete at Marian College (now University), I was supported and flourished in a community that was student-focused and individualized. They made it easy to succeed and hard to fail. I chose to become a teacher and then a professor to specifically support students like myself who were learning to navigate the educational system on their own.

As an educational researcher, I try to keep an eye on higher education policy and changes to the system that support first-generation college students. Over the last decade the state of Indiana has quietly worked to ensure that more and more students can earn the title of first-generation college student.

### **State leadership**

Under the leadership of Commissioner Teresa Lubbers, Indiana began an aggressive policy agenda to blur the lines between college and high school with the dual credit initiative and implementing the Indiana College Core. Commissioner Lubbers retired with a record that mirrors that of a hall-of-fame baller when it comes to championing opportunities for Indiana's aspiring first-generation college students. She passed her legacy on to another first-generation college student, Chris Lowery.

Prior to his current role as Commissioner, Lowery served on the Batesville school board and leveraged opportunities from the K-12 sector, the community college system and the business community to ensure that students in the Batesville schools were able to gain all the opportunities that dual credit and dual enrollment had to offer. As Commissioner he is laser-focused on implementing the Indiana College Core across all Indiana high schools and universities.

He and his staff are racing toward an aggressive 3-year goal of 100% participation. This is no small feat, but as he puts it, "Every high school student in Indiana deserves access to this opportunity."

We have seen a troubling trend with a 12 percentage-point decrease in college-going rate in the last five years. That number jumps when you disaggregate for students who took dual credit classes and if students complete the Indiana College Core that number jumps to a 90% college-going rate. Additionally, students who complete the Indiana College Core perform better than their peers during their first year of college."

### **Putting in the work**

With all the policy initiatives taking hold, it falls on high school educators to bring these opportunities to reality. Kevin Teasley and his team at GEO Academies have been at the forefront of supporting high school students make their college dreams a reality for more than 20 years.

GEO focuses on supporting students navigating poverty and many of those are first-generation college students. As Teasley shares, "It's not just enough to get high school kids college credits and it's not enough to get them to college. We must do more. Our average student leaves us with 30 college credits, but that's not good enough. Our high school students need to be on college campuses, in college classes with other college students, taught by college professors that don't coddle them like high school teachers. We can't just get them there, we have to make sure they are prepared to succeed." Teasley's passion has led him to sharing his work specific to early college with the Louisiana Commission on Higher Education with hopes of expanding these life-changing successes more broadly.

Indiana is known nationally for leading in the area of educational innovation. We have leveraged autonomy and choice in ways that other states strive to achieve. First-generation college students, like myself and Commissioner Lowery, are lucky to be in a state that recognizes their value and works tirelessly on their behalf.

**Fort Wayne Journal Gazette**  
**Indiana's public colleges mark fall semesters with flat enrollment overall**  
**By Ashley Sloboda**  
**November 18, 2022**

Statewide enrollment at public colleges generally remained flat this fall as most reported fewer students, with exceptions including the flagship campuses for Indiana and Purdue universities. Among private colleges, some in northeast Indiana touted record numbers despite years of declining college-going rates, which fell to 53% for the high school graduating class of 2020, according to the most recent data available.

Meanwhile, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education recently sought to understand why Hoosiers pursue or don't pursue a college education. In-depth interviews with more than 100 people and a survey of 1,254 others revealed two key themes, a news release said: College is too expensive, and college isn't necessary.

“I think we’re still facing that challenge of the value perception,” Commissioner Chris Lowery said, noting enrollment among undergraduate residents is down 17% from 2017.

Lowery and other officials hope a new campaign – the Education Value Movement – will help stem the falling college-going rate and encourage more people to pursue some form of education or training after high school.

Efforts include equipping trusted messengers – including educators, nonprofits and faith-based groups – with tools and resources to encourage prospective students to seek a degree or credential.

“It is important to approach the college conversation in ways that don’t automatically turn people off the idea,” Lowery said, “and that starts with acknowledging the skepticism, helping students and adult learners navigate the cost and connecting everyone to the myriad resources Indiana makes available.”

Regional Purdue, IU enrollment This fall marked the first time since at least 2018 that the number of degree-seeking students increased at Indiana’s public colleges and universities, but the 144-person gain represented only a 0.1% change from the previous fall’s total of 239,799 students. Enrollment has dropped by 9% since 2017, according to the commission, which annually produces a fall census enrollment summary.

Along with providing statewide information, the report breaks down head counts by two-year and four-year institutions; undergraduate and graduate students; resident and non-resident students; and individual campuses.

Two-year institutions – which saw their head count drop by 7.1% the previous fall – collectively reported a 4.4% gain this fall, although enrollment remained down by 21.4% compared with fall 2017.

Enrollment at four-year schools fell by 1.1%, with Purdue University Fort Wayne reporting a similar loss – 1.9%, for a total of 6,092 students compared with 6,211 the previous fall.

Purdue Fort Wayne enrolled a record number of international students – 339 compared with 224 the previous fall, a 51% increase, said Krissy Surface, vice chancellor for enrollment management and the student experience. Together, the fall’s international students represented 54 countries.

Many international students come to Fort Wayne through the redirect process, which involves the regional campus recruiting applicants who weren’t admitted to the flagship campus in West Lafayette, Surface said.

“There are students who want to be in the (Purdue) system,” she said.

Purdue Fort Wayne’s enrollment strategy also includes a focus on student retention, which has been a problem area but is improving, Surface said. For example, the university experienced a retention increase of 5.5% in fall 2022 compared with fall 2021.

The commission doesn’t provide IU Fort Wayne enrollment data – that’s included in IUPUI’s head count – but the local campus reported “steady” fall enrollment of 913 undergraduate students and 123 graduate students across seven schools.

Deborah Garrison, IU Fort Wayne vice chancellor and dean, said the head count is encouraging considering a national trend in higher education toward declining enrollment.

“This year’s enrollment of more than 1,000 students demonstrates IU Fort Wayne’s commitment to educating the next generation of health professionals and leaders in our community,” Garrison said in a statement. “With a critical workforce shortage in the health care industry, we will do everything we can to support the needs of Fort Wayne and the northeast Indiana region.”

David Chappell, IU Fort Wayne director of enrollment management, said leaders are optimistic about spring enrollment because the campus is experiencing higher-than-normal interest in its health professions programs, as indicated by an increase in applications and admissions.

### **Breaking records**

This fall was a record-breaking semester for at least three private colleges in northeast Indiana.

Trine University's head count increased by 56.6% from the previous fall with a total of 8,446 students. The tally included a record 2,287 students at its Angola campus; more than 3,000 students in hybrid graduate programs at Trine's education center in Detroit; and almost 500 students in similar programs in Phoenix, a news release said.

"Trine University prides itself on its innovative, flexible approach in providing an education that meets the needs of our students and the demands of industry, an approach that is validated in these unprecedented enrollment numbers," university President Earl Brooks II said in a statement.

Huntington University, which has grown almost 30% in the last decade, reached 1,428 students – a new high, a news release said. The 64 additional students this fall represented a 4.7% increase.

The university's home campus in Huntington welcomed 978 undergraduate students while its site in Peoria, Arizona, enrolled 154, the release said.

"This year's class is the largest number of incoming students on record," President Sherilyn Emberton said in a statement. "We are seeing encouraging growth at each of our locations, with particularly exciting growth in Arizona, which has grown by 77% since its opening in 2017."

Grace College had a record 1,307 undergraduate students at its Winona Lake campus. The school credited the high enrollment to recruiting its second-largest incoming class of 465 students and a strong retention rate. Overall enrollment totaled 2,069 students.

### **Boosting enrollment**

Officials continue to work on an initiative that's seen success elsewhere in boosting undergraduate enrollment, said Lowery, the commissioner for higher education.

The pre-admissions initiative would use high school students' GPAs and SAT scores to let them know which schools they might be accepted at statewide, Lowery said, noting Indiana is studying a model implemented in Idaho.

It would "help students know the options they might have (in Indiana)," Lowery said. "I'd love to keep them here."

Lowery said Indiana has a great story to tell about the value of higher education. When adjusted for inflation, he said, tuition and fees at four-year, public Indiana colleges have declined by 7% over the last year.

The Indiana State Budget Committee's recent decision to increase funding for the Frank O'Bannon Grant – the state's primary need-based financial aid program – should further help affordability, Lowery said.

The approved award amounts will go into effect during the 2023-24 academic year, allowing for maximum awards of \$12,400 for students attending private institutions and \$6,200 for students at public institutions, a news release said. It noted the 35% increase returns the award to 2008-09 levels when adjusting for inflation.

“That was really encouraging,” Lowery said.

**WSBT 22**  
**Operation Education: Fewer Indiana High School grads choosing college, equity gaps grow**  
**By Kristin Bien**  
**December 19, 2022**

Fewer Indiana High School students are choosing college after graduation.

New numbers are due out this spring, but some believe the downward trend is expected to continue.

The 2022 Indiana College Readiness Report shows the college-going rate for Indiana High Schoolers is at its lowest point in recent history.

**What do the numbers show?**

53 percent of Indiana’s 2020 high school graduates went straight to college.

In 2015, 65 percent of Indiana’s high school graduates went straight to college.

That is down 12 percentage points over 5 years.

While all races and ethnicities declined in college-going rates, black and Hispanic/Latino students went to college at a lower rate their white and Asian peers.

The report also shows that within Indiana’s 2020 high school cohort, 61 percent of females went to college compared to 46 percent of males.

The data shows rural students are less likely to go to college than non-rural students. 54 percent of non-rural students went to college right after high school compared to 49 percent of rural students.

The report states, more Hoosiers still go to college than the number of those who don’t.

**Local impact**

As President and CEO of the South Bend Regional Chamber of Commerce, Jeff Rea spends a lot of time talking with local businesses and prospective local business about what our area has to offer.

“It is the number one thing they ask about these days when they are thinking about coming to our community,” says Rea, “they want to understand our workforce and the pipeline of talent that will ultimately feed them.”

Rea also says that “pipeline of talent” must include workers of all education levels.



“Three principle industries here drive our economy. It is healthcare, it is higher ed, and it is manufacturing. Those are the three principal industries where most people work,” says Rea, “and when you think about two of those three in particular have that big higher ed requirement.”

It is one of the reasons, Rea says, the business community wants to see more people in this area go to college or get some type of education beyond high school.

“As we were doing our regional strategic plan, we said, gosh in order to move our economy the way we think it needs to be and compete with other areas we have one overarching goal and that is to raise per capita personal income, and we have five goals that contribute to that in our study area,” says Rea.

Rea is referring to the Regional Economic Development Strategy.

One of the plan’s main goals is to raise the post-secondary attainment levels from 30 to 50 percent in the area.

That is because, statistics show, the more education a person has, the more money they will make.

The latest numbers from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows in 2021 people with degrees made more money on a weekly basis and had a lower unemployment rate.

This is why, there is alarm at the steep decline in Indiana's college-going rate.

“There are clear economic benefits that come with greater levels of education,” says Chris Lowery, the new Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education.

### **Why the decline?**

“It’s really about the fabric of what we call civil society. How we make all of this work. From work, to civic engagement, to volunteerism, because if you have the opportunity and ability to attain economically and socially and so forth, you are more engaged,” says Lowery.

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education plans and coordinates with the state’s public institutions align with the needs of students and the state. It often works with private colleges as well.

The Commission also administers Indiana’s financial aid programs.

Lowery says Indiana’s sharp decline in the college-going rate is likely due to the impact of the pandemic, but that the numbers have been trending downward for around 10 years.

The Commission and other partners including the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet undertook an 18-month research project to understand why fewer Hoosiers “are – or increasingly aren’t – enrolling in or promoting college.”

“Indiana’s current and future growth is directly related to the level of our skilled workforce,” Governor Eric Holcomb said in a news release in November.

The research found many adult learners, parents and current high school students felt “college is too expensive” and “college isn’t necessary.”

Last month, the Commission launched a movement to encourage more Hoosier students and adult learners to pursue some form of education or training beyond high school.

The Education Value Movement is meant to help step the college-going decline and encourage more students to pursue some form of education or training beyond high school.

Football Hall of Famer and Indiana College graduate, Jerome Bettis even signed on to participate in the movement.

Lowery says the movement is about getting a new message out to potential college students and their families.

“When adjusted for inflation, tuition and fees at four-year, public Indiana colleges have gone down by 7 percent over the last year, said Lowery.

### **Positive signs**

The latest data from the Indiana College Readiness Report also shows that there are factors that reveal a stronger likelihood for students to go to college.

62 percent of 2020 high school graduates had some form of Early College Credit.

Academic Honors diploma earners were far more likely to go to college.

1,802 High School seniors in 2020 had earned the Indiana College Core.

That is a 30-hour block of credits that transfer to Indiana’s public institutions.

Lowery says more schools will be offering these credits in the future.

21st Century Scholars are nearly three times as likely to go to college as their low-income peers.

The Scholars program is Indiana’s early-college promise program designed to make college more affordable.

Lowery says, “it is critical that we ensure all Hoosiers can access the opportunity that education and training beyond high school can provide.”

### **What’s next?**

“So there are a number of things that we have really been leaning into, some of which are going to come up in this forthcoming legislative session that begins in January,” says Lowery.

Lowery says the Commission will be calling to auto-enroll all eligible students into the 21st Century Scholars Program. Currently, fewer than half of eligible students enroll despite its success at helping students consider college after graduation.

The Commission is also recommending increasing funding for the Frank O’Bannon Grant, which annually helps over 30,000 Hoosiers afford college. Lowery says funding for the grant was cut during the recession and amounts have not yet recovered. He is asking for a 35 percent increase now.

The Commission will also be recommending increasing the number of students earning the Indiana College Core.

Rea and the Chamber will also be taking local steps to encourage and support area students on their aspirations beyond high school.

He will also be watching the legislative session as well.

On Wednesday, December 21st, Operation Education is looking at what Indiana's High Schools are doing to help students decide on college and make it more affordable.