

HLC Membership by the Numbers

2023 Institutional Update

Introduction

HLC member institutions have continued to persevere through, and adapt to, the enormous challenges of post-pandemic conditions and new realities impacting the educational ecosystem. Their quality, strength and stability are the foundation for the success of students and communities that they serve. The following analysis provides a broad overview, coupled with historical context and national trends, of student enrollment, program completion, institutional workforce, and financial resources of the membership based on the 2023 Institutional Update data.

Institutional Update Background

HLC member institutions provide annual updates on organizational health through the [Institutional Update](#). It is held each spring in alignment with the IPEDS Surveys' data collection schedule. Institutions provide information about enrollment, completion, finances, academic offerings, off-campus activities, and other topics. Based on the available data, HLC assesses institutional risk levels and conducts follow-up with institutions that may be at risk of not meeting the quality standards of accreditation.

Membership Update

In academic year 2022-23, three member institutions, Iowa Wesleyan University (IA), Finlandia University (MI), and Chatfield College (OH), ceased operations and voluntarily resigned their HLC accreditation. In addition, University of Arizona (AZ) and Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (WI) voluntarily resigned their HLC accreditation.

Student Enrollment Headcount

In fall 2022, HLC member institutions enrolled 4.8 million undergraduate and graduate students, down 1.8 percent in comparison to fall 2021 and 6.5 percent from the fall 2019 level. The downward trend in enrollment reflects continuing challenges for many institutions to stabilize and recover in the post-pandemic era. Nationally, total enrollment in fall 2022 was estimated at 18.2 million students, down only 0.7% in comparison to the prior year, according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (Current Term Enrollment Estimates, Fall 2022).

The data on student enrollment by institutional control among HLC membership shows that tribal colleges had another strong enrollment increase in fall 2022 (+2.77%), following a healthy gain of 8.49% in the previous year. While enrollment at private for-profit (FP) institutions had a slight increase in fall 2022 (+0.4%), enrollment at public and private not-for-profit (NFP) institutions declined 2.13% and 1.66%, respectively. See Table 1.

Table 1
Postsecondary Enrollment by Institutional Control: Fall 2020 to Fall 2022

Fall Term	2020		2021		2022	
Control	N	% Change	N	% Change	N	% Change
Public	3,560,798	-4.17%	3,505,207	-1.56%	3,430,701	-2.13%
Private NFP	1,015,541	-1.38%	997,208	-1.81%	980,639	-1.66%
Private FP	387,860	3.75%	371,569	-4.20%	372,945	0.37%
Tribal	11,264	-7.85%	12,220	8.49%	12,559	2.77%
All Institutions	4,975,463	-3.04%	4,886,204	-1.79%	4,796,844	-1.83%

Source: HLC, Data as of 8/25/2023

Enrollment breakdowns by student level shows that undergraduate student enrollment in fall 2022 was down by 2.24% while graduate student enrollment was flat (-0.2%) in comparison to the prior year level. At the undergraduate level, full-time enrollment among HLC institutions declined at a smaller rate than part-time enrollment (-1.24% and -4.21%). In fall 2022, full-time graduate enrollment at HLC institutions increased 1.5%, but part-time graduate enrollment was down 2.08% from the previous year's levels.

Data at the national levels, per National Student Clearinghouse Research Center's Current Term Enrollment Estimates for fall 2022, showed an overall stabilization in undergraduate enrollment in fall 2022, declining only 0.6%, while undergraduate enrollment at HLC institutions decreased at a higher rate (-2.24%). On the other hand, graduate enrollment at HLC declined at a lower rate than graduate enrollment at national level (-0.21% versus -1.2%). See Table 2.

Table 2**Postsecondary Enrollment by Student Level: Fall 2020 to Fall 2022**

Fall Term	2020		2021		2022	
Student Level	N	% Change	N	% Change	N	% Change
Undergraduate Total	3,994,969	-4.12%	3,901,034	-2.35%	3,813,733	-2.24%
Full-time Undergraduate	2,671,986	-4.15%	2,588,560	-3.12%	2,556,527	-1.24%
Part-time Undergraduate	1,322,983	-4.05%	1,312,474	-0.79%	1,257,206	-4.21%
Graduate Total	980,494	1.62%	985,170	0.48%	983,111	-0.21%
Full-time Graduate	501,651	0.53%	514,534	2.57%	522,275	1.50%
Part time Graduate	478,843	2.79%	470,636	-1.71%	460,836	-2.08%
Grand Total	4,975,463	-3.04%	4,886,204	-1.79%	4,796,844	-1.83%

The number of high school students taking college courses at HLC institutions continued to strengthen. In fall 2022, nearly 700,000 high school-level students enrolled, gaining 10.26% over the fall 2021 level and 14% over the pre-pandemic level in fall 2019. Dual enrollment in public institutions, which accounted for 92% of the total enrollment, gained 10.2% over the prior year, while enrollment at private not-for-profit (7% of the total) increased 12%. Dual enrollment at tribal colleges, though small in comparison to the public and private not-for-profit institutions, had a healthy gain of 4.5%. Lastly, dual enrollment at private for-profit institutions decreased 25% in comparison to fall 2021. See Table 3.

Table 3**Dual Enrollment by Institutional Control: Fall 2020 to Fall 2022**

Fall Term	2020		2021		2022	
Control	N	% Change	N	% Change	N	% Change
Public	536,629	-4.86%	583,271	8.69%	642,705	10.19%
Private NFP	39,691	-9.30%	45,373	14.32%	50,732	11.81%
Private FP	453	28.69%	355	-21.63%	265	-25.35%
Tribal	2,317	1.76%	2,758	19.03%	2,883	4.53%
All Institutions	579,090	-5.13%	631,757	9.09%	696,585	10.26%

Program Completion

HLC member institutions conferred 1.18 million awards in degree program completion in FY 2021–22, a slight decrease (-1.2%) from the previous year’s level. While awards in bachelor’s degree decreased 3.6%, awards in master’s degree programs were flat (-0.1%). On the plus side, awards in associate degree programs gained 2.5%, in doctoral degrees an increase of 4%, and in specialist degrees an additional 11.5%. The overall number of certificate awards conferred in FY 2021–22 jumped 12% from the previous year. The gains at program levels followed divergent directions, as undergraduate certificate program awards were up 15% and graduate certificate program awards were down 6%. See Table 4.

Table 4
Degrees and Certificates Awarded: Fiscal Years 2020 to 2022

Fiscal Year	2020		2021		2022	
Award Level	N	% Change	N	% Change	N	% Change
Associate Degree	247,826	-2.28%	240,618	-2.91%	246,603	2.49%
Bachelor’s Degree	616,199	0.06%	619,829	0.59%	597,330	-3.63%
Master's Degree	257,354	0.52%	267,711	4.02%	267,431	-0.10%
Specialist Degree	3,446	7.42%	3,456	0.29%	3,854	11.52%
Doctoral Degree	57,419	2.19%	58,653	2.15%	61,016	4.03%
Total Degree Awards	1,182,244	-0.22%	1,190,267	0.68%	1,176,234	-1.18%
Undergraduate Certificate	230,484	1.99%	206,197	-10.54%	237,599	15.23%
Graduate Certificate	27,312	-16.13%	37,347	36.74%	35,111	-5.99%
Total Certificate Awards	257,796	-0.29%	243,544	-5.53%	272,710	11.98%

In FY 2021–22 the number of conferred awards in bachelor’s degree programs decreased across institutional control types. Following a sharp increase in the previous year (+38.6%), awards conferred by tribal institutions were down 8.4% this year. Awards in bachelor’s degree programs decreased 6% at private for-profit institutions, 3.8% at public institutions, and 2.45% at private not-for-profit institutions, compared to the previous year. See Table 5.

Table 5
Bachelor’s Degrees Conferred by Institutional Control: Fiscal Years 2020 to 2022

Fall Term	2020		2021		2022	
Control	N	% Change	N	% Change	N	% Change
Public	410,271	1.12%	410,041	-0.06%	394,480	-3.79%
Private NFP	157,546	-1.58%	157,603	0.04%	153,740	-2.45%
Private FP	48,115	-3.25%	51,815	7.69%	48,771	-5.87%
Tribal	267	-6.97%	370	38.58%	339	-8.38%
All Institutions	616,199	0.06%	619,829	0.59%	597,330	-3.63%

Institutional Workforce

The level of employment at HLC member institutions continued to stabilize in fall 2022, gaining 0.6% from the previous year. Among instructional staff members, full-time faculty increased 0.6% and part-time faculty increased 0.06% from the previous year. Among administrative positions, full-time administrators gained 2.5%, while the number of part-time administrators decreased by 1.37%. Lastly, the number of full-time staff positions declined by 1.39%, and the part-time staff positions decreased 0.66%, compared with the prior year’s levels. See Table 6.

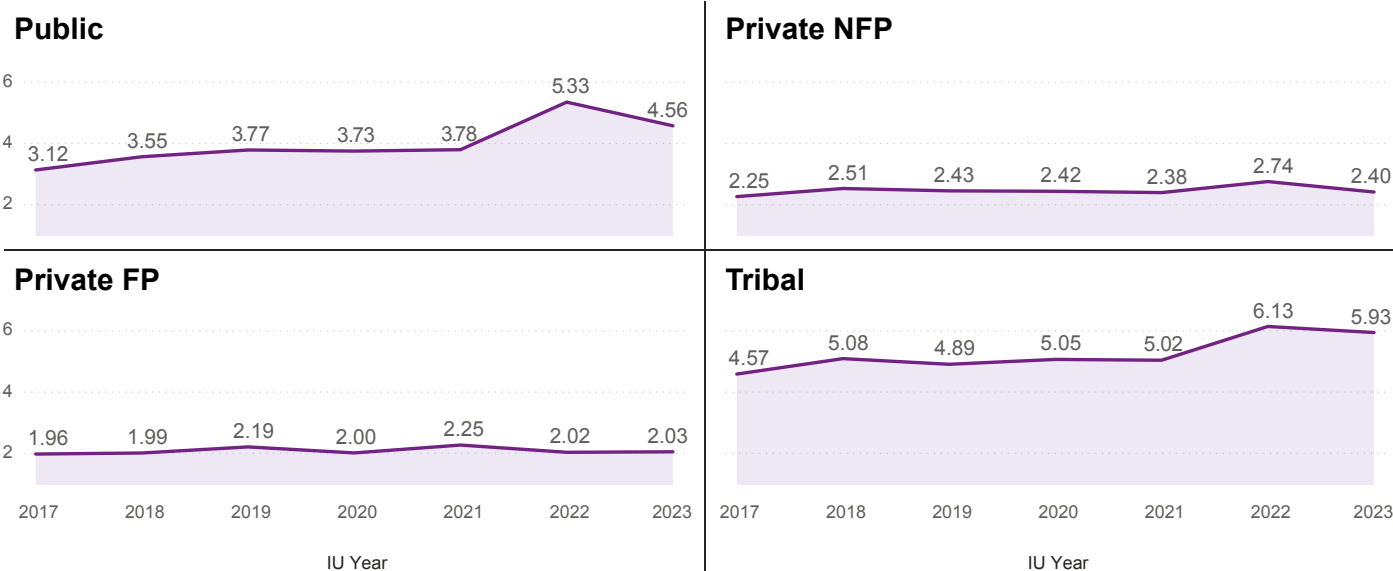
Table 6
Institutional Workforce Headcount: Fall 2020 to Fall 2022

Fall Term	2020		2021		2022	
Employee Type	N	% Change	N	% Change	N	% Change
FT Administrators	323,613	1.95%	322,841	-0.24%	331,051	2.54%
PT Administrators	40,639	-4.44%	39,701	-2.31%	39,159	-1.37%
FT Faculty	231,104	-1.57%	230,571	-0.23%	231,934	0.59%
PT Faculty	283,646	-4.78%	288,047	1.55%	288,207	0.06%
FT Staff	174,984	-7.78%	170,253	-2.70%	167,894	-1.39%
PT Staff	33,720	-18.69%	33,951	0.69%	33,727	-0.66%
All Employees	1,087,706	-3.22%	1,085,364	-0.22%	1,091,972	0.61%

Composite Financial Index

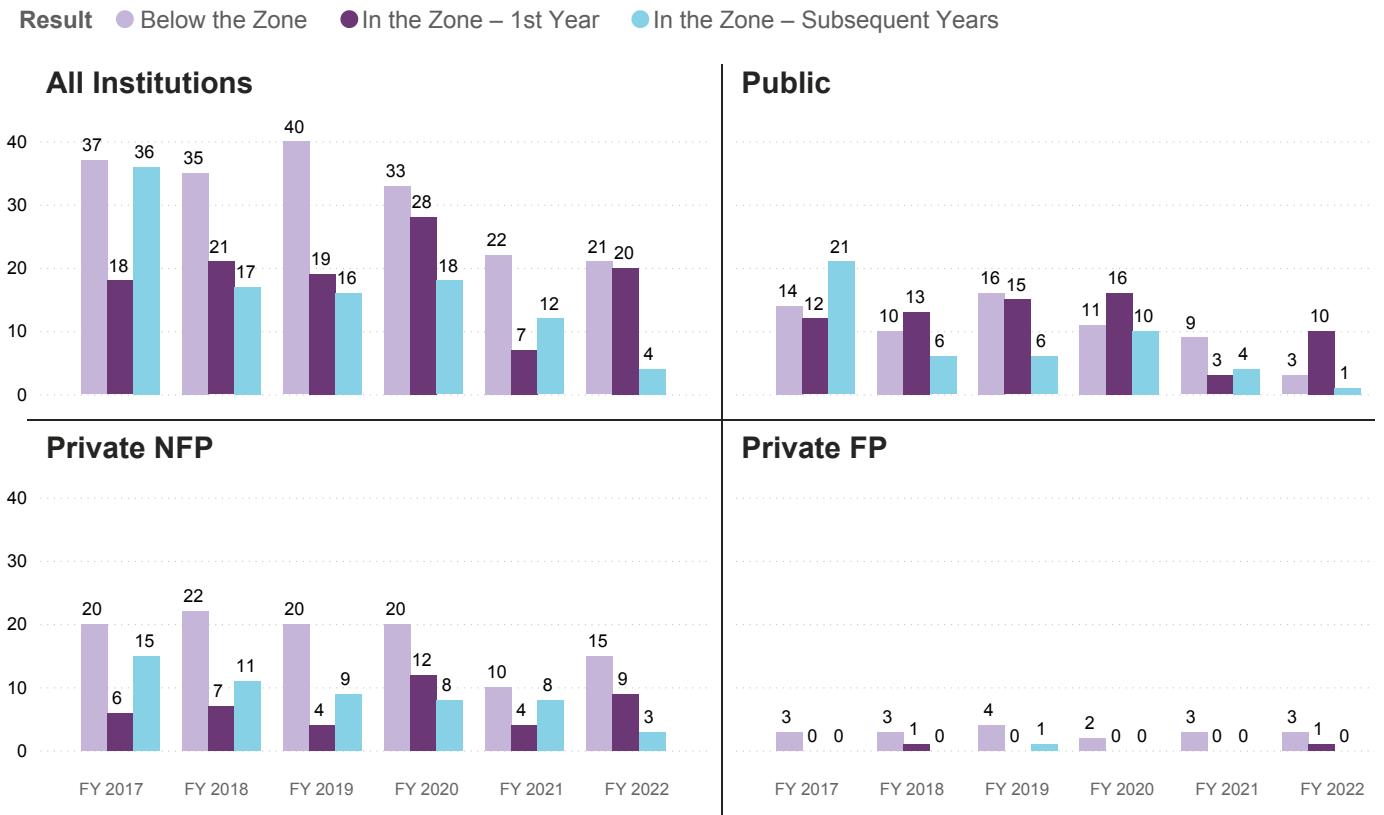
Based on the latest financial data submitted by the institutions, mostly from the fiscal year 2021–22, the average composite financial index was 5.93 among tribal colleges, 4.56 among public institutions, 2.40 among private not-for-profit, and 2.03 among private for-profit institutions. While the average CFI of private for-profit institutions was flat, among public, private not-for-profit, and tribal institutions the average CFI levels decreased in comparison to the prior year’s levels. The prior year increase in CFI levels may be attributed to the inflows of pandemic relief fundings from the federal government. See Figure 1.

Figure 1
Average CFI by Institutional Control, Institutional Update 2017-2023



HLC uses the CFI as an indicator of overall financial health of the institutions and conducts follow-up with institutions when the CFI values fall within or below specific zones that signal potential risk. In the past year, 45 institutions were identified for follow-up based on the results of the financial indicator process. While this number was on par with the previous year's results, it is noted that the number of institutions with a CFI in the zone in the first year increased from 7 to 20 institutions, returning to a level that is more consistent with the trend prior to last year. See Figure 2.

Figure 2
Number of Institutions Required Further Financial Reviews by CFI Values, FY 2017-2022



Visit HLC's website for more information about the [Institutional Update](#) and [financial and non-financial indicators procedure](#).

Reference

National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (n.d.). *Current Term Enrollment Estimates (Fall 2022)*. Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Retrieved August 28, 2023, from https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/researchcenter/viz/CTEE_Fall2022_Report/CTEEFalldashboard