

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees
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From: Joe Rives, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning

Date: December 15, 2017

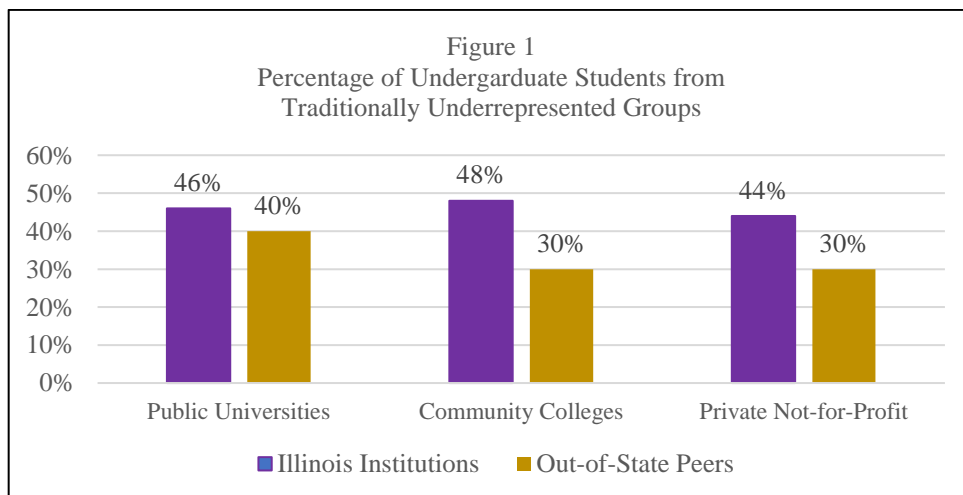
Re: December 2017 Strategic Plan Update

Western Illinois University Board of Trustees Report 17.12/4, *Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation Rate Information* provides trend data on these topics and addresses the competitive landscape of higher education recruitment. This is important background knowledge, as the university community works together in achieving the *Strategic Plan* goals of stabilizing enrollment and increasing retention and graduation rates. To build upon the information provided, this month's *Strategic Plan Update* looks at demographic forecasts for the populations of students that Illinois public higher education will serve in the future. It also seeks you feedback in the drafting process.

In looking at our foundation for the future, Western Illinois University provides a quality, well-rounded education to high-achieving, diverse students. Total minority student enrollment as a percent of total university enrollment increased from 26.3% in fall 2013 to 33.8% in fall 2017.

Similar enrollment trends exist at the Illinois public universities. Table 1A (attached) shows that minority student enrollment as a percent of total statewide enrollment increased from 33.5% in fall 2013 to 35.9% in fall 2016. Ten of the Illinois public universities increased on this measure. Only Chicago State University and the University of Illinois-Springfield had declines.

Fall 2017 data published by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (*IBHE Bulletin, November 17, 2017*) confirms these trends and shows that Illinois is a leader in diversity and inclusion within all sectors of higher education. The Illinois public universities, community colleges, and private not-for-profit institutions all serve a more diverse student population than IBHE-defined out-of-state peers.



Moreover, the Illinois public universities serve a higher percentage of African American Students and Hispanic students than out-of-state peers. Western exceeds out-of-state comparisons for African

American students and is at the average for Hispanic students. The University’s Hispanic student enrollment increased by 152 students (18.1%) between fall 2013 and 2017.

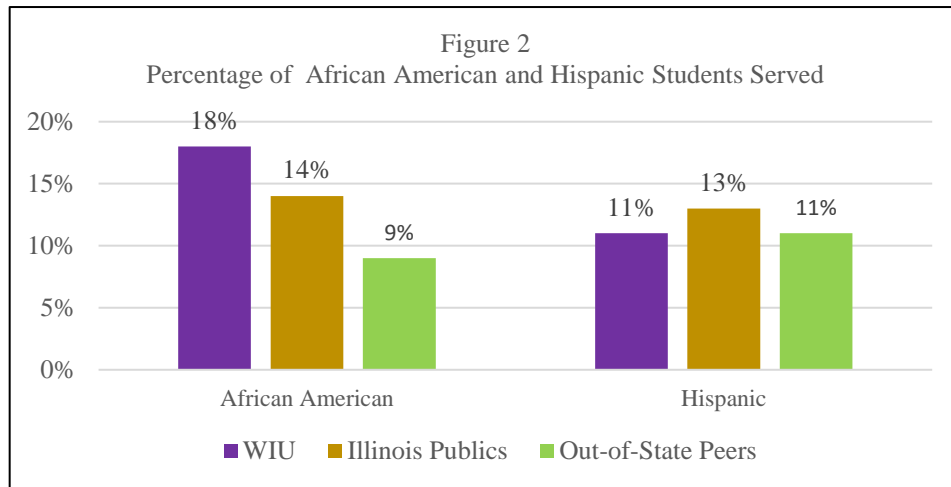
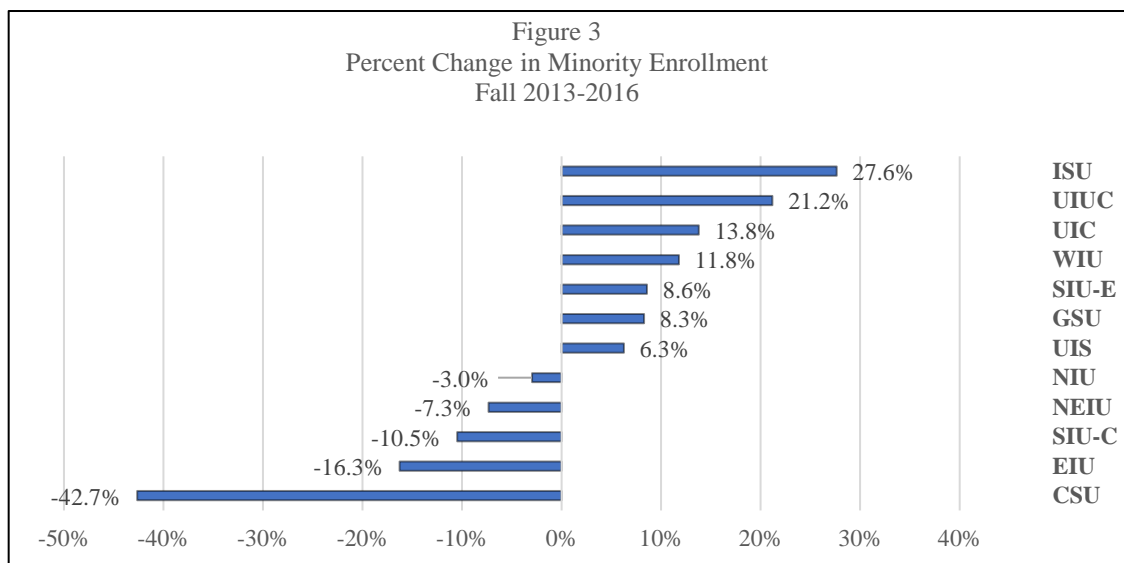
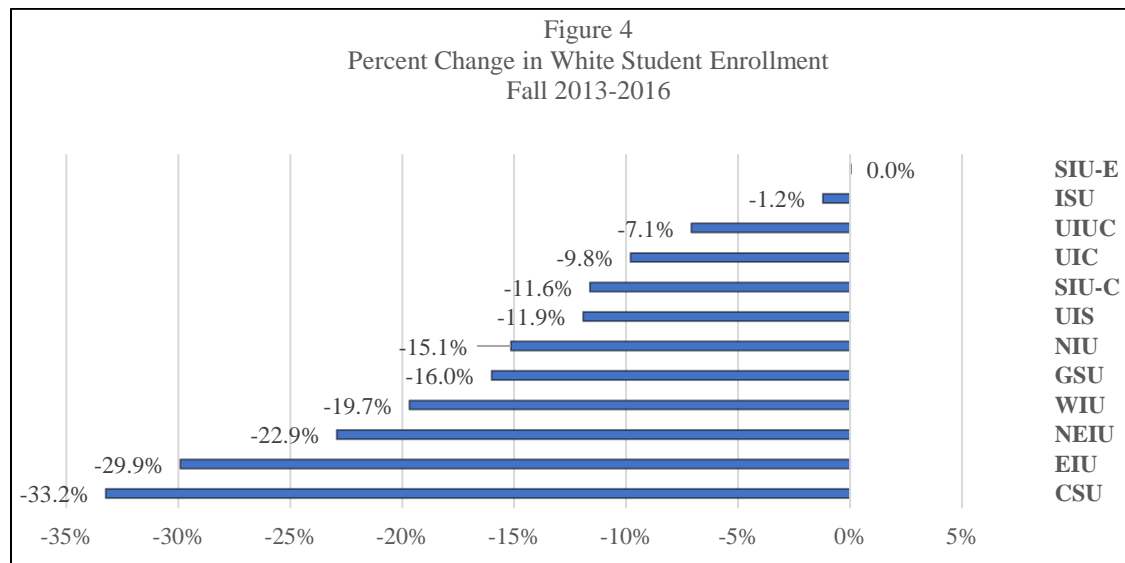


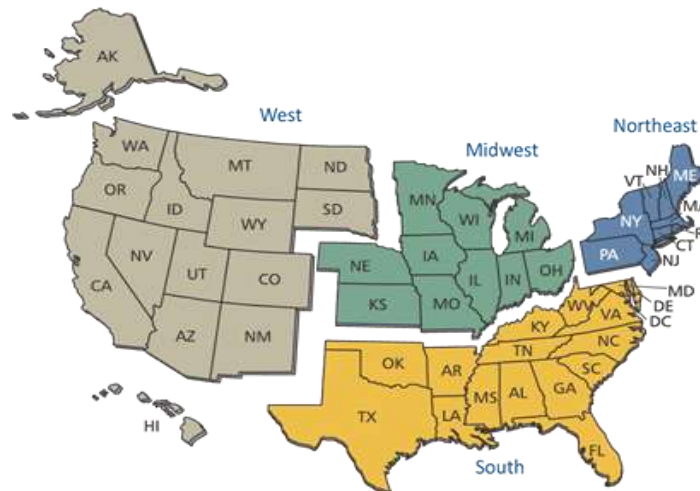
Figure 3 shows that minority student enrollment increased at seven of the 12 Illinois public universities. Data in Table 1B (attached) shows that these institutions had minority student enrollment increases totaling 6,354 students between fall 2013 and fall 2016. Western’s 349 minority student enrollment increase represented 5.5% of the overall increase. Western was the only rural institution to have minority student enrollment increases. Northern Illinois, Southern Illinois -Carbondale, and Eastern Illinois University had declines in this area.



While minority student enrollment has increased at seven Illinois public universities, Figure 4 shows that only one institution (Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville) had an increase in white student enrollment between fall 2013 and 2016. This SIU-E increase was only 4 students. Total white student enrollment at Illinois public universities decreased by 11,767 students (10.7%) during this time. Western had the second smallest decrease for the five former Board of Governors institutions.



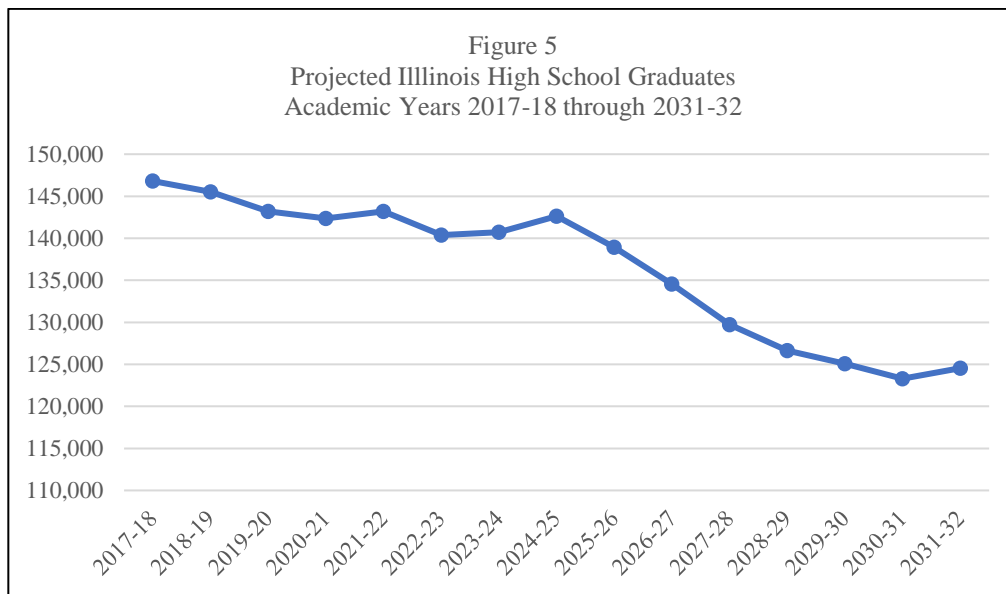
Future recruitment trends show a declining overall pool, but with estimated increases in the number of minority students. Data published by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education provides high school graduates by region according to the map on the right.



The Midwest is projected to have a 65,888 (8.9%) decrease in the number of high school graduates between academic years (AY) 2017-18 and 2031-32. The predicted reduction is from 738,805 to 672,917 graduates during this time. The only racial/ethnic designation predicted to increase are Hispanic graduates by 10.4%, from 7,486 graduates in AY17-18 to 78,793 graduates in AY31-32.

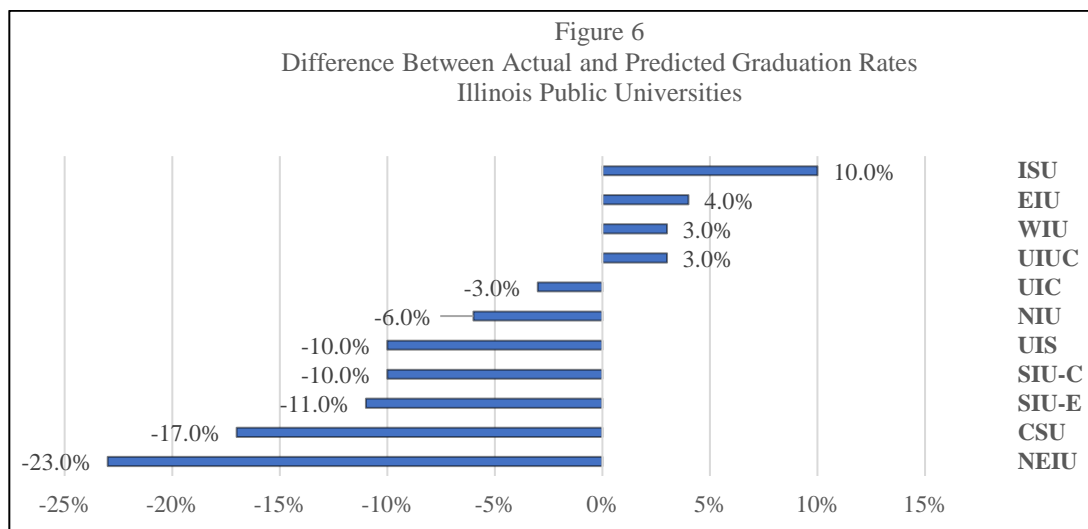
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Illinois' predicted decrease is even larger than the Midwest's. Figure 5 shows that the projected number of high school graduates is expected to decrease by 22,241 graduates (15.2%) between AYs 17-18 and 31-32. The only racial/ethnic groups with projected increases in the number of high school graduates are American Indian/Alaskan Natives (42) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (2,234).



Combined, the data show in this month’s *Strategic Plan Update* show that it will be an increasingly competitive recruitment environment for Illinois colleges and universities. Nevertheless, Western Illinois University is positioned to meet these challenges. Our enrollment is growing where there have been population increases.

Furthermore, Western has been nationally recognized for graduating more students than predicted on the basis of entering student preparation and socioeconomic variables. We are one of only four Illinois public universities that have a positive difference between actual and predicted graduation rates from the most recent data published *US News and World Report* and displayed in Figure 6. Similar positive differences in the University’s graduation rates have been documented by the Pell Institute for the Study and Opportunity in Higher Education, Southern Education Review Board, and the United States Department of Education.



From a retention perspective, Western offers an engaging and supportive environment. Recently published 2017 data from the National Survey of Student Engagement shows that the mean differences in

ratings from second-semester freshmen and seniors at Western Illinois University are statistically significantly higher than those ratings from students at peer Midwestern institutions on the quality of instruction and in the quality student-faculty interactions. Moreover, 83% of Western's seniors compared to only 57% of seniors from public universities in the Great Lakes Region reported participating in learning communities, service learning, research with faculty, internships, study abroad, and/or a senior capstone experience.

With high levels of student engagement, Western Illinois University was one of 11 colleges and universities from across the United States selected for inclusion in the United States Department of Education's (DOE) College Completion Toolkit, *Promising Practices for Improving Student Degree Attainment*. In a similar regard, the University received the Minority Access, Inc. *Commitment to Diversity Award* in 2016 and was featured in the DOE report, *Fulfilling the Promise, Serving the Need*.

Simply stated, Western Illinois University's traditions of excellence position the University well to serve the next generation of students. With this in mind, the Social Responsibility Task Force will be considering even more ways to recruit and retain students. We seek your participation in this process. Please also contact me if have any questions and/or feedback for the continued successful advancement of the *Higher Values in Higher Education 2012-2022*, and/or for the drafting of *Higher Values in Higher Education 2017-2027*.

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