



### A Message From Mason



Mason Dyer  
AIKCU President

This has been a busy winter for the AIKCU team, as you'll see in the stories highlighted here.

In the policy arena, we've connected campus leaders with state and federal elected officials to talk about issues facing our students and institutions. Of course, we're closely watching the General Assembly, with a particular interest in student financial aid funding.

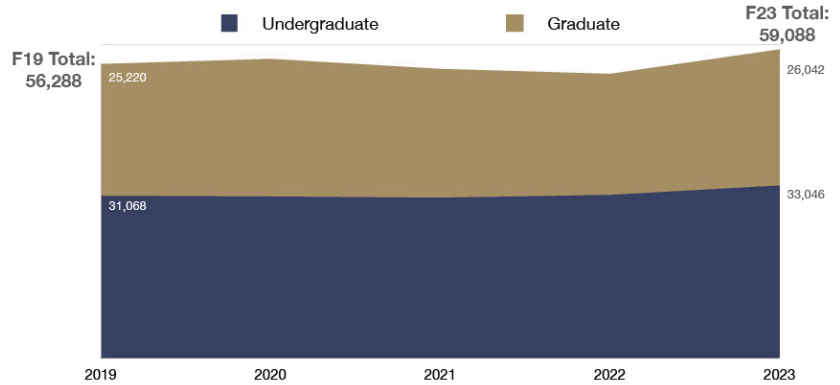
The recently released Fall 2023 enrollment data highlighted here shows that students and families continue to recognize the value proposition offered by Kentucky's independent colleges and universities. While strong recruitment of new students is crucial to this success, the post-pandemic rebound also validates the excellent work of AIKCU faculty and staff to increase student success and retention. Bravo.

The new FAFSA rollout has introduced new challenges and uncertainty to the enrollment environment, but we're thankful to our partners at CPE and KHEAA who collaborated with us to help spread a message of patience and perseverance to students and families.

There is nothing like spring on a small college campus, and I'm looking forward to getting back out to visit AIKCU members over the next few months.

I hope to see you soon.

AIKCU Total Fall Enrollments Fall 2019 - Fall 2023



Source: CPE Database

### Fall 2023 enrollment jumps significantly at Kentucky's independent colleges and universities

Kentucky's independent colleges and universities saw a significant increase in enrollment this year, according to new Fall 2023 enrollment data available from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education.

Total fall enrollment grew by 8.5% at the 18 institutions that make up the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities. There were 4,640 more students enrolling than in Fall 2022.

"This is great news for the commonwealth's independent college campuses," AIKCU President Mason Dyer said. "This year's boost in enrollment tells us that students and families recognize the unique value that our independent colleges and universities offer."

Dyer said that AIKCU members have been making substantial investments to improve student outcomes and retention as they continue to recover from the pandemic. "This renewed momentum confirms that we're focusing on the right things and moving in the right direction."

#### Headcount Breaks Record

Headcount enrollment at AIKCU institutions reached a record 59,088 students for Fall 2023. "This continues a period of phenomenal growth for AIKCU member colleges and universities," Dyer said. "Our overall enrollment is up more than 63% over the last decade."

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### AIKCU FAST FACTS: Fall 2023 Enrollment

- 1 8.5% increase** in total headcount enrollment at AIKCU institutions in Fall 2023.
- 2 4.4% increase** in first-time, full-time students in Fall 2023.



## **AIKCU, CPE, KHEEA team up on editorial to address FAFSA delays**

The late release of the new FAFSA form is causing delays in students receiving news of their financial aid packages from the U.S. Department of Education.

To explain the situation and encourage anxious students and parents to be patient during the waiting period, AIKCU President Mason Dyer joined CPE President Aaron Thompson and KHEEA Executive Director/CEO Jo Carole Ellis to author a joint guest editorial that went out to Kentucky media. Find the full editorial and a PDF to download at [www.aikcu.org/Advocacy/Financial Aid](http://www.aikcu.org/Advocacy/Financial Aid).

## **Turnout strong for NAICU Advocacy Day in D.C.**

Hill Day 2024 was a success! Presidents from six AIKCU member colleges, several of their senior staff, and AIKCU staff traveled to D.C. to meet with Kentucky's congressional delegation Feb. 6.

Talk of the day: the importance of federal financial aid to AIKCU students, meeting the challenges of new regulations, and the key role AIKCU colleges are playing in cultivating talent to address the state's workforce needs.

See more at [www.aikcu.org/News](http://www.aikcu.org/News).

## **Fall enrollment jumps significantly**

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### **Undergrad & Grad Enrollment Up**

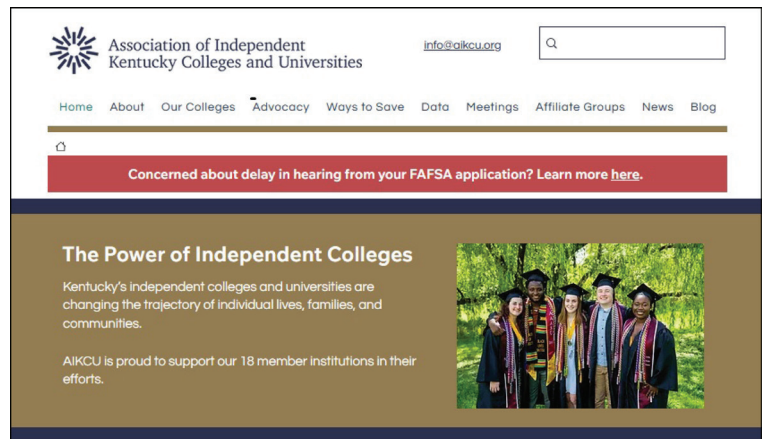
While much of that growth has been driven by the expansion of graduate enrollment (up 255% since 2013), Fall 2023 saw significant growth at the undergraduate level as well.

Total Fall 2023 undergraduate enrollment at AIKCU institutions increased by 5.6% to approximately 33,000 students. Nearly 24,000 of those undergraduate students were enrolled full time in the fall.

First-time, full-time enrollment among AIKCU institutions (the traditional entering class) increased 4.4%. Fall 2023 AIKCU graduate enrollment increased by 12.4% over Fall 2022 after a slight dip last fall.

The 8.5% enrollment growth at independent colleges and universities played a large part in Kentucky's 4.4% overall statewide enrollment growth. Total fall enrollment was up 1.3% at public four-year universities and 6.5% within the Kentucky Community & Technical College System, for an overall increase of 3.3% within the public sector.

Explore the data in the CPE Data Center at [www.cpe.ky.gov](http://www.cpe.ky.gov).



## **Check out AIKCU's new website!**

We're excited to introduce AIKCU's new website. The site went live Feb. 1 and has been redesigned to better serve AIKCU members and the public. We hope you'll make this your go-to site for AIKCU news, advocacy updates, ways to save, data and stats, meeting highlights, and much more.

Explore the site at [www.aikcu.org](http://www.aikcu.org).

### **SPRING MEETINGS**

#### **AIKCU Library Directors Spring Meeting**

April 12, 10 a.m. ET, Asbury University, Wilmore

#### **AIKCU Chief Academic Officers Spring Meeting**

May 3, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. ET, Georgetown College, Georgetown

#### **AIKCU Executive Committee**

May 15, 2-3 p.m. ET, Virtual

#### **AIKCU Board of Directors**

10 a.m.-2 p.m. ET, Midway University, Midway

See full schedule at [www.aikcu.org/Meetings](http://www.aikcu.org/Meetings).