



Early signs point to strong fall enrollment for AIKCU members



Mason Dyer
AIKCU President

With the fall semester now in full swing, AIKCU's member campuses are buzzing with activity.

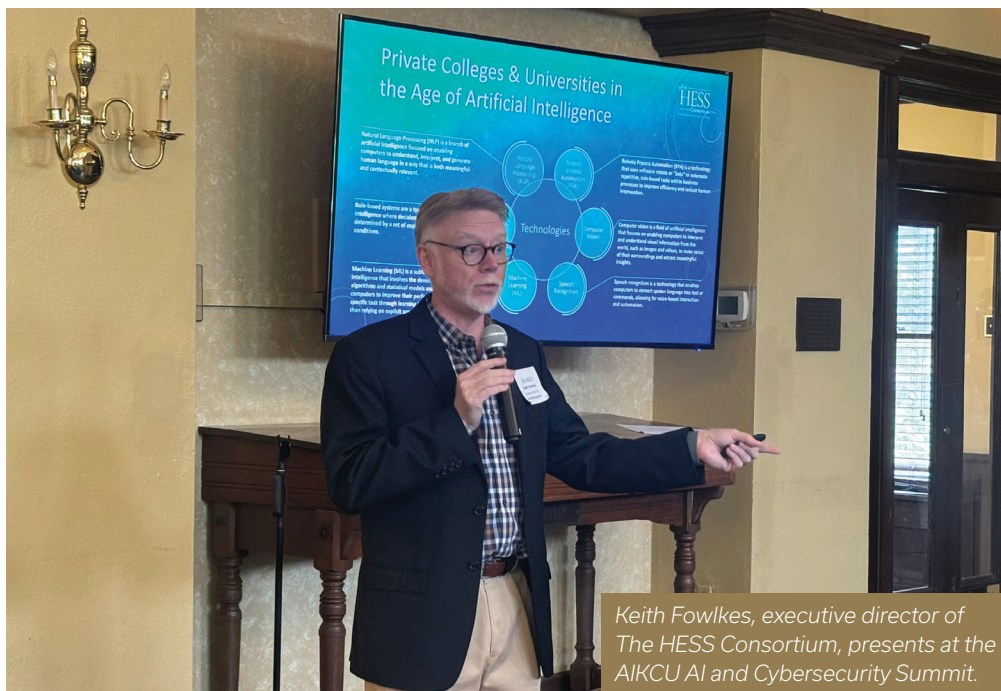
Each year I try to ensure that I get to each AIKCU institution at least once, and since August I have already had the opportunity to visit five of our 18 campuses.

My conversations with presidents, faculty, staff, and students during these visits reinforce the critical role these small colleges and universities fill both in preparing graduates for lives and careers of purpose and as anchors in their communities.

Kentucky's independent colleges and universities were founded in communities like Barbourville, Berea, Columbia, Campbellsville, Williamsburg, Danville, and Pippa Passes for a reason — because someone identified a need and had a vision for what education could bring to that community.

Today, AIKCU institutions remain grounded in their missions, committed to student success, and committed to those same Kentucky communities.

While the environment for all of higher education continues to be challenging, early fall indicators suggest the overall enrollment outlook for the sector remains positive in Kentucky.



Keith Fowlkes, executive director of The HESS Consortium, presents at the AIKCU AI and Cybersecurity Summit.

AIKCU AI and Cybersecurity Summit examines impact on independent colleges and universities

A group of about 40 chief information officers and librarians from Kentucky's independent colleges and universities gathered at Centre College Aug. 4 for an AI and Cybersecurity Summit hosted by AIKCU and its presenting partner, The HESS Consortium.

Keith Fowlkes, founder and executive director of HESS, discussed the economic impact of AI and how an institu-

tion can take an AI-centered approach to planning, governance, and ethics.

Dave Minnaar of Intel Corp. led a session titled "Intel's Vision for the Future of AI."

In addition, Adam Vedra of Moran Technology Consulting discussed "Current & Future AI Challenges in Cybersecurity."



Chief information officers and librarians from AIKCU institutions get an update on AI and higher education at a summit hosted by AIKCU and The HESS Consortium in August.

AIKCU welcomes new presidents at Kentucky Wesleyan College, Alice Lloyd College

Stephen Germic was named interim president of **Kentucky Wesleyan College** in Owensboro July 1. He assumed the position after serving as provost and senior vice president of Academic Affairs at Kentucky Wesleyan.

He succeeds President James P. Cousins, who left KWC to become president of Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.



*Stephen Germic
Interim President
Kentucky Wesleyan College*

For the first time, an alumnus will serve as president of **Alice Lloyd College** in Pippa Passes. **Charles Marshall**, ALC Class of 1999, took on the role of president Aug. 1. He previously served ALC as a trustee, provost, and vice president for Academic Affairs.

He succeeds President Jim Stepp, who transitioned to the role of chancellor.



*Charles Marshall
President
Alice Lloyd College*

Brescia University's student body president to represent AIKCU students on statewide board

Kaitlyn Orange, president of the Brescia University Student Government Association, has been appointed to the 2026-27 Kentucky Board of Student Body Presidents. She will represent AIKCU and serve as the convener of Kentucky's independent college student leaders.

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as the AIKCU student representative for the 2026-2027 academic year," said Orange, who is from Manitou, Kentucky. "Being able to connect with and learn from Student Body presidents across the state is something I am genuinely looking forward to. I hope to contribute to a culture of service and connection, and make a positive impact for students in the months ahead."

Orange is a senior majoring in English. She is vice president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and a member of the Women's Track and Field Team. Her awards include the Spirit of St. Angela Merici Award in 2026, the St. Catherine Scholar-Athlete Women's Track and Field Award in 2025 and 2026, and track and field awards for Champion of Character in 2025 and 2026.

"Kaitlyn Orange is an outstanding student-athlete who embodies what we call the Brescia Difference," Brescia President Madison C. Silvert said.

"Through her efforts and influence in academics, athletics, student government, and other activities, she puts into practice the university's values of service and leadership. Kaitlyn will make a great representative to the Kentucky Board of Student Body Presidents."



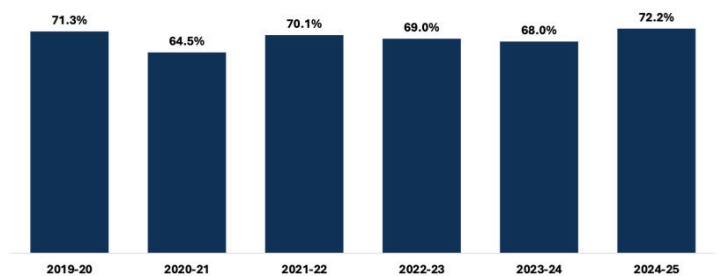
*Kaitlyn Orange
SGA President
Brescia University*

The KBSBP advises the legislative and executive branches, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, and Kentucky's university presidents on postsecondary education issues and the concerns of college students.

Post-Covid momentum sees retention rebound at AIKCU institutions

After a dip during and after the Covid pandemic, retention at AIKCU colleges and universities bounced back to 72.2% in 2024-25, exceeding the pre-Covid retention rate of 71.3% in 2019-2020.

AIKCU retention has rebounded to surpass pre-Covid rates



Retention Rate: Percentage of first-time, degree- or credential-seeking students enrolled in the summer or fall of their first year who are still enrolled at the same institution the following fall.
Source: CPE

