

**REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS IN ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION**

Submitted for: Information.

Summary: This annual report presents information on minority, female, and disabled students and staff at Illinois colleges and universities. This year's report focused on academic achievement. The report demonstrates that Illinois higher education institutions have a wide range of programs designed to support academic achievement of underrepresented groups at all educational levels, including K-12. The report also indicates that the overall number of minority and disabled students enrolling and receiving degrees continues to increase.

Action Requested: None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS IN ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION**

This annual report presents information on minority, female, and disabled students and staff at Illinois colleges and universities. Beginning with the June 2002 report, institutions entered into a three-year cycle to bring attention to specific areas directly related to the participation of underrepresented groups in higher education. This year's report focuses on academic achievement of underrepresented groups. The report consists of three main sections.

The first section provides examples of the numerous types of programs public colleges and universities have implemented for the purpose of supporting academic achievement of underrepresented groups. These programs support students at all educational levels, including K-12. Institutional evaluations of these programs indicated that many of these programs have been successful in increasing the academic achievement among minority, female, and disabled students.

The second section provides an overview of campus-level data commonly used by institutions to determine the academic achievement of all students, such as freshmen retention rates and six-year graduation rates. These rates should be evaluated in the context of an institution's mission and while taking into consideration the various reasons why students leave college, which often include changes in career goals or financial difficulties. Though freshmen retention rates and six-year graduation rates vary by individual institution, the following trends were identified.

- Freshmen retention rates for Black/non-Hispanic and Hispanic students in fall 2001, 2002, and 2003 freshmen cohorts at four-year public universities are generally, though not always, lower than the freshmen retention rate for all students in those cohorts.
- The six-year graduation rates for Black/Non-Hispanic students from the fall 1995, 1996, and 1997 freshmen cohorts are lower than the graduation rates for all students in those cohorts. The graduation rates for Hispanic students are generally, though not always, lower than the graduation rates for all students. The graduation rates for female students are higher than those of male students.

The final section of the report provides an overview of campus-level and state-level data that indicate the extent to which underrepresented groups are participating in and complete their postsecondary education, as well as the amount of resources designated to programs that serve them. Select major findings from this section include:

- Total undergraduate and graduate/professional enrollment for all minority groups increased between fall 2003 and fall 2004.

- The number of students with disabilities enrolled at public community colleges who identified themselves as having a disability decreased by 6 percent from Fiscal Year 2003 to Fiscal Year 2004, while the number of students with disabilities enrolled at public universities who identified themselves as having a disability increased by 34 percent.
- Total degrees awarded increased for all minority groups between Fiscal Year 2003 and Fiscal Year 2004.