

# Illinois Equity Symposium: Strategies to Ensure Black Student Access and Success

Presented by Z Scott, Esq.  
President, Chicago State University  
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# Chicago State University: Founded in 1867 and Ever in Motion

- Public university founded in 1867
- Five colleges – Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Health Sciences, and Pharmacy – with over 70 undergraduate and graduate degree and non-degree programs
- Illinois' **only** four-year U.S. DOE-designated Predominantly Black Institution
- Produces **1 in 10 of Black student graduates statewide**
- **73% of faculty** identify as Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latinx

CSU ranked in **top 4%** nationwide among all colleges and universities for economic mobility

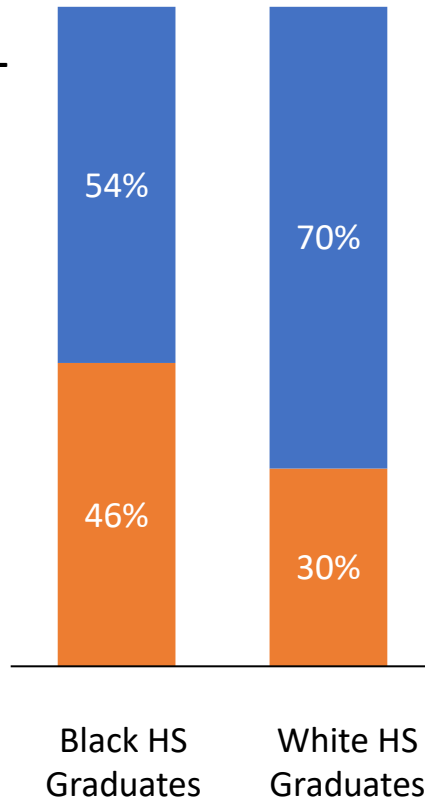




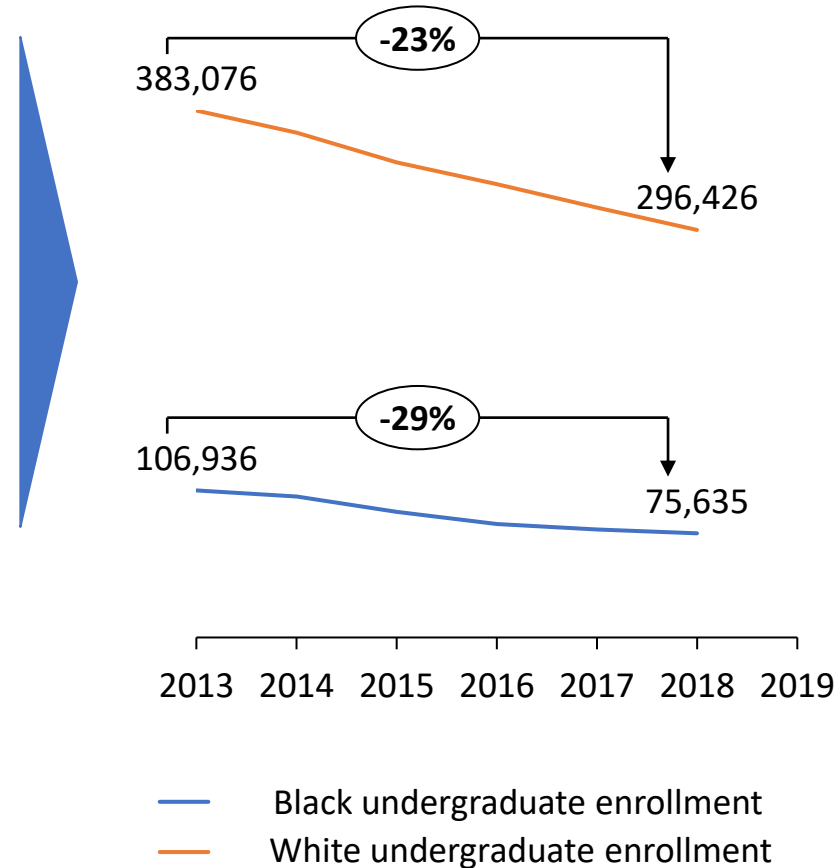
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# Black undergraduate enrollment in Illinois is declining

12-month college enrollment rates for IL high school graduates, 2018  
100% = 135,420 IL HS graduates



Undergraduate enrollment trends for Black and White students in IL, 2013-2018



- Nearly **half** of all Black high school graduates do not enroll in post-secondary in the 12 months following graduation.
- While overall undergraduate enrollment in IL has declined 16% since 2013, enrollment has declined disproportionately for Black students (29%).

Data on college enrollment rates for high school graduates comes from a data match between ISBE, IBHE, and NSC on 2017 and 2018 IL high school graduates. Data on enrollment trends comes from IPEDS 2013-2018 Fall Enrollment Trends Data.



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# Equity gaps exist for Black students at every step of the way through higher education

	<u>Black Individuals</u>	<u>White Individuals</u>		<u>Black Individuals</u>	<u>White Individuals</u>
HS Graduation Rate	<b>75%</b>	<b>91%</b>	First-year full-time retention	<b>64%</b>	<b>82%</b>
Post-secondary enrollment among HS graduates	<b>54%</b>	<b>70%</b>	Part-time retention	<b>34%</b>	<b>41%</b>
First-Year-Full-Time Retention Rate	<b>62%</b>	<b>82%</b>	Developmental <i>Publics</i> education placement	<b>15%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Graduation Rate	<b>36%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<i>Community Colleges</i>	<b>65%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Unemployment Rate	<b>17%</b>	<b>9%</b>	Transfer student retention	<b>69%</b>	<b>78%</b>



Applying these rates to 100 Black high schoolers = **the higher education system would graduate only 9 Black students from college**, vs. 28 White students.



Although Black students make up **16%** of Illinois' population ages 18-24, they only make up **10-11% of degrees conferred**.

**Black Illinois residents participate in the labor force at 69%, compared to 82% of White residents.**

Sources: 1. ISBE Illinois State Report Card, Graduation Rates, 2019 2. Data match between ISBE, IBHE, and NSC on 2017 and 2018 IL high school graduates. 3. IBHE "Assessing Equity in Illinois Higher Education," 2020. 4. IPEDS Graduation Rate, 2018; 5. [Illinois Current Population Survey](#), IDES



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# Equity Working Group for Black Student Access and Success in Illinois Higher Education

- Origin: CSU creates statewide Equity Working Group

“Chicago State University will begin convening higher education thought partners to collectively identify strategies and policies that eliminate barriers to access and completion for Black students.” President Z Scott

- Working Group Composition: Leaders from secondary and postsecondary education, elected officials and government agencies, business, nonprofits, philanthropic, and community-based organizations

- Support: Civic Consulting Alliance provided a framework and project management support; the Lumina Foundation provided technical assistance through facilitation

- Outcome: **Cross-industry action plan** for increasing Black student enrollment in higher education institutions across Illinois, for closing the race-based gap in college degree attainment, and improving labor market outcomes for Black families

- Phase 1 (convenings) and Phase 2 (action plan release): completed

- Phase 3: Launch the Illinois Center for Education Equity to begin implementation of the action plan

**Civic  
Consulting**  
alliance



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# Members of the Equity Working Group

## Co-Chairs:

**Zaldwaynaka Scott**, Esq., President at Chicago State University

**Hon. Elgie Sims**, Illinois State Senator, 17th District Illinois State Senate

**Karen Freeman-Wilson**, President and Chief Executive Officer at Chicago Urban League

**John Atkinson**, Executive Vice President and Managing Director at Willis Towers Watson; Board Chair at Illinois Board of Higher Education

**Corporate / private sector represented by:** AT&T, Advocate Aurora Health, Deloitte US, John Deere, Hyatt Corporation, Spark Foundry, Willis Towers Watson, Cleveland Avenue

**Educational institutions represented by:** Chicago Public Schools, Chicago State University, University of Illinois System, Southern Illinois University System, City Colleges of Chicago, National Louis University, Bradley University, Illinois State University, Northern Illinois University, Governors State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Illinois Central College

**Philanthropy, community-based organizations, and advocates represented by:** Joyce Foundation, Circle of Service Foundation, Metropolitan Family Services, Chicago Urban League, Coppin Memorial AME Church, Illinois Justice Project, Partnership for College Completion, Education Trust, Women Employed, Cleveland Avenue Foundation for Education

**Public offices and agencies represented by:** Illinois State House of Representatives, Illinois State Senate, City of Chicago, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Student Assistance Commission



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Chicago  
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Women<sup>™</sup>  
Employed

Deloitte.

TheJoyce  
Foundation



JOHN DEERE

# The Equity Working Group is applying this framework to understand root causes and potential interventions

Dropout points for Black students, prioritized by the largest divergence, will be considered...

- The Fact Pack analysis will provide a common understanding of the detail for the dropout points



- ✓ Transition to post-secondary education
- ✓ Enrollment patterns
- ✓ Persistence to completion
- ✓ Labor market outcomes

...within seven focus areas and their drivers...

AFFORDABILITY

INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING

INSTITUTIONAL PREPAREDNESS & SUPPORT

ENROLLMENT AND PROGRAM CHOICE

CLIMATE AND CULTURE

STUDENT WELL-BEING

CONNECTION TO CAREER

...for each part of the ecosystem, leading to a solution to drive outcomes.

- High School and alternative paths to secondary completion
- Community colleges
- Four-year colleges and universities
- State legislature
- Employers
- Community-based organizations
- Philanthropy



## Sampling of Media Coverage of EWG Action Plan Release

BREAKING NEWS

NEWS

Chicago Tribune

# Illinois colleges are losing Black students. Turning that around is key not just for equity but to ‘build jobs’ here, advocates say.



"We have to be even more intentional about our strategies for engaging and supporting our minority communities," said Chicago State University President Z. Scott.

"The action plan recognizes racial tensions on campus and, beyond that, create further stress and help create strategies for inclusion and supporting student wellbeing. #News of Willis Towers Watson.

Members of the Equality Working Group said this problem isn't even their communities; it ripples all the way up in to a problem

### ‘Crisis Level’ Decline

A disproportionate drop in Black students enrolled in college prompted Illinois higher education leaders to propose increased state support for and shifts in how higher education is promoted and delivered to students of color.

INSIDE  
HIGHER ED





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# The plan has actionable solutions for each focus area

## Overview of directives in the Action Plan:

AFFORDABILITY

- Make existing financial aid more accessible to Black families
- Accessible barrier-reduction grants to help Black students persist and complete college

INSTITUTIONAL  
FUNDING

- Ensure that institutional funding for public universities and community colleges is equitable

INSTITUTIONAL  
PREPAREDNESS &  
SUPPORT

- Provide additional institutional supports for Black first-generation students, Black students from low-income backgrounds, Black adult learners, and others for whom the transition to college might be more difficult

ENROLLMENT &  
PROGRAM CHOICE

- Reform developmental education to shorten time-to-degree
- Make the admissions process more inclusive
- Provide robust, culturally competent advising for Black students

CLIMATE & CULTURE

- Examine campus policies to improve Black student safety and inclusion on campus

STUDENT WELL-  
BEING

- Provide culturally competent mental health services for Black students on campus and in the workplace

CONNECTION TO  
CAREER

- Build a stronger bridge between college and career by improving career supports
- Hiring practices to prioritize closing equity gaps in the workforce

# Actionable Solutions Specific for Two-year and Four-year Institutions

## AFFORDABILITY

### Financial aid:

- Increase culturally relevant financial aid outreach, targeting Black schools and families
- Conduct comprehensive internal audits of financial aid and reprioritize to center equity
- Collect, share, and utilize data on MAP, both for the applicants who receive MAP and those who do not

### Barrier reduction:

- Collect institutional data on additional student financial need and grant distribution, and develop in-house early alert systems to identify students who need additional financial resources
- Make institutional barrier-reduction grants more accessible for Black students
- Implement debt-forgiveness for returning students who have small remaining balances
- Form partnerships with other sectors to direct emergency funds to Black students most in need

## INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING

### Resource allocation:

- Distribute emergency budget funds using an equity lens
- Where budget cuts must be made, distribute cuts equitably, not evenly
- Create an evidence-based funding formula for public universities that prioritizes Black students
- Gather data over time to evaluate the effectiveness of reforms

# Actionable Solutions Specific for Two-year and Four-year Institutions

## Overall change management:

- Launch a sustained effort to engage Black students in redesigning programs and processes

## Dual credit:

- Build new dual credit partnerships with local high schools that center equity
- Make existing dual credit programs more inclusive by eliminating common barriers to access
- Leverage digital infrastructure from the COVID-19 pandemic to increase access for dual credit at high schools and colleges that do not offer courses on-site
- Require reporting on racial representation, student eligibility requirements, and student success metrics from all dual credit partnerships; follow state-determined racial equity targets for enrollment in dual credit programs
- Explore ways to increase the number of teachers qualified to teach dual credit courses, especially in underserved communities

## Pathways:

- Commit resources to the development of existing bridge programs
- Invest in transfer pathways for Black students

## Developmental education:

- Use multiple placement criteria to avoid unnecessarily enrolling Black students in developmental courses
- Transition to more effective models of developmental education

# Actionable Solutions Specific for Two-year and Four-year Institutions

## CLIMATE & CULTURE

### Policies:

- Commit to regularly examining school use of campus and/or local police
- Commit to examining student codes of conduct and implementing state standards
- Use campus climate and culture assessments and micro-surveys to guide policy changes

### Communities:

- Fund on-campus Black communities
- Remove barriers for Black students to engage with all student spaces on campus
- Collect data and track on retention, persistence, and completion rates for Black students who participate in Black student communities

### Hiring:

- Prioritize diversity in faculty hiring

# Actionable solutions specific for two-year and four-year institutions

## STUDENT WELL-BEING

### Mental health:

- Require mental health providers to be licensed therapists and trained in cultural competencies and implicit bias
- Require all faculty and staff to be trained in culturally competent and anti-racist mental health awareness

## CONNECTION TO CAREER

### Career support:

- Allocate resources to career centers
- Connect Black students with mentors who will help guide them through college and into the workforce
- Provide career-field specific scholarships for Black students pursuing specific career paths

### Collaboration with corporate:

- Increase collaboration between university faculty and workforce/industry partners:
  - Build partnerships to give Black students more opportunities to interact with employers on campus
  - Build cross-sector partnerships to connect Black students to careers

# Key Takeaways and Resources

- **Be Intentional:** Call out and make credible (within your strategic plan and equity plans) what your goals are and what your desired outcomes are re: Black students
- **Assess, Assess, Assess:**
  - Survey your students, and potential students, early and often
  - Are there places on campus (courses, degree programs, student organizations, unofficial social networks, etc.) where Black students thriving on your campus? How can you replicate and scale pockets of success?
- **Revisit your equity plan frequently** and cross-reference with your latest data and trends
- Revisit the [Equity Working Group for Black Student Access and Success Action Plan](#) for ideas for transformation

# Thank You



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