



## University Relations

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## News Release

# UW System preliminary 2019 enrollment drops slightly in wake of demographic trends

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MADISON, Wis.—Reflecting state and national demographic trends, the University of Wisconsin System's preliminary enrollment for fall 2019 is 167,186 students, an overall 2.6 percent decline from last year.

Nationally, higher education enrollments are down. These modest enrollment reductions are not unique to the UW System amid trends of fewer high school graduates and low unemployment rates in a strong economy.

Despite the decline, the UW System share of overall higher education enrollment in Wisconsin has increased since 2010, from 48.6 percent to 50.8 percent in 2018.

"These preliminary enrollment numbers were not unexpected given the demographic trends," said UW System President Ray Cross. "It demonstrates more than ever the need for investing in student success and building the talent pipeline to deliver the graduates Wisconsin needs."

UW System produced a record 36,825 graduates in 2017-18.

"Our graduation numbers are a bright spot for employers and communities and provide a solution to the future career readiness challenges facing Wisconsin," said UW System Regent President Andrew S. Petersen. "As we engage with our business partners as part of the All In Wisconsin tour, we repeatedly hear that they are counting on our student graduates. Our success in retaining, recruiting, and graduating students is absolutely critical to all of us."

Overall, preliminary fall 2019 enrollment in the UW System declined by 4,450 students compared to 2018.

The data also shows:

- Preliminary overall enrollment at five four-year campuses increased;
- Graduate student enrollment increased by 1.6 percent, to 24,717, an increase of 395 students;
- New freshman headcount enrollment fell 0.8 percent, or 234 enrollments, to 28,319;
- Overall headcount enrollment across all UW System branch campuses dropped to 7,286, a decrease of 25.2 percent.

Following restructuring and full integration of campuses, UW System institutions are now including two-year student enrollments along with four-year student enrollments for the first time. Previously, UW Colleges reported two-year student enrollments.

"We undertook restructuring to enable two-year campuses to maintain a presence in communities around Wisconsin and to provide students expanded opportunities," Cross said. "Amid a strong jobs market, enrollment in colleges traditionally dips. However, we have succeeded in accreditation and a guaranteed transfer policy, which set these campuses up for future success. We continue our efforts to attract and retain students at all levels across the System."

[Find the 2019 preliminary enrollment figures here.](#)

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*The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 170,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. More than 80 percent of in-state UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.*

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