

COVID-19 RETURN TO CAMPUS (FALL 2021)

AICCU Survey Report

Colleges and universities have largely returned to in-campus operations for the 2021-22 academic year. As they welcome back students, faculty, and staff amid an ongoing global pandemic, the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) administered a survey to its member institutions in October 2021.

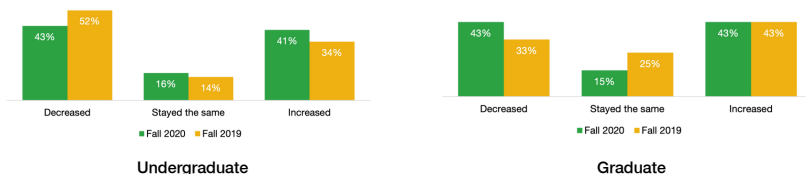
The following information is based on the responses of 50 of the 85 AICCU member institutions, representing a 59% response rate. The 50 responding institutions represent approximately 62% of the AICCU's total undergraduate population.

Findings Mixed for Undergraduate versus Graduate Enrollment

All responding institutions indicated they have returned to in-person instruction. When asked to compare the Fall 2021 enrollment to two prior years, results indicated a modest positive shift compared to Fall 2020's enrollment. This pattern differed in comparison with the Fall 2019 enrollment, where more institutions indicated their current enrollment is less than what it was two years ago. These findings could suggest that institutions are somewhat recovering from undergraduate enrollment losses experienced last year. Conversely, there has been a negative shift in graduate enrollment, with an increased proportion of institutions reporting that their enrollment has declined compared to the prior year.

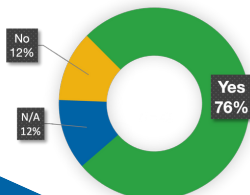
Though these patterns are noteworthy, the percentages are based only on the 50 responses received and may not fully capture the broader realities of the entire sector.

Fall 2021 enrollment compared to prior years



Student-Focused Changes to Academic Policies

Institutions moved quickly to ensure their current students experienced minimal disruptions to their academic pursuits, were safe, and had access to the technology necessary to continue their studies remotely. They also looked to address disruptions experienced by prospective students, and to redress those challenges appropriately. Some AICCU institutions were test-optional prior to the pandemic, with many others moving to become test-optional as a result of the pandemic.



Are AICCU institutions test optional?

Of the institutions who are test-optional...

- 31% indicated the shift is permanent or that there is no anticipated end date.
- 34% indicated that the policy will be in place through at least one or two academic years, with future plans beyond that being considered.

Persistence Rates Stable for Majority, but Not All

60% of responding institutions indicated their undergraduate persistence rates have either increased or remained comparable to prior years. However, 40% reported decreases, with institutional staff consistently indicating that the adverse impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately impacted underrepresented minority students, first-generation students, and low-income students.

Institutions have taken an array of steps to bolster student and financial supports, wrap-around services, academic advising, and more. Over 70% of institutions report they have experienced increased student demand for both mental health services and financial support, and 60% report increased demand for academic student support services.

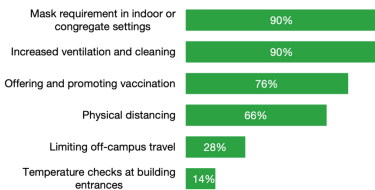
2020-21 Academic Year Persistence compared to prior years



Institutions Utilizing Similar Preventative Strategies to Promote Public Health and Minimize COVID Exposures

Our member institutions are open for in-person instruction, and 61% of those that offer on-campus housing are open at full capacity. Many institutions are leveraging prevention strategies to protect the health of the campus community, with the most common being mask requirements, investing in increased ventilation and cleaning, and vaccine promotion. Many are also utilizing tools such as symptom self-reporting applications for smartphones and contact tracing.

COVID-19 Prevention Strategies



Tools for monitoring COVID-19

