



# Demand Trends for Higher–Education Programs

January 23, 2025

# Agenda

## What is a Program Evaluation System?

### Student Demand

- Google Keywords
- Enrollment
- International Demand
- Non-Degree Demand

### Employment: Current Indicators

### Fiscal Fitness

### Summary

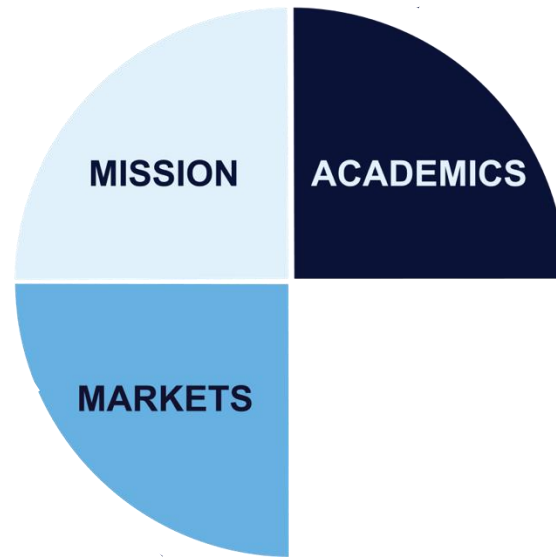
**An academic Program Evaluation System enables growth and sustainable financials.**



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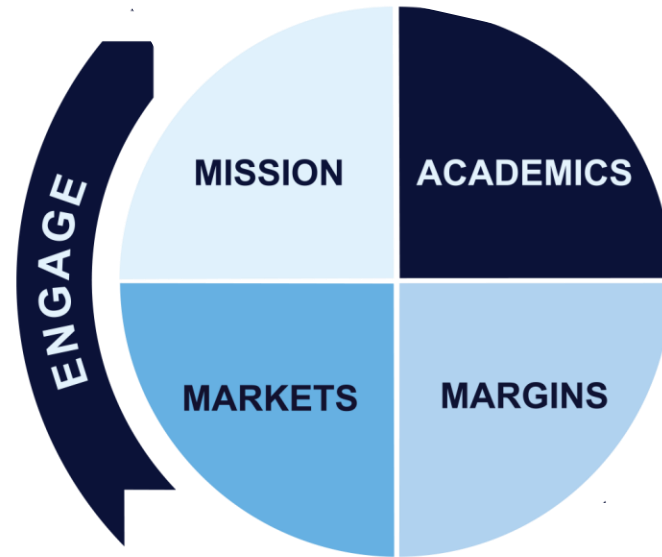
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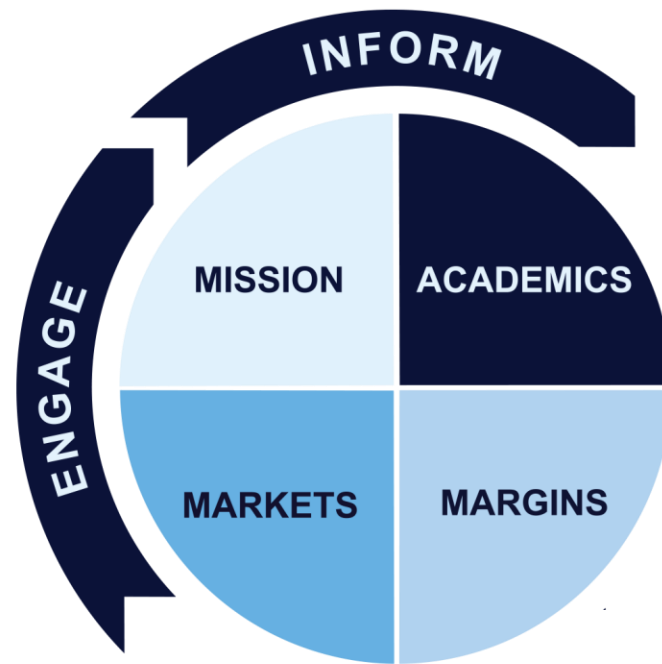
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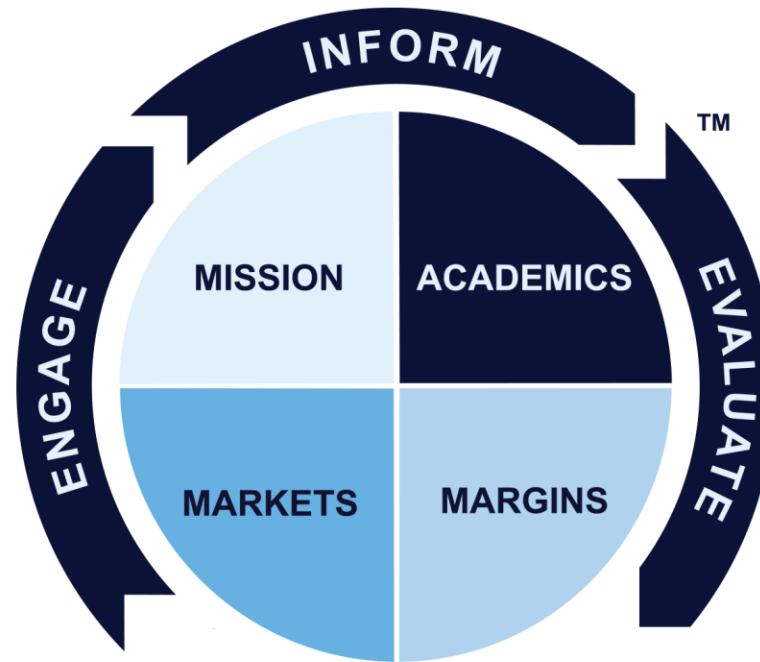


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## Right Now Reports: Excerpt

The program's high student demand and strong employment outcomes contrast sharply with the challenges presented by intense competitive pressures.

### Overview

National completions stand at 40,461, ranking in the 99th percentile, indicating a robust volume of graduates. The program excels in student demand and employment metrics but faces significant challenges due to competitive intensity and high Google Search Cost per Click, which ranks in the 4th percentile. Despite strong completion rates, negative trends in completions and competitive pressure may hinder future growth.

### Student Demand

The program's Google Search Volume is impressive at 1,719,070, placing it in the 95th percentile, reflecting considerable student interest. Additionally, the Google Search YoY Unit Change of 459,950 ranks in the 96th percentile, while the 37% YoY Percentage Change is in the 84th percentile, highlighting positive trends over time. New Student Enrollment Volume is exceptionally strong at 20,849, leading the 99th percentile, although the YoY Percentage Change stalls at 5%, ranking in the 62nd percentile. On-ground and Online Completions collectively reach 40,461, also in the 99th percentile, yet the Completion Volume YoY Unit Change shows a concerning decline of 4,852, ranking lowest at the 0th percentile. The Completion Volume YoY Percentage Change of -11%, ranking in the 31st percentile, further emphasizes this negative trend.

### Employment

The Entry Level Salary stands at \$60,973, indicating a strong starting point in the 77th percentile. Post Entry Level Median Salary hits a significant \$96,566, placing it in the 92nd percentile, reflecting the program's capacity to support economic advancement. Job Postings per Graduate at 2.3 rank in the 91st percentile, signifying favorable job availability. Importantly, the Underemployed Percent of Graduates is low at 24%, an indication of successful workforce integration, ranking high at the 97th percentile. Conversely, BLS 1-Year and 3-Year Historical Growth rates at 3% reflect weaker prospects for employment growth, ranking in the 7th and 27th percentiles, respectively.

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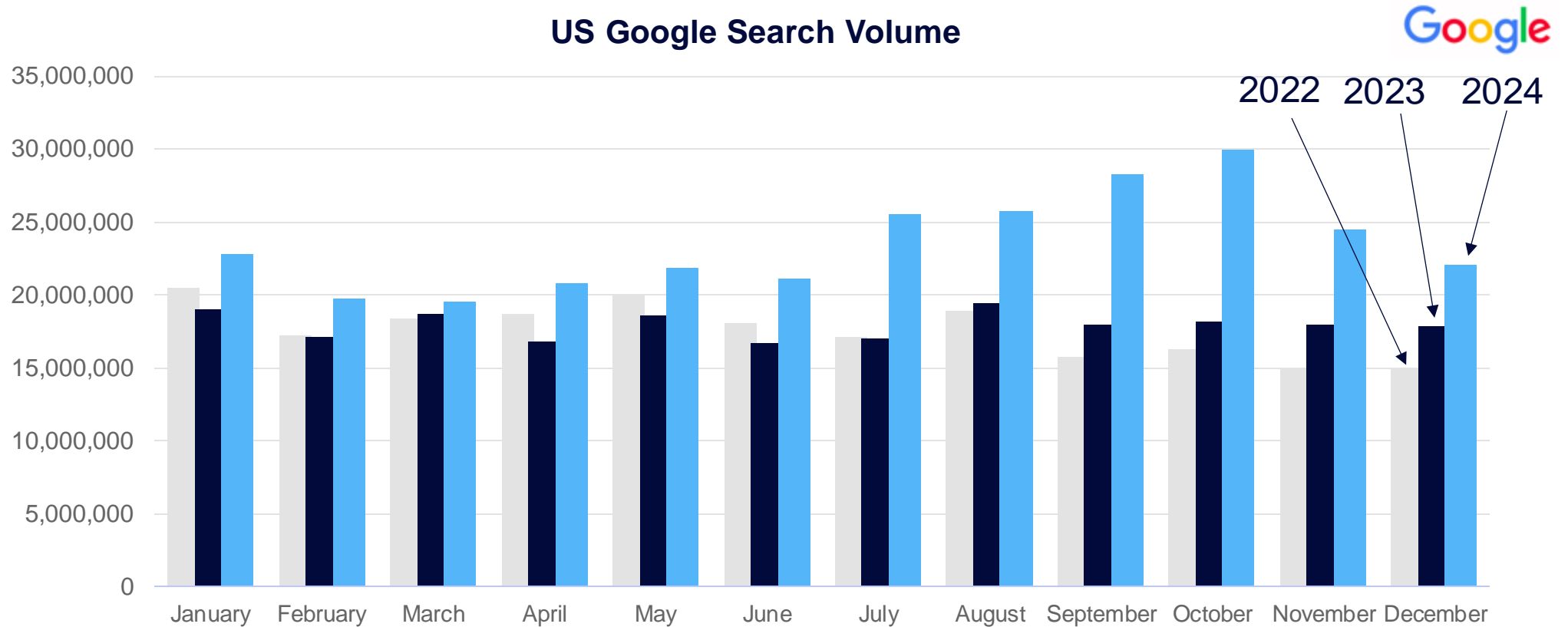
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# Google Search Trends: Programs

Gray DI tracks searches for over 900 programs (90% of all US completions).

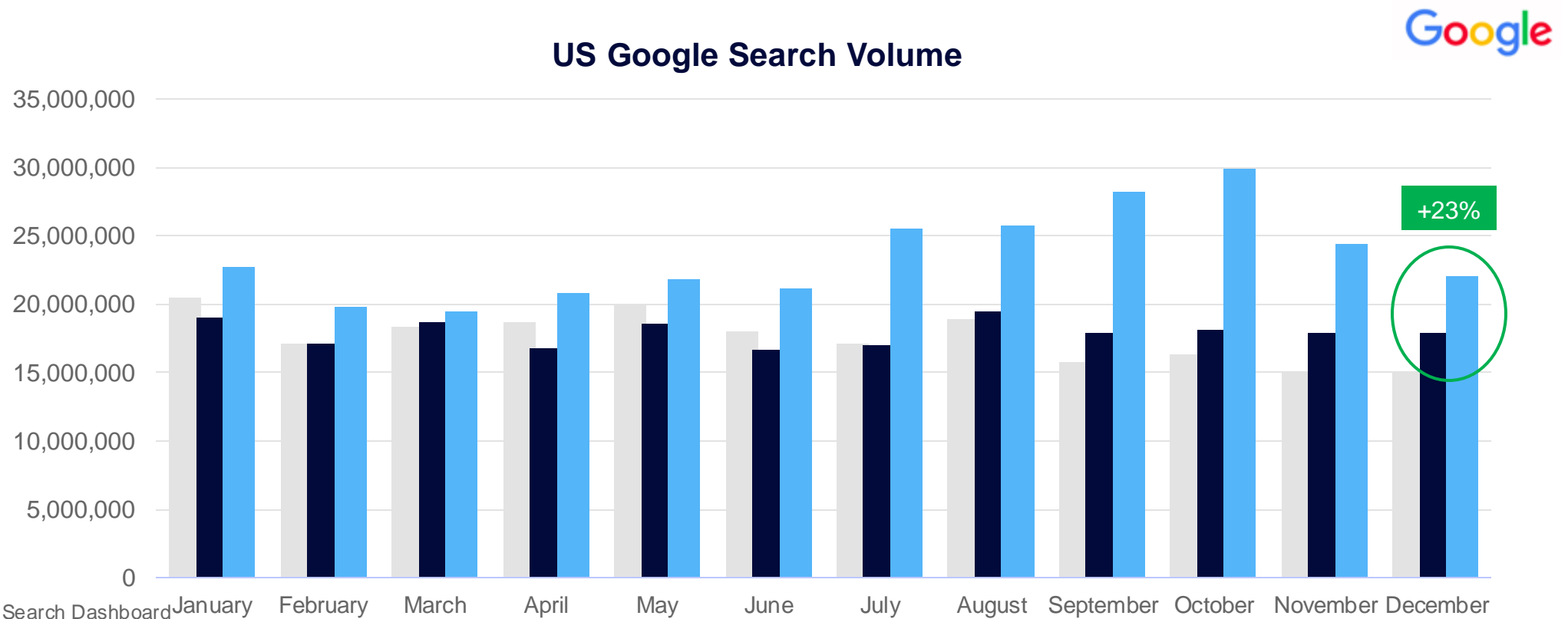


Source: PES Keyword Search Dashboard

## Google Search Trends: Programs

**In December 2024, Google searches for academic programs grew 23% year-over-year.**

- In 2024, Google searches rose 31% year-over-year.



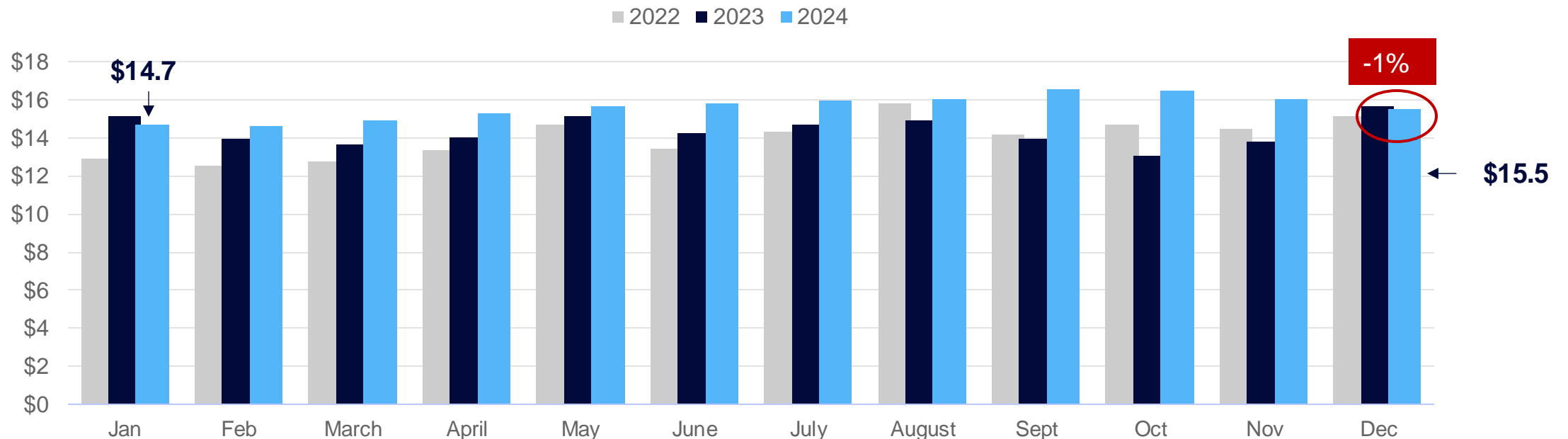
## Google Search Trends: Cost-per-Click

In December 2024, average Google cost-per-click fell 1% YoY.

- It has risen almost 6% since January 2024.



### US Google Cost-per-Click

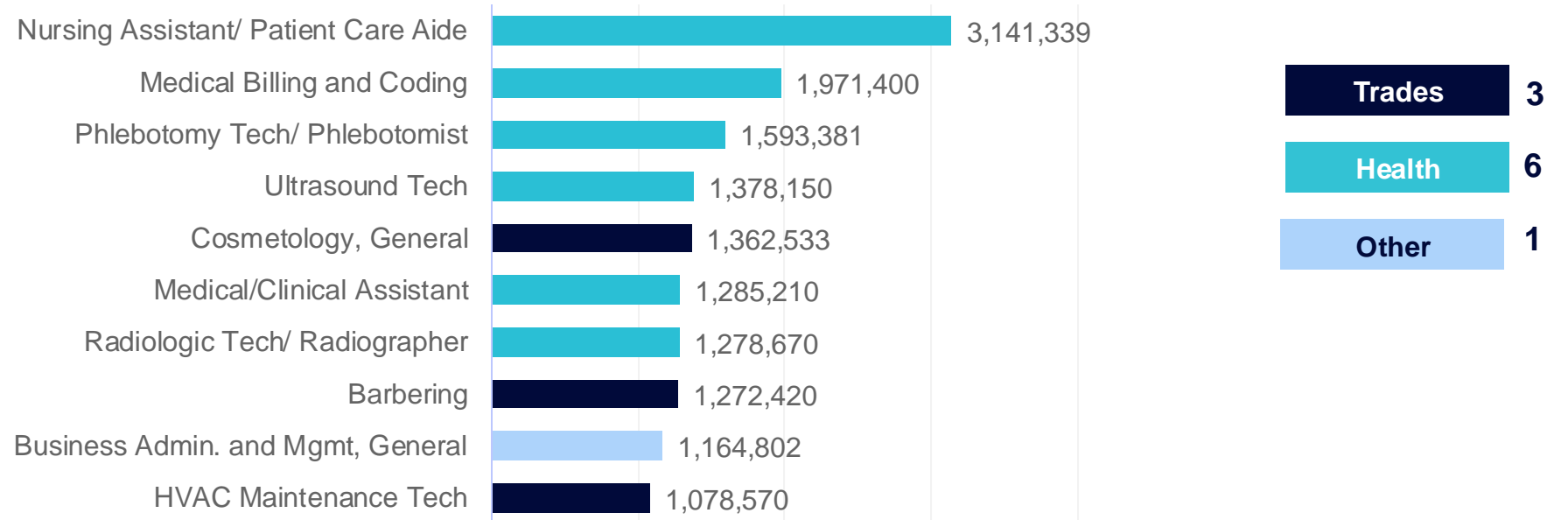


Source: PES Keyword Search Dashboard

## Associate and Below: Fastest-Growing Google Searches

In 2024, searches for Nursing Assistant grew by more than three million year-over-year.

Programs with the Fastest-Growing Google Search Volumes\*  
2024 YoY





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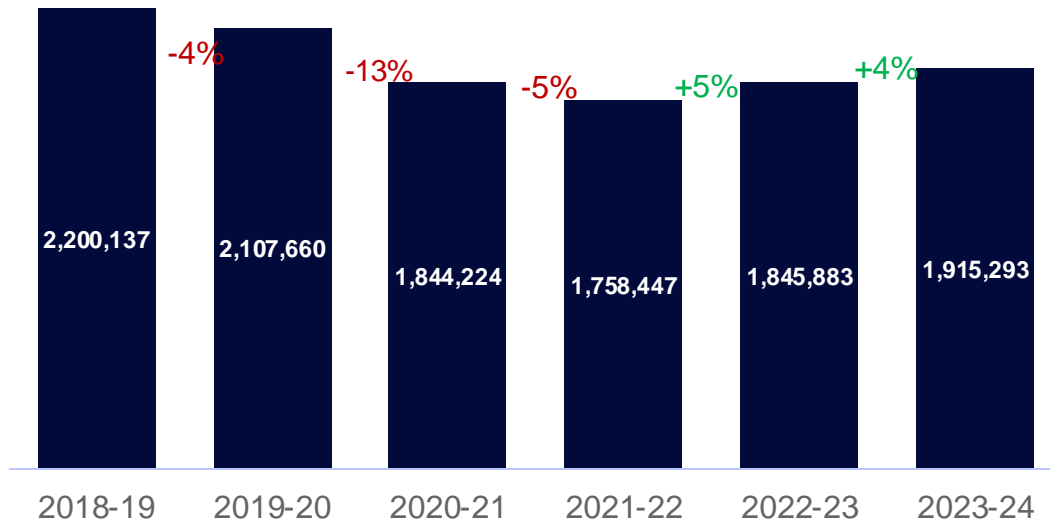
### Summary

## New Enrollment: Five-Year Trends

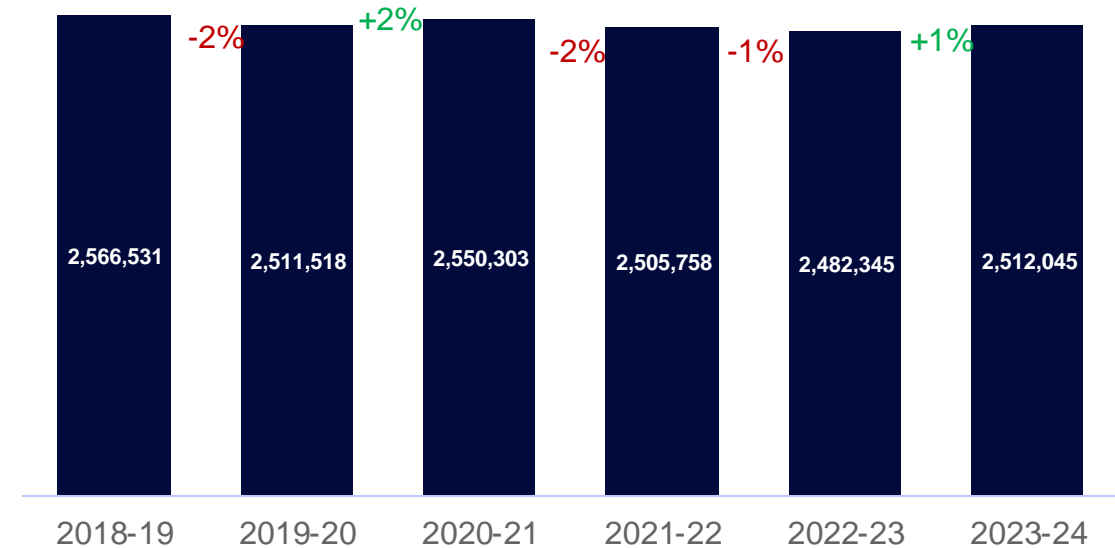
In the academic year 2023–24, new enrollment in associate and certificate programs grew 4%.

- Bachelor's and master's programs rose 1%.

**US New Enrollment**  
Associate and Certs 2018–19 to 2023–24



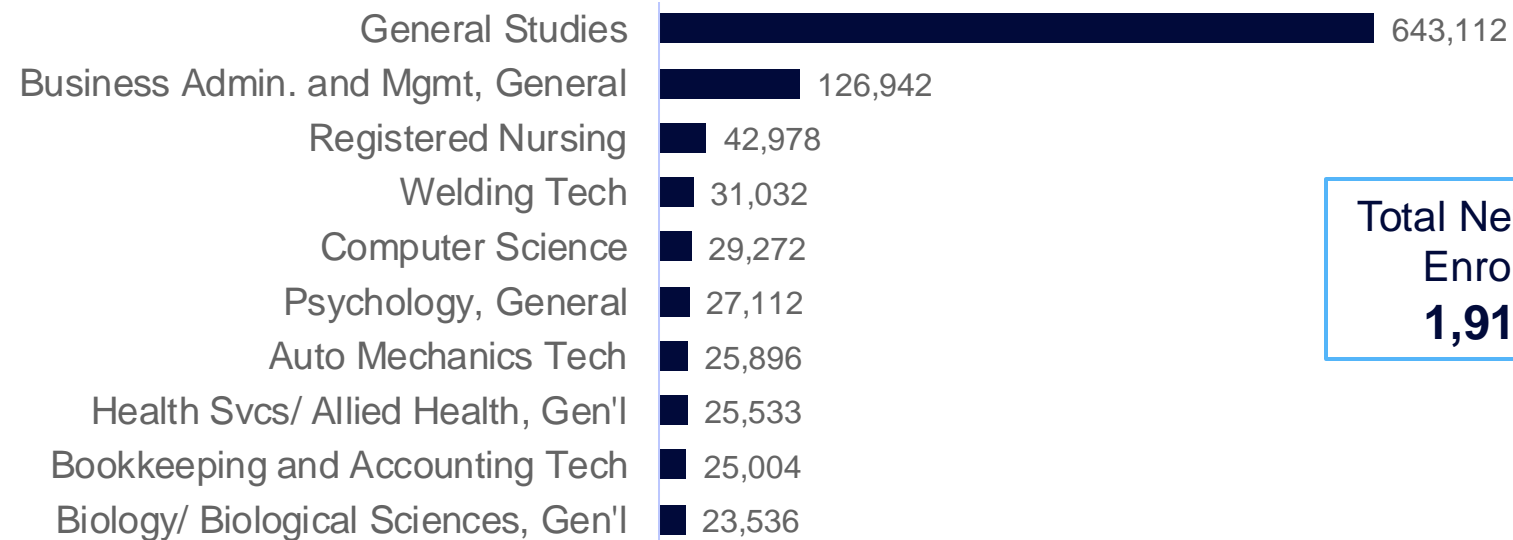
**US New Enrollment**  
Bachelor's and Master's 2018–19 to 2023–24



## Associate and Certificate: New Enrollment Volume

In 2023-24, over 643,000 students enrolled in General Studies – 34% of total new enrollment.

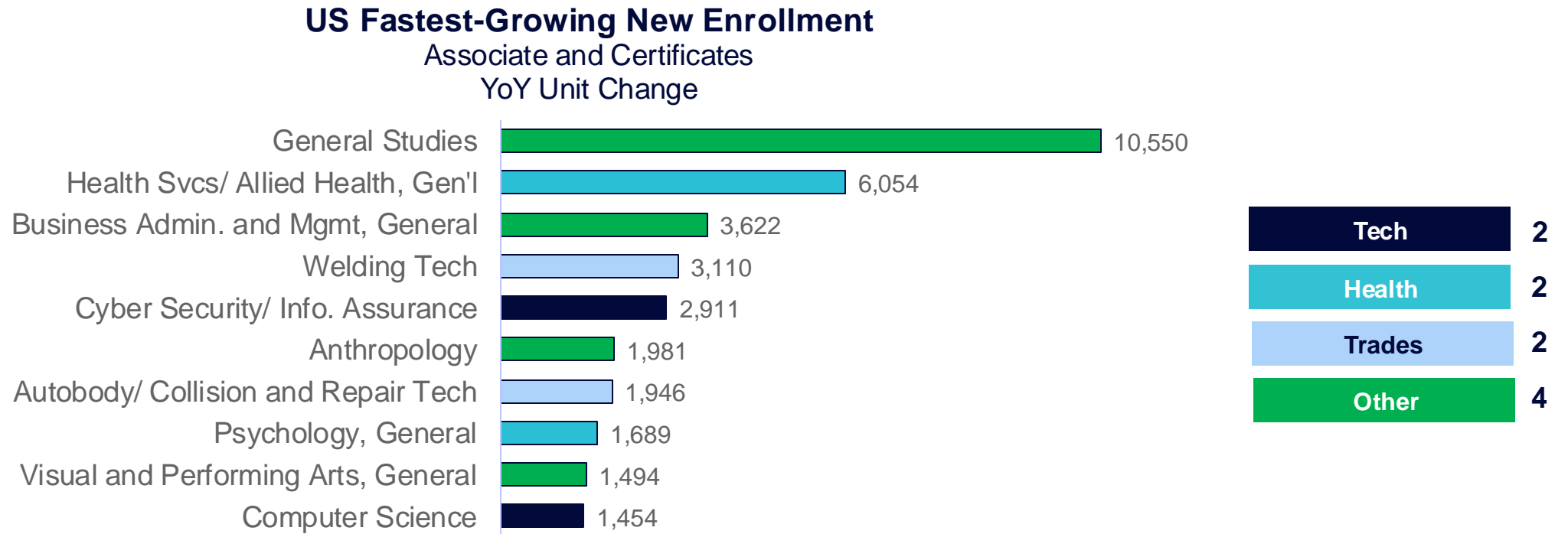
### Largest New Enrollment Volume Associate and Certificate, 2023-24



Total New Student  
Enrollment:  
**1,915,293**

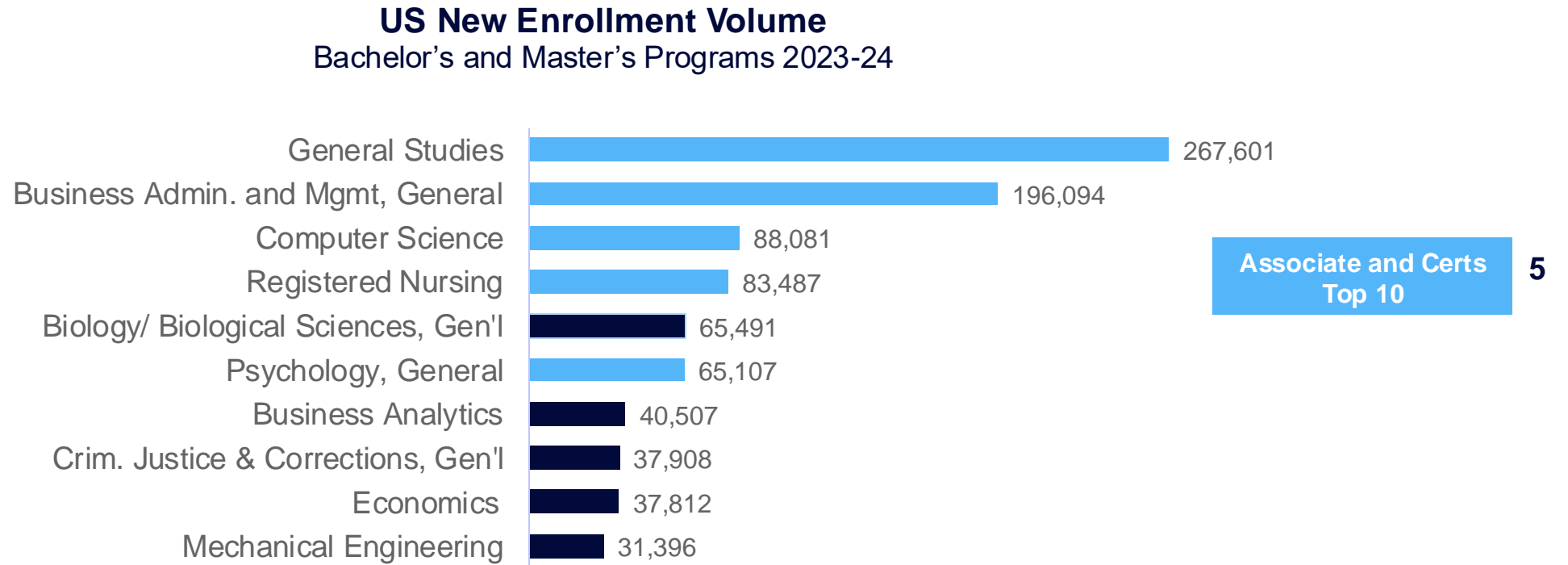
## Associate and Certificate: Academic Year 2023-24, One-Year Change

In the academic year 2023-2024, General Studies added over 10,500 new enrollments YoY.



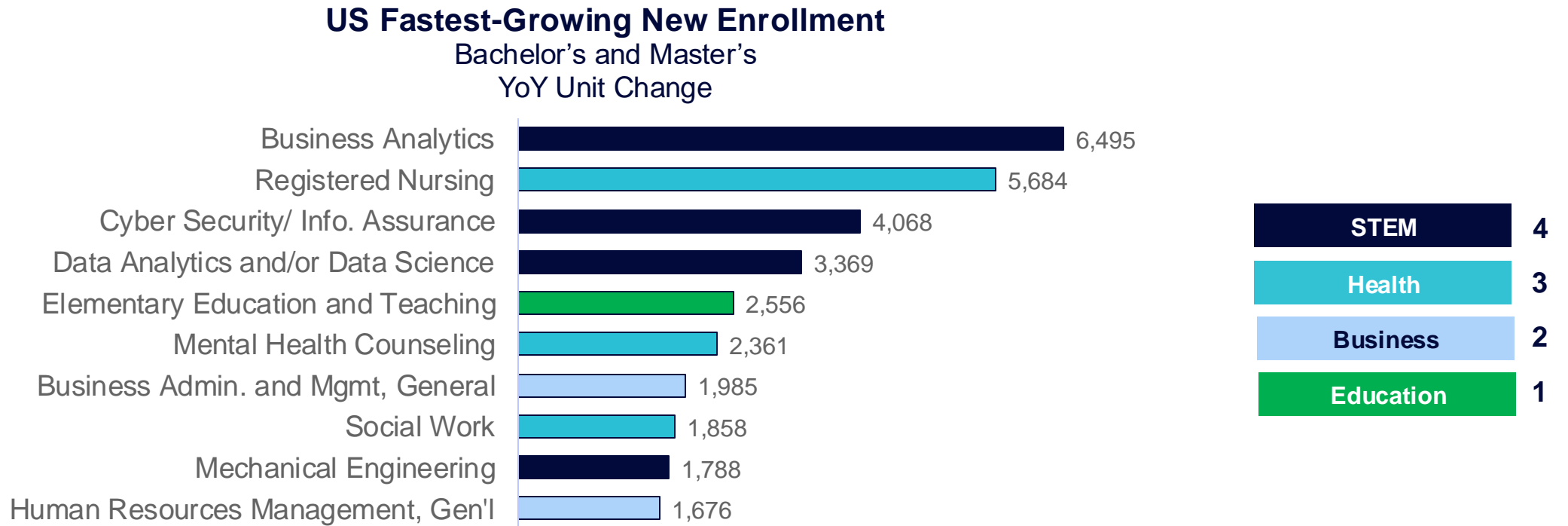
## Bachelor's and Master's: New Enrollment Volume

Five of the 10 largest program enrollments overlapped with associate and certs.



## Bachelor's and Master's: Academic Year 2023-24, One-Year Change

In the academic year 2023 – 2024, Business Analytics added almost 6,500 new enrollments YoY.



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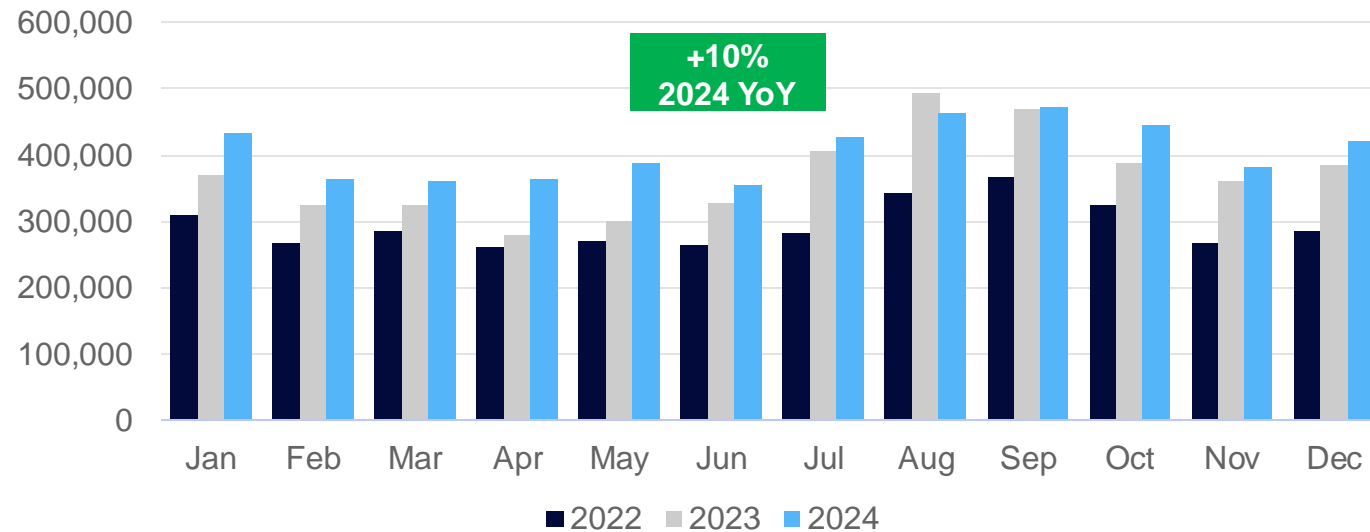
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## International Student Demand

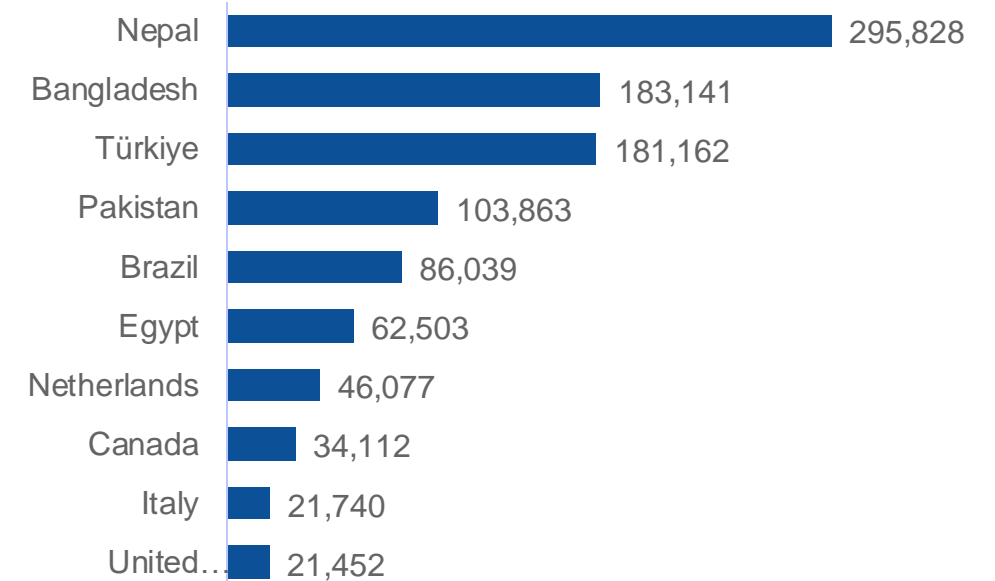
In 2024, international student interest in US programs rose 10% year-over-year.

**International Page Views**  
Bachelor's and Master's 2022 - 2024



Among countries of origin, Nepal had the highest increase in page views.

**Fastest-Growing Page Views**  
Bachelor's and Master's 2024 YoY Change

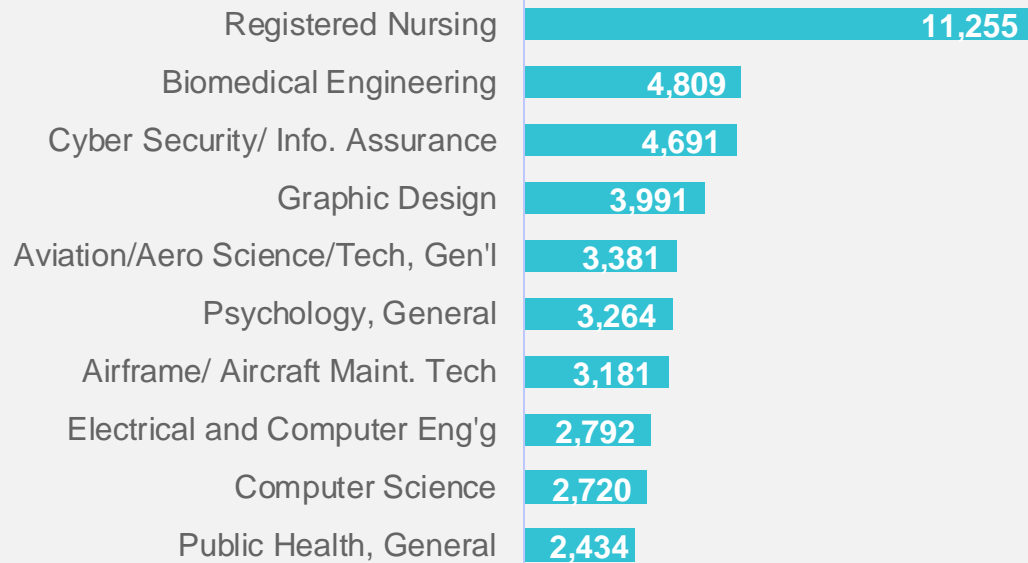




## International Page Views: 2024 fastest-growing programs

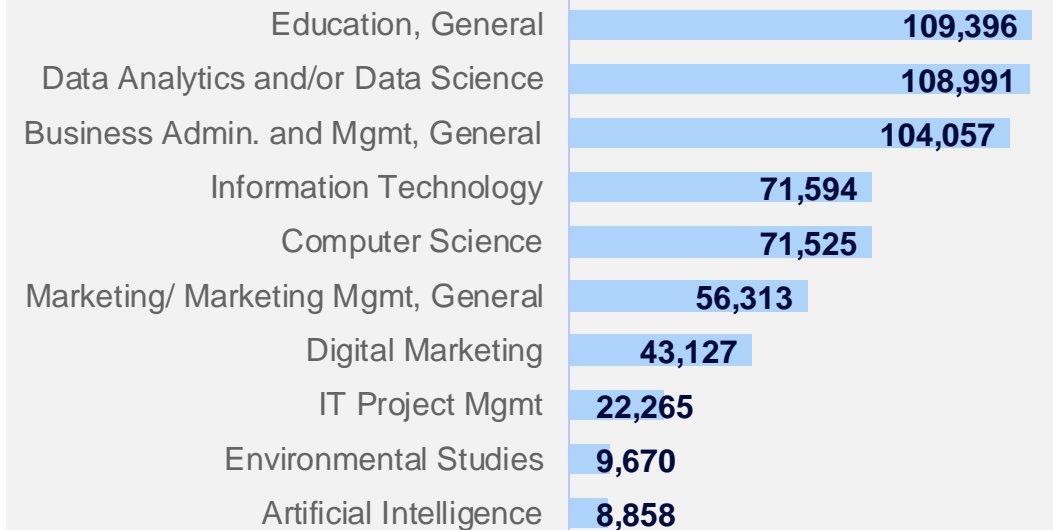
Among Bachelor's programs, Registered Nursing had the highest growth in page views.

### 10 Fastest-Growing Bachelor's Programs 2024 Change



At the master's level, Education had the highest growth in page views

### 10 Fastest-Growing Graduate Programs 2024 Change



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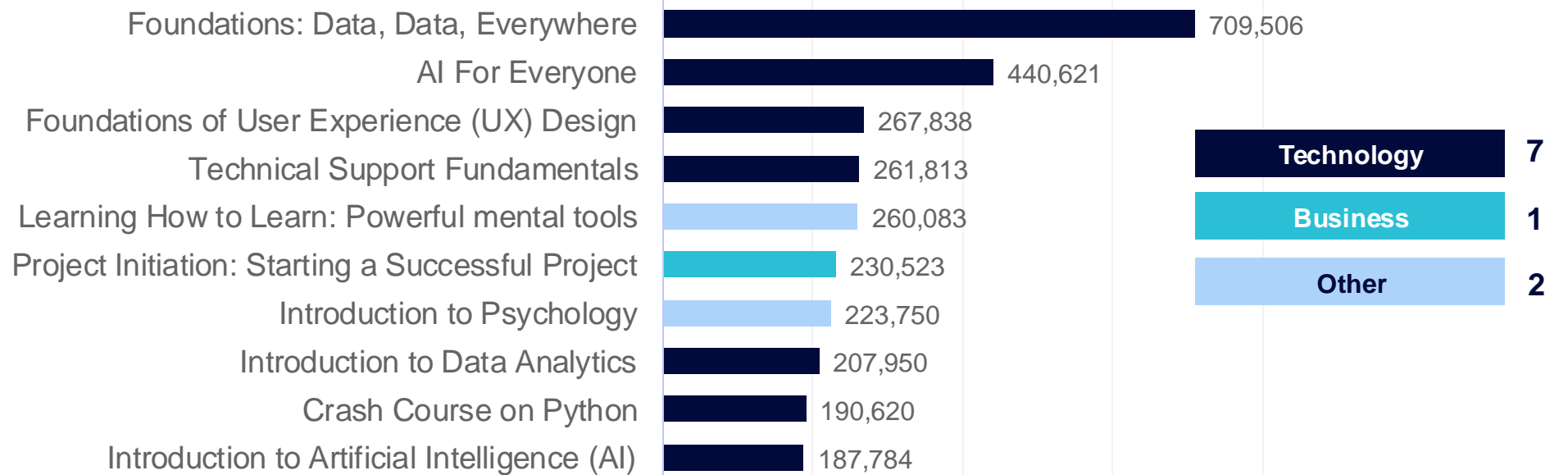
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## Non-Degree Demand: Coursera

In 2024, 16,233,432 learners enrolled in Coursera courses.

- Seven out of the 10 largest courses were in technology and AI.

**Largest Courses**  
Coursera 2024 Enrollment



Source: PES Non-Degree Dashboard, Coursera

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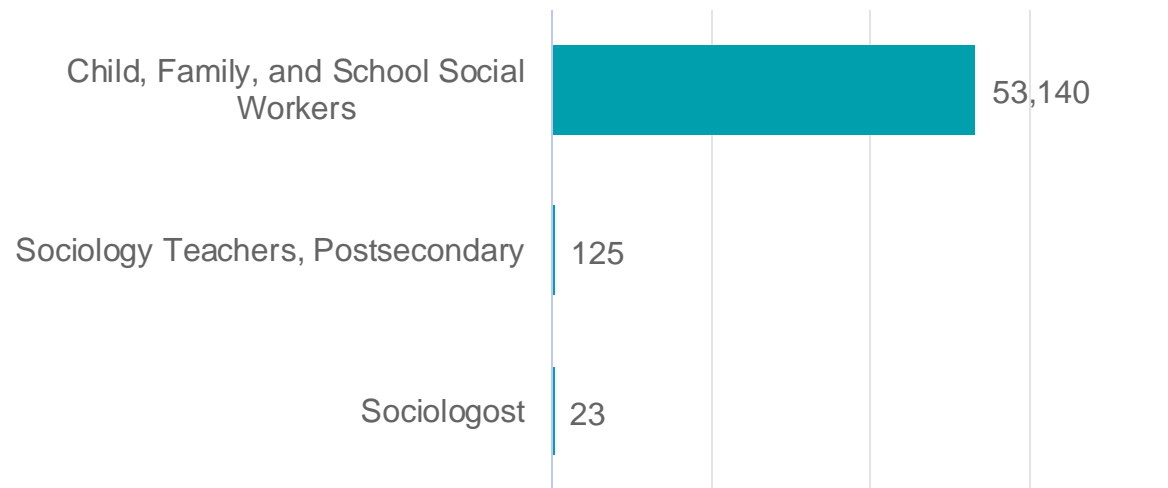
### Summary

## Commonly available data sources link programs to occupations for which students are “directly prepared.”

According to direct prep jobs data, Sociology grads are prepared for three occupations.

- The average salary is \$48,600.

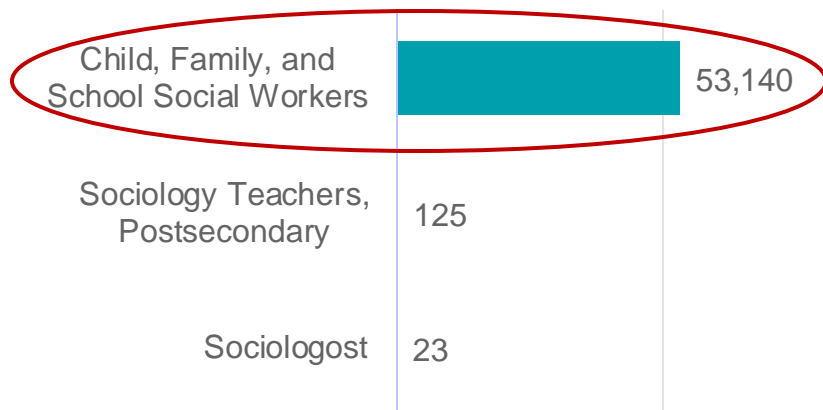
**Direct Prep Job Postings, Bachelor’s in Sociology**  
2024



**Average Salary:**  
**\$48,600**

## Approximately 6% of Sociology majors become Child, Family, and School Social Workers.

### Direct Prep Job Postings, Bachelor's in Sociology 2024



### Top 10 Field of Degrees: Child, Family, and School Social Workers



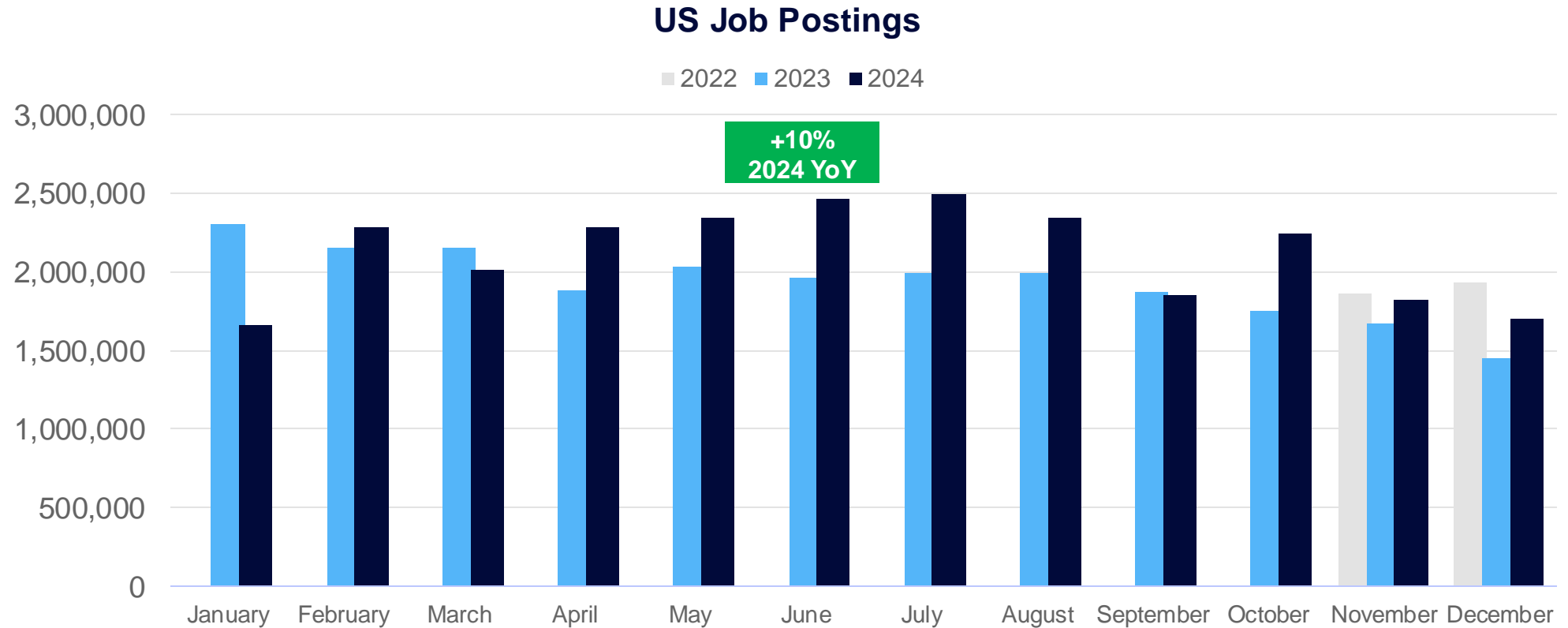
**Data on almost 222,000 graduates with a Bachelor's in Sociology shows 777 occupations.**

**Seven out of the 10 top occupations are in management.**



# US Job Postings Trends

In 2024, job postings rose 10% year-over-year.

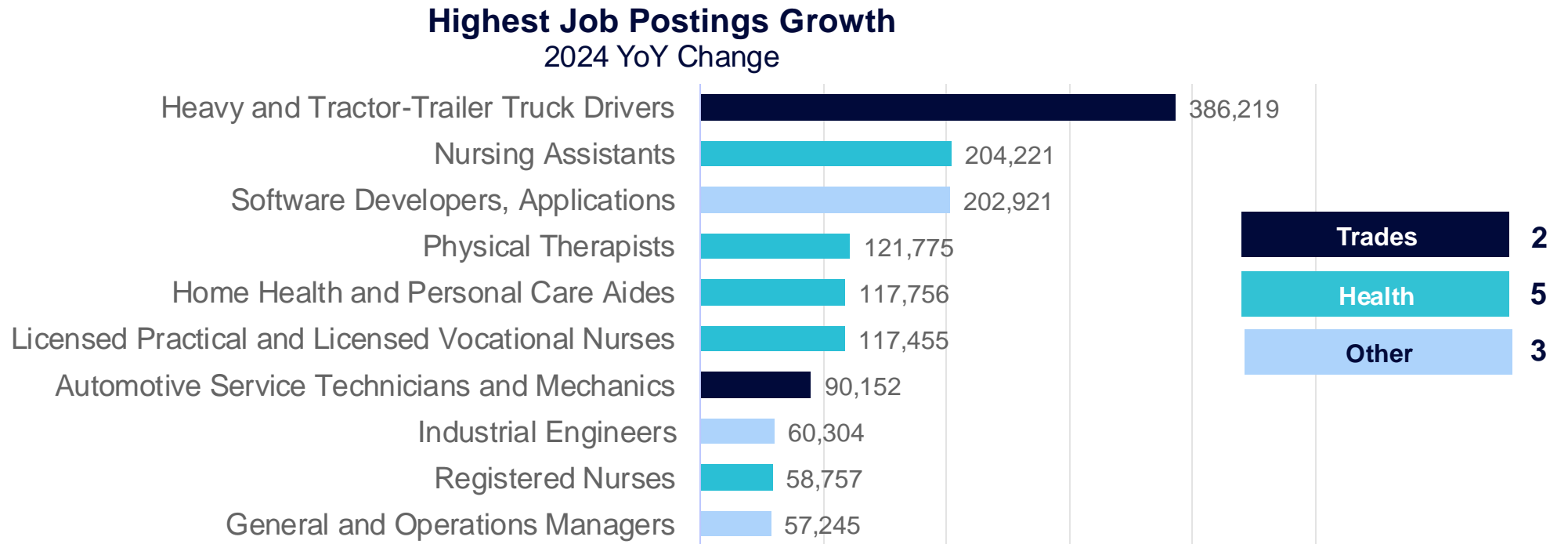


Source: PES Job Postings Dashboard



# Fastest-Growing Job Postings Year-over-Year

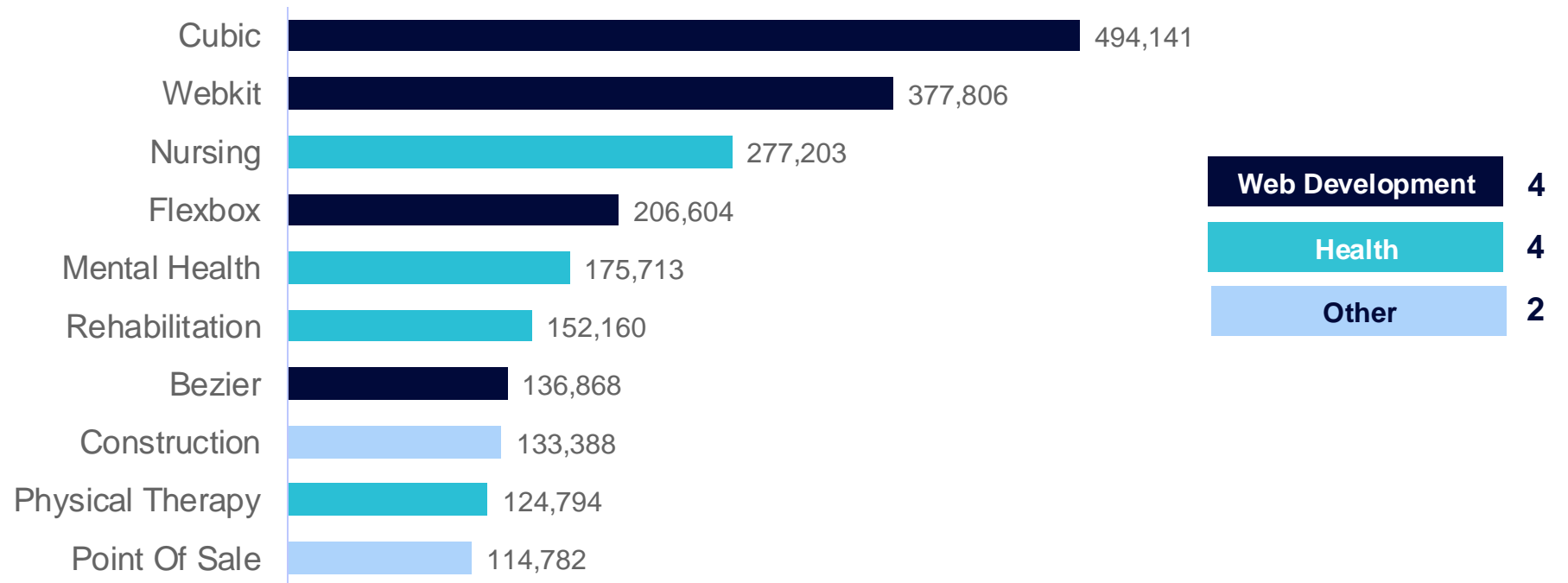
2024 job postings for Truck Drivers rose by more than 386,000 year-over-year.



# Which skills are growing in demand in the US?

There is a growing demand for skills in web development

**Fastest-Growing Skills Volume, Bachelor's and Above**  
Listed in Job Postings, 2024



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## What is Fiscal Fitness?

**It ensures that an institution can fund its mission, survive crises, and serve its constituencies.**

### How do I get fiscally fit?

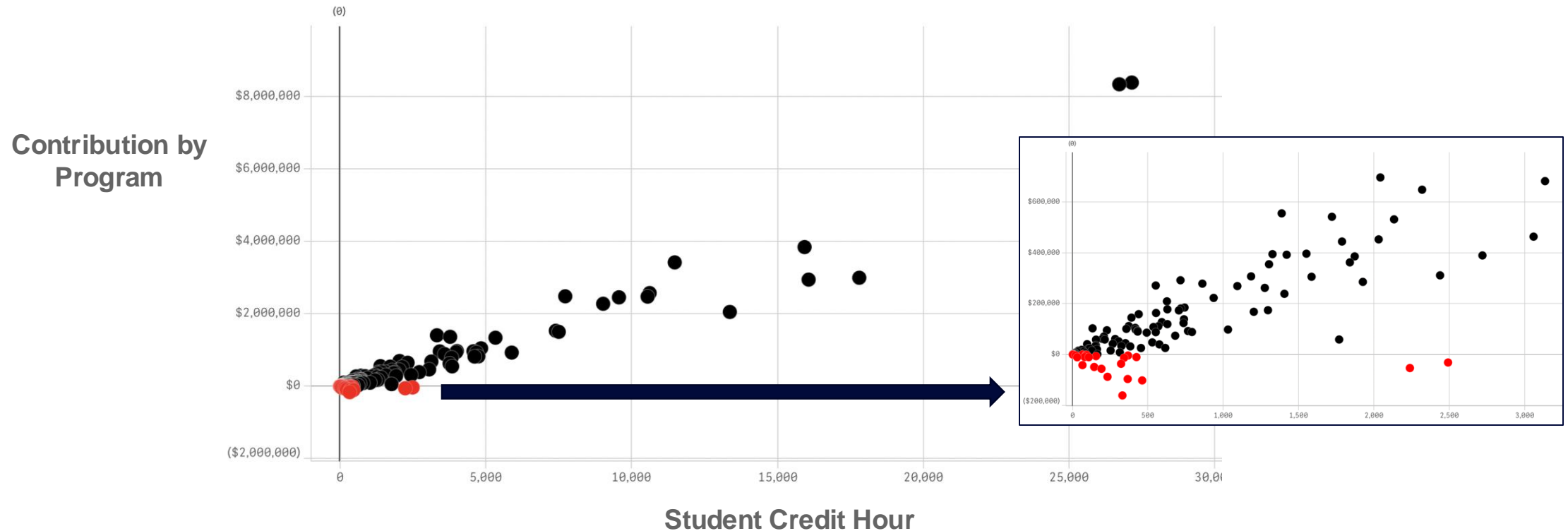
- Increase enrollment, e.g., new programs and sports
- Identify and reduce excess capacity
  - Small programs?
  - Underenrolled courses and sections?
  - Faculty workload (especially release and unassigned time)?
- Retain students: e.g., fix courses with high DFW rates



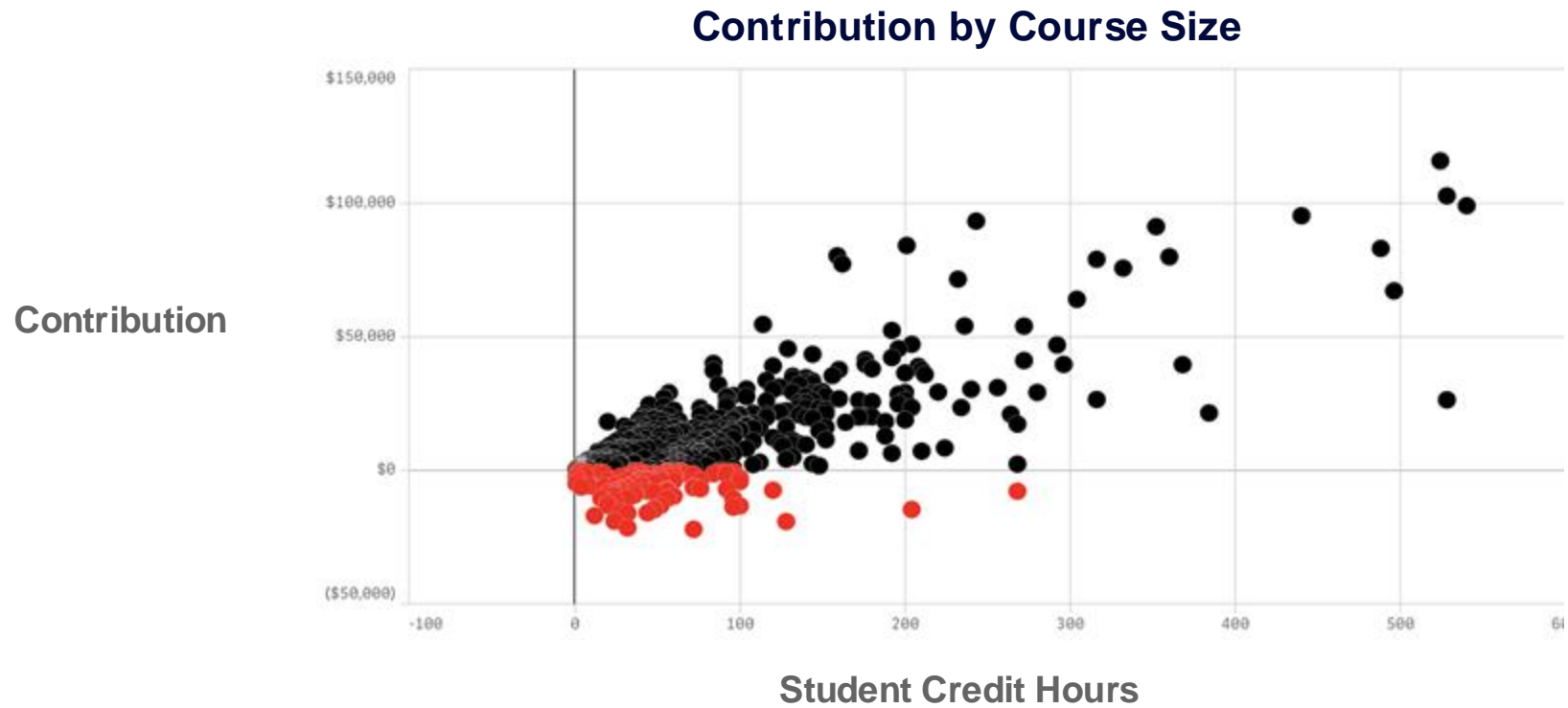
# Program Economics

Most programs make money; even small ones.

Contribution by Student Credit Hour



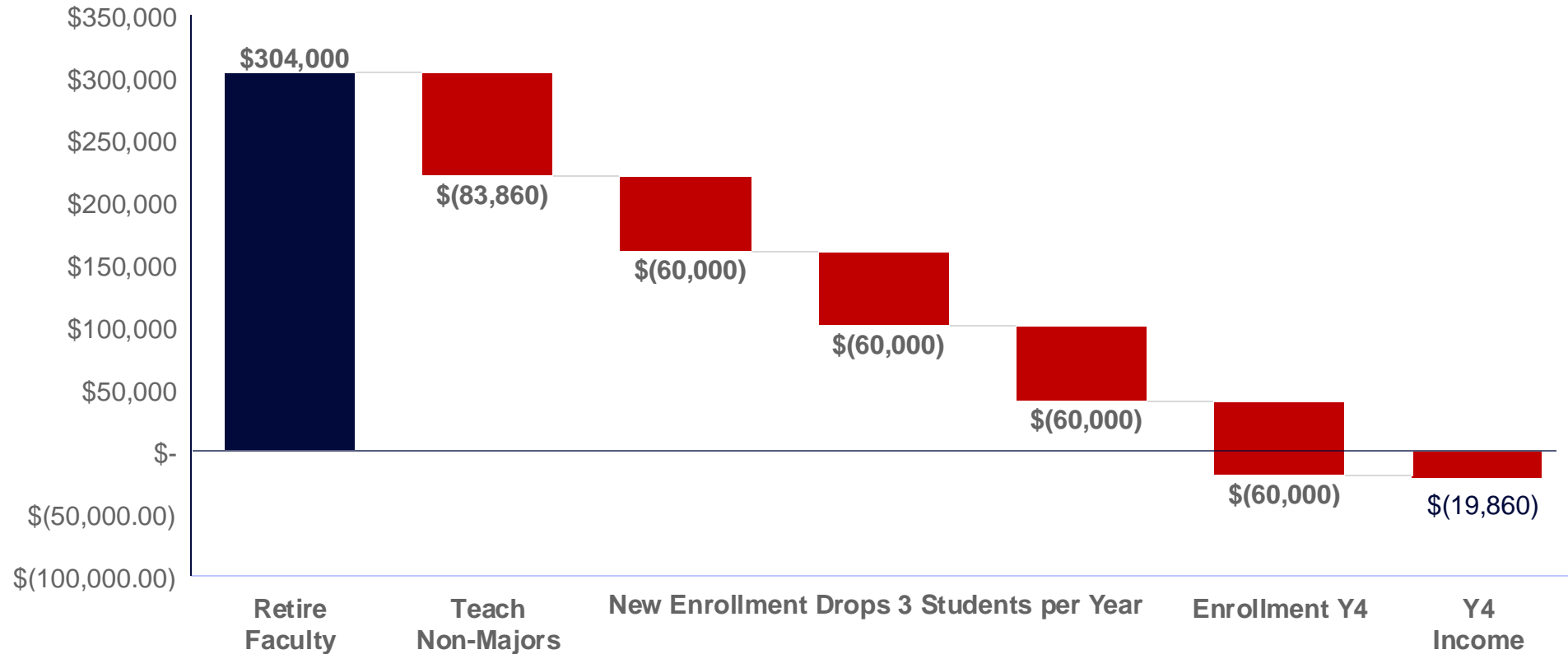
## Courses Cost Money



## What happens when you cut a small program?

**Example: Cut program with six new enrolls, 22 total enrolls, 2.9 faculty, and \$104,000 margin.**

**Cutting a Communications Program**



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- In 2024, Google searches for academic programs rose 31%.
  - The highest growth was in healthcare.
  - Average cost-per-click declined slightly in December (1%).
- Four programs lead new enrollment at both the associate/certificate and bachelor's/master's levels.
  - General Studies is both the largest and fastest-growing major overall.
  - Nursing, Business, and Computer Science are in the top five at both degree levels
- In 2024, international page views were up 10% year-over-year.
  - Registered Nursing was the fastest-growing Bachelor's program
  - Education was the fastest-growing Master's program.
- Approximately 6% of Sociology graduates go into the largest direct prep jobs.
  - They go into 777 occupations, not three.
- In 2024, US job postings grew 10% year-over-year.
  - There was an increasing demand for healthcare workers, trades, software developers, and engineers.
- Focus on program contribution margins, not only costs, when you consider cutting a small program.

## Gray Decision Intelligence Resources

### *Coming in March – Master Class Series*

Date	Topic
Tues., March 4	Foundations of Academic Program Evaluation
Tues., March 11	Fiscal Fitness to Fund Growth
Tues., March 18	Market Demand: The Key to Program Growth and Relevance
Tues., March 25	Managing and Sustaining Program Evaluation
Tues., April 1	Embracing Innovation: The Future of Program Evaluation

Register here:

<https://www.graydi.us/2025-master-class-series>

### *Coming in February – Monthly Webinars*

Topic	Date
Demand Trends Webcast: Community Colleges	Wednesday Feb 26 at 2 PM ET
Demand Trends Webcast: Bachelor's and Above	Thursday Feb 27 at 2 PM ET

