



# Demand for Higher Education Programs

March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026

# Agenda

**What is a Program Evaluation System?**

**Student Demand Indicators**

**Employment: Current Indicators**

**Program of the Month**

**AI: News from the Front**

**Summary**



## Program Evaluation System Overview



# Agenda

What is a Program Evaluation System?

Student Demand Indicators: Google Keywords

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

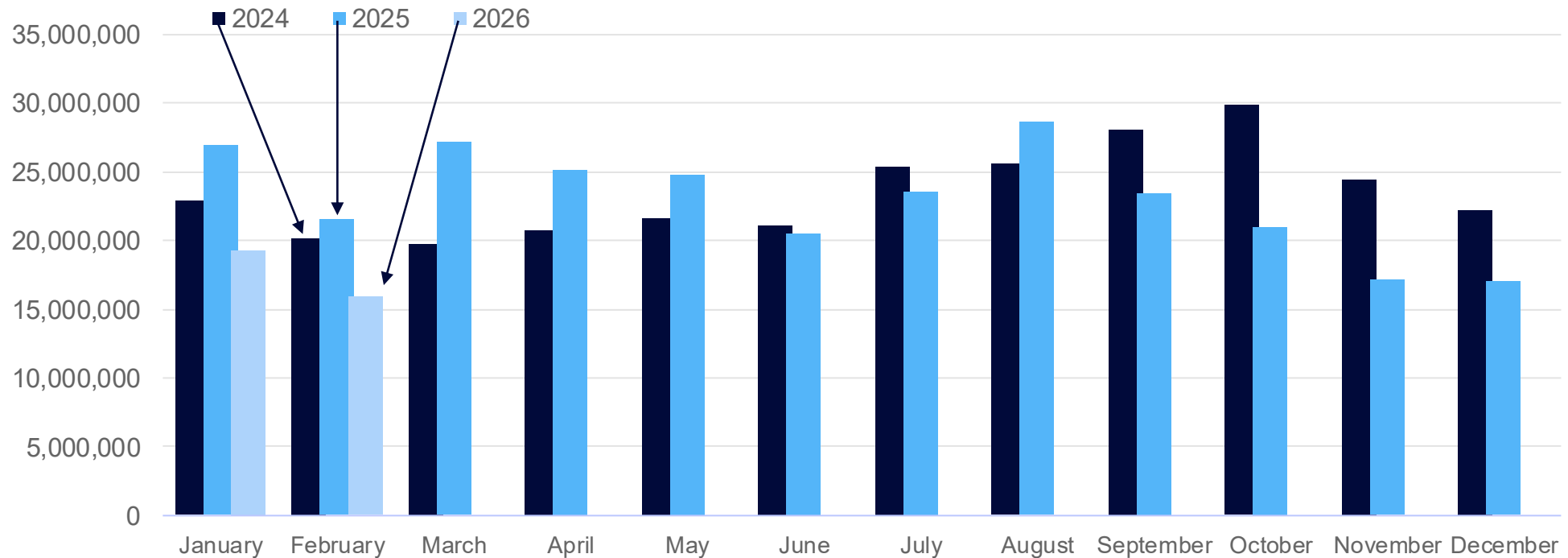
AI: News from the Front

Summary

## Google Search Trends: Programs

Gray DI tracks searches for over 900 programs, which represent 90% of all US completions.

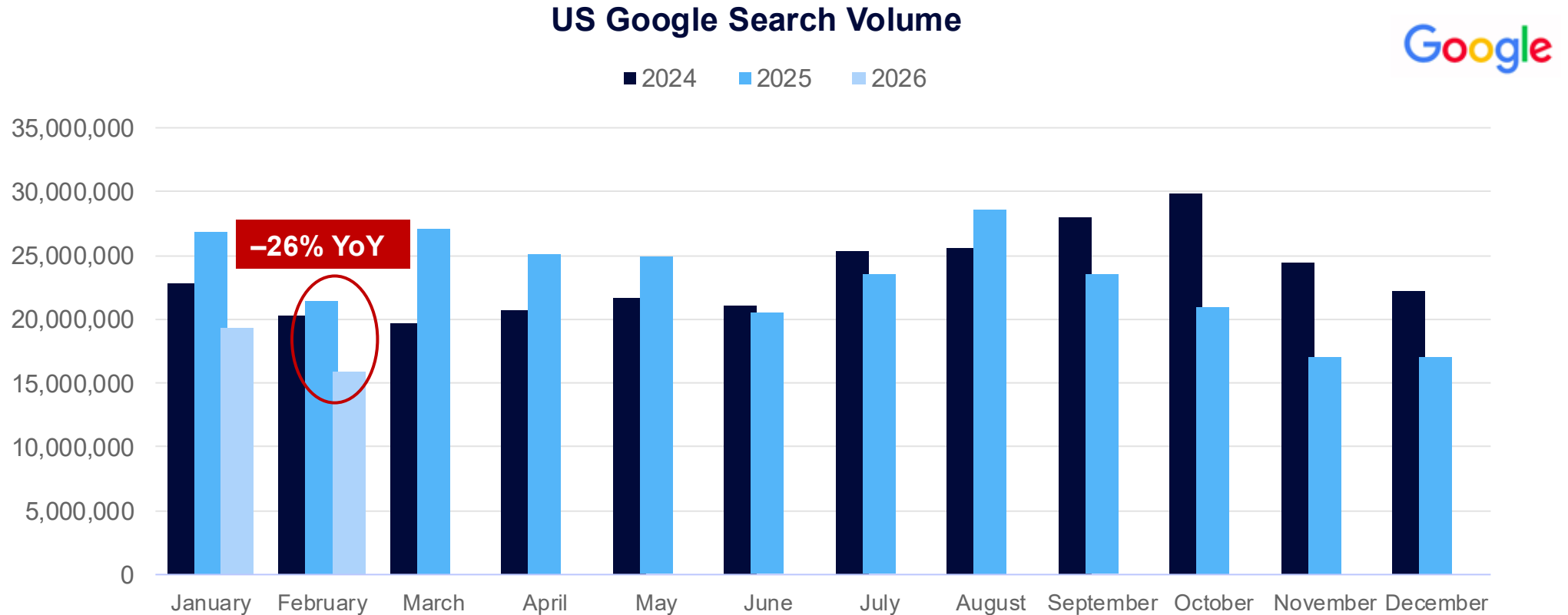
US Google Search Volume



Source: Gray DI's PES Keyword Search Dashboard

# Google Search Trends: Programs

In February 2026, Google searches fell 26% year over year.



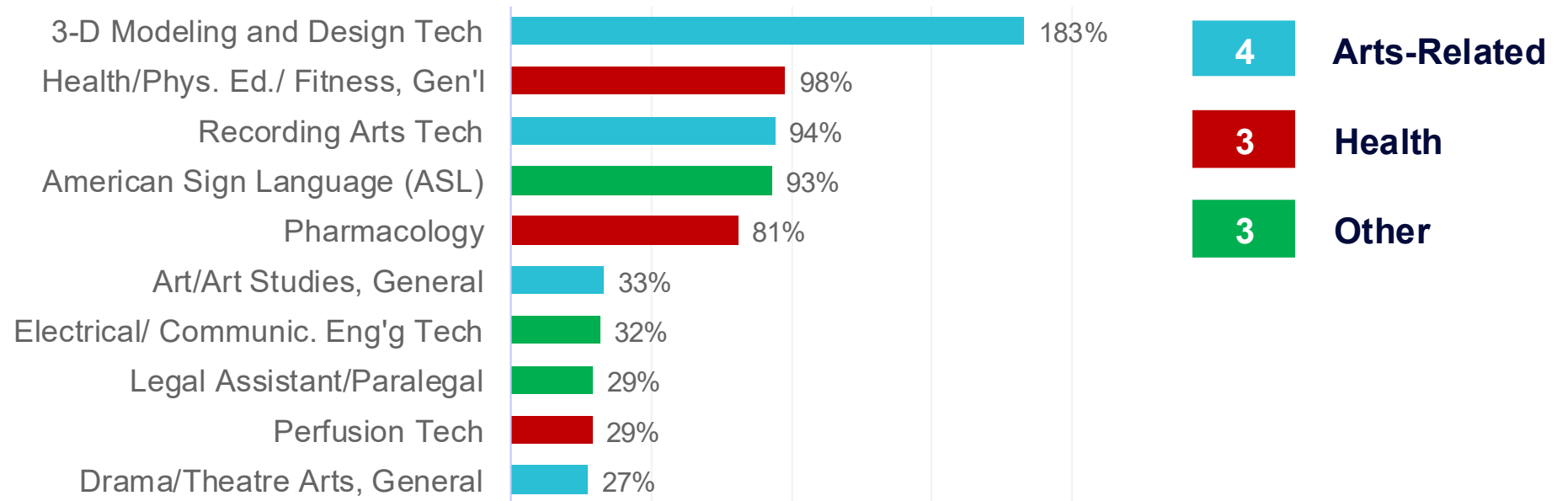
Source: PES Keyword Search Dashboard

# Google Keywords: Fastest-Growing Program Searches

3-D Modeling and Design Tech continues to dominate.



**Google Search Volumes by Program**  
February 2026 Year Over Year



# Agenda

What is a Program Evaluation System?

**Student Demand Indicators: Fall Enrollment**

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

AI Adoption in Higher Ed

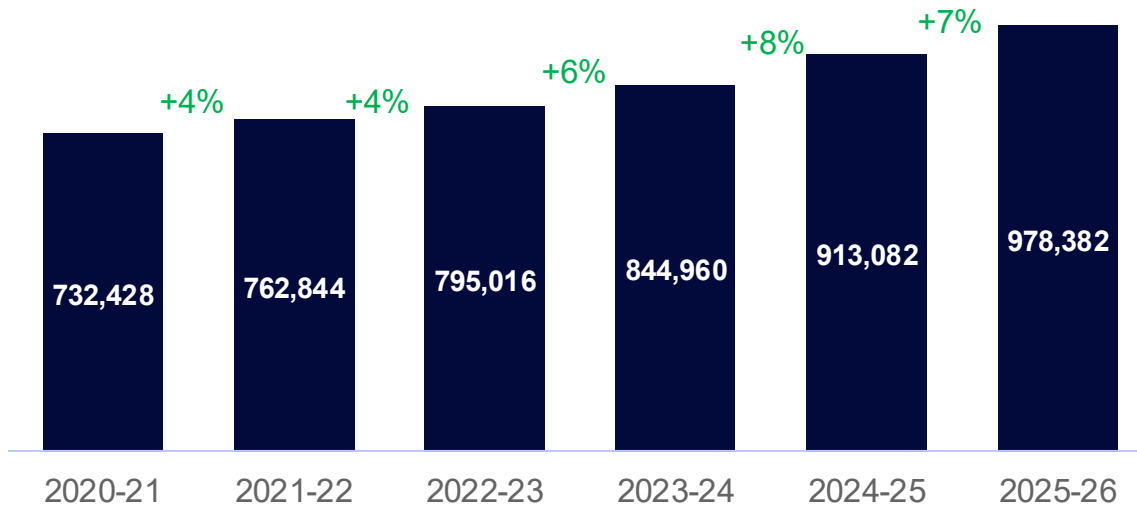
Summary

## Fall Enrollment: Community Colleges

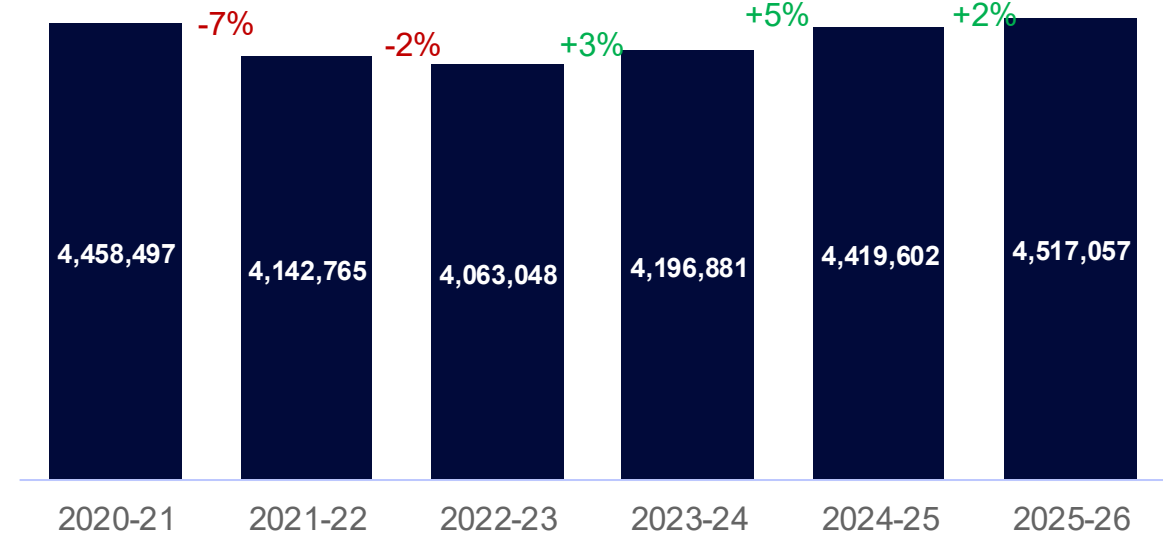
In Fall 2025, enrollment at the certificate level rose 7% year over year.

- Associate rose 2% year over year.

**US Fall Enrollment**  
Certificate



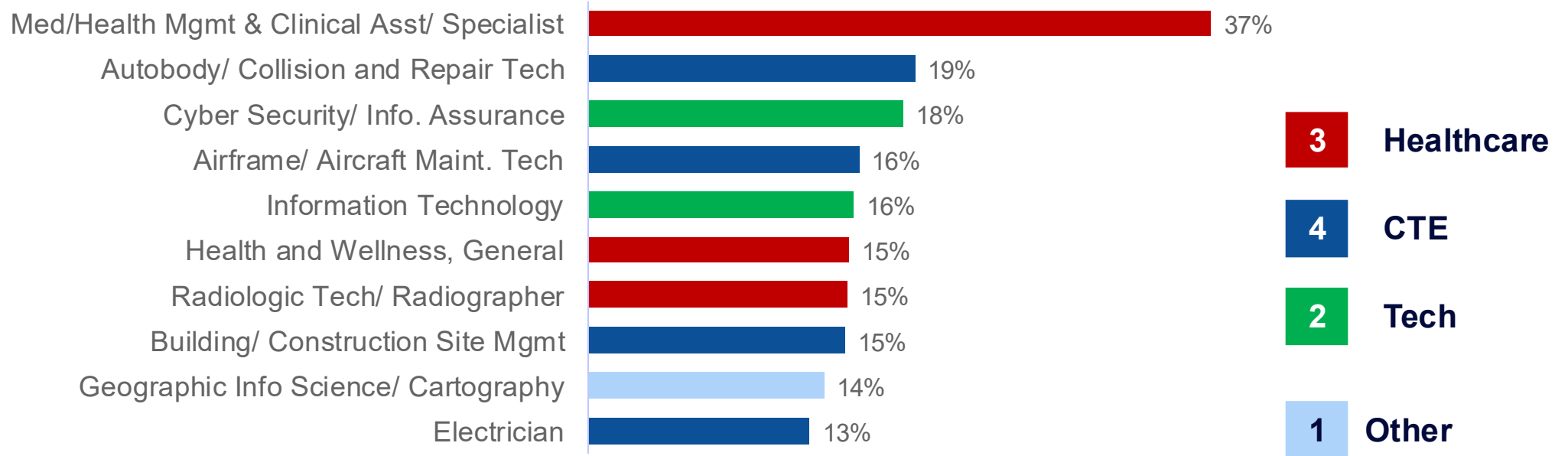
**US Fall Enrollment**  
Associate



## Certificate Fall Enrollment: 5-Year Annual Growth

From Fall 2021–2025, Med/Health Management enrollment grew 37% on average annually.

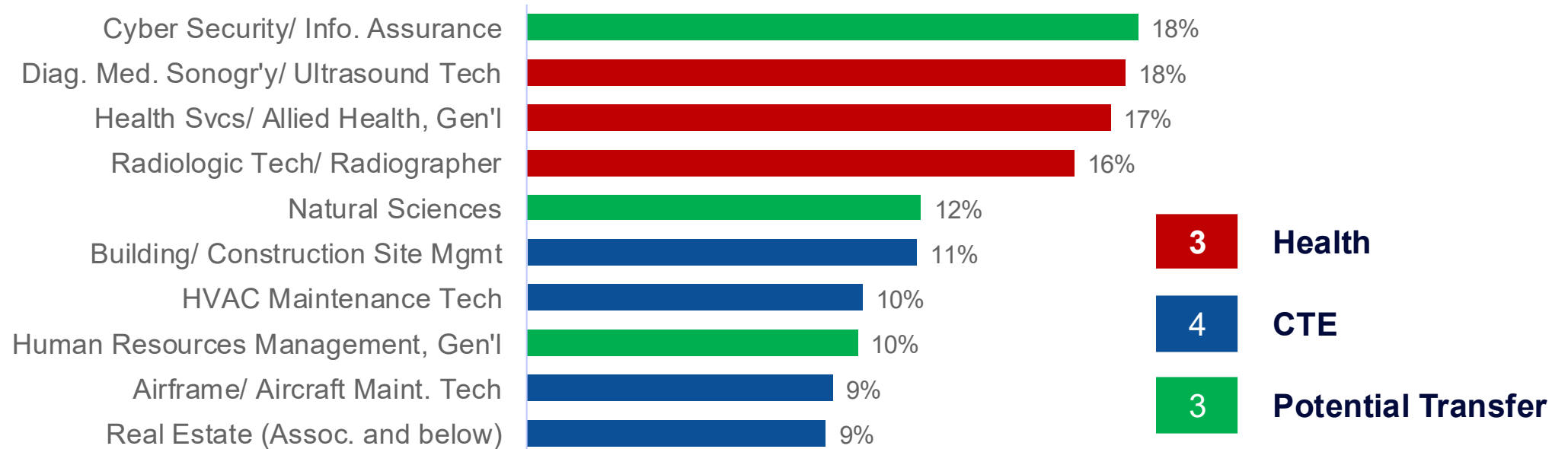
### US Fastest-Growing Fall Enrollment\* Certificate Programs 5-Year CAGR



# Associate Fall Enrollment: 5-Year Annual Growth

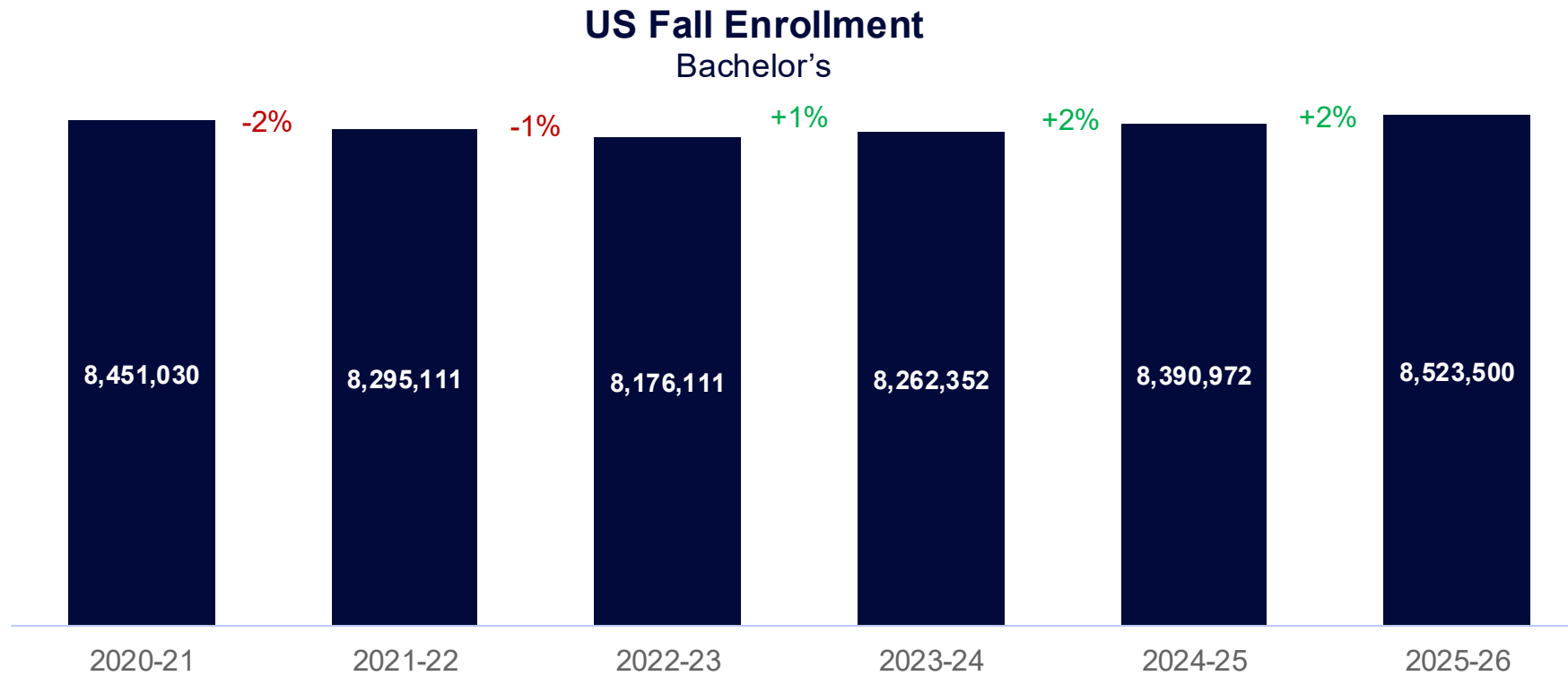
From Fall 2021–2025, Cybersecurity grew 18% on average annually.\*

## US Fastest-Growing Fall Enrollment\* Associate Programs 5-year CAGR



## Fall Enrollment: Bachelor's

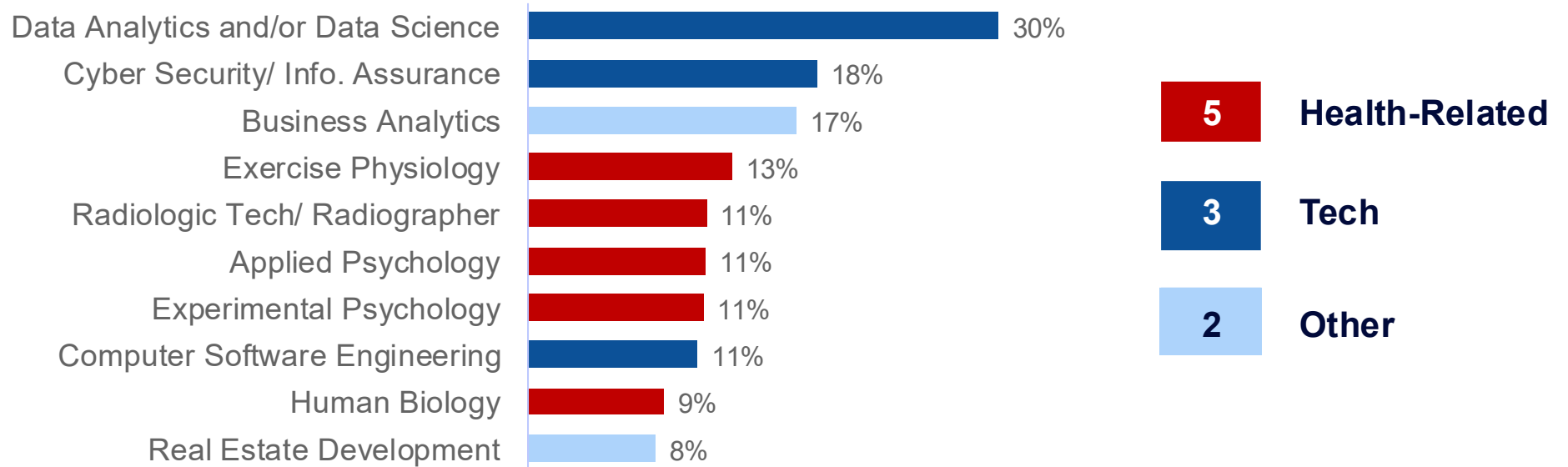
In Fall 2025, enrollment at the bachelor's level rose 2% year over year.



# Bachelor's Fall Enrollment: 5-Year Annual Growth

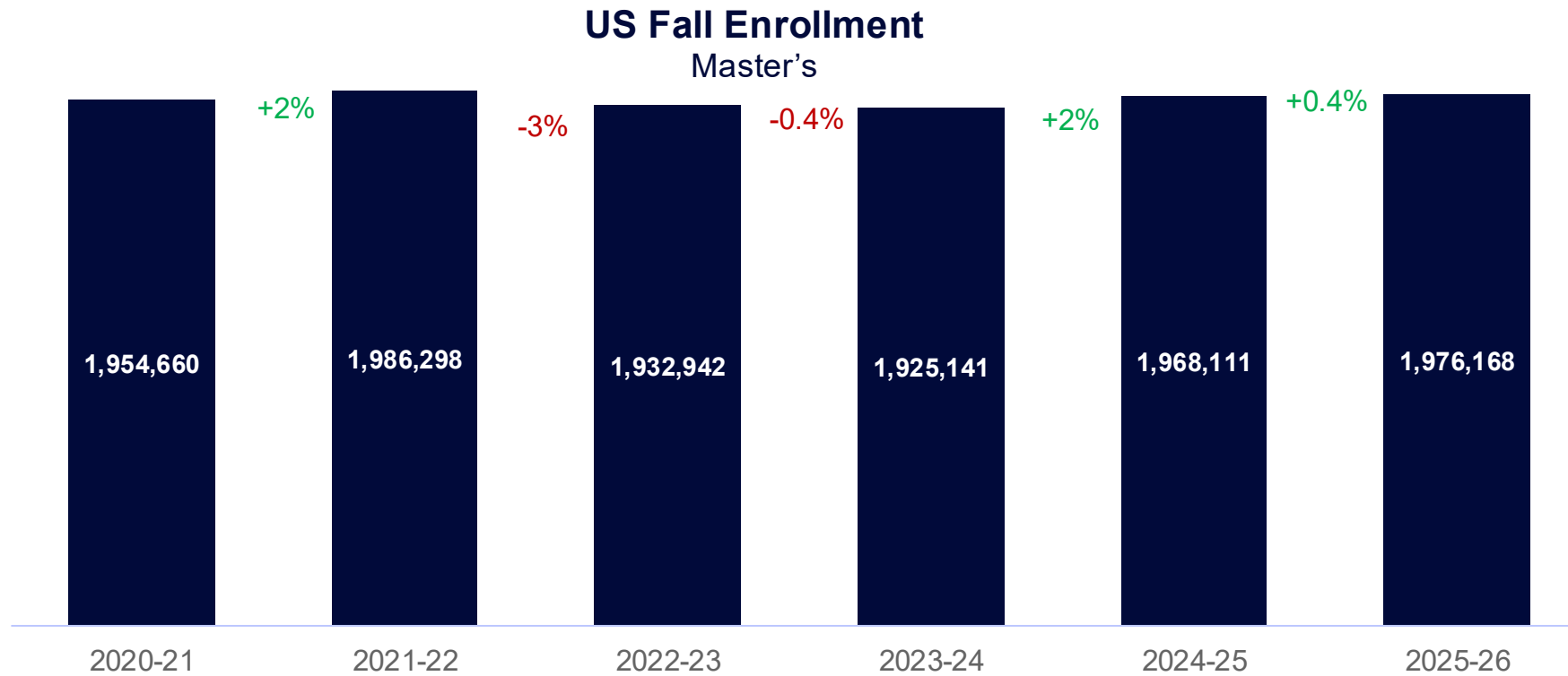
From Fall 2021–2025, Data Analytics/Science grew 30% on average annually.

## US Fastest-Growing Fall Enrollment\* Bachelor's Programs 5-year CAGR



## Fall Enrollment: Master's

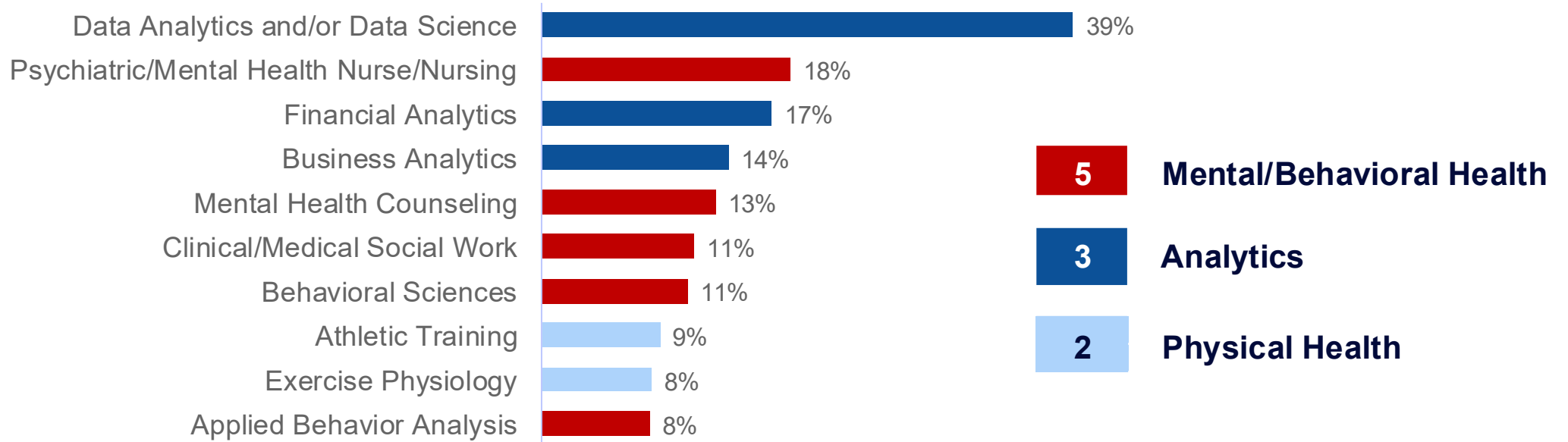
In Fall 2025, enrollment at the master's level rose slightly.



## Master's Fall Enrollment: 5-Year Annual Growth

From Fall 2021–2025, a Master's in Data Analytics/Science also took the lead in annual growth.

### US Fastest-Growing Fall Enrollment\* Master's Programs 5-year CAGR



# Agenda

What is a Program Evaluation System?

**Student Demand Indicators: International Demand**

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

AI Adoption in Higher Ed

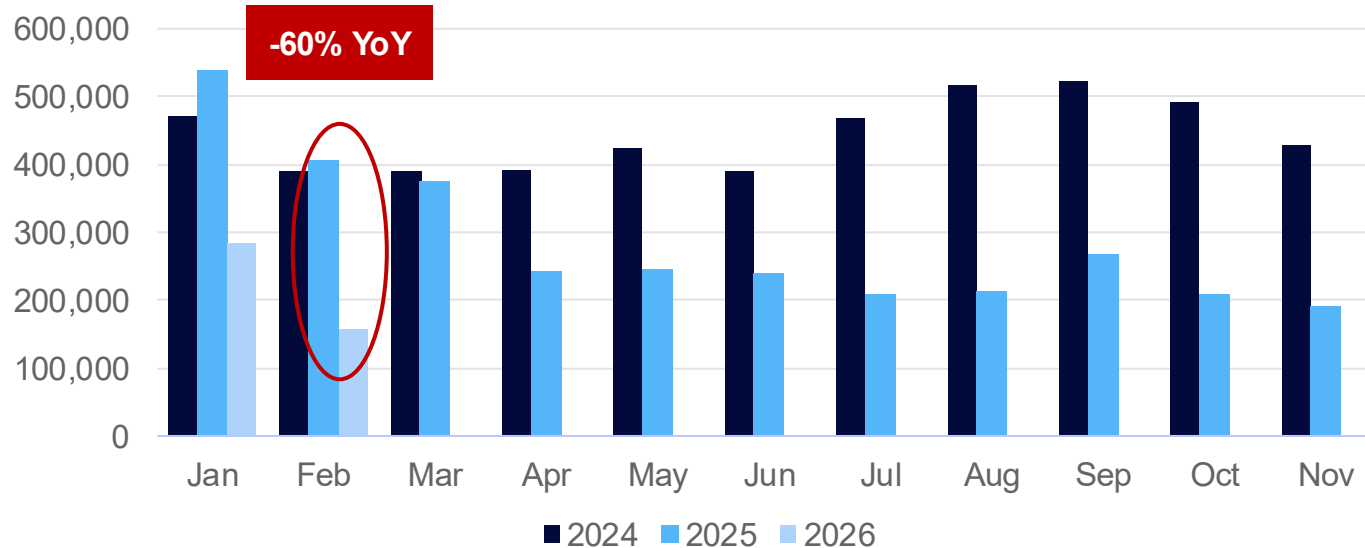
Summary

## International Student Demand

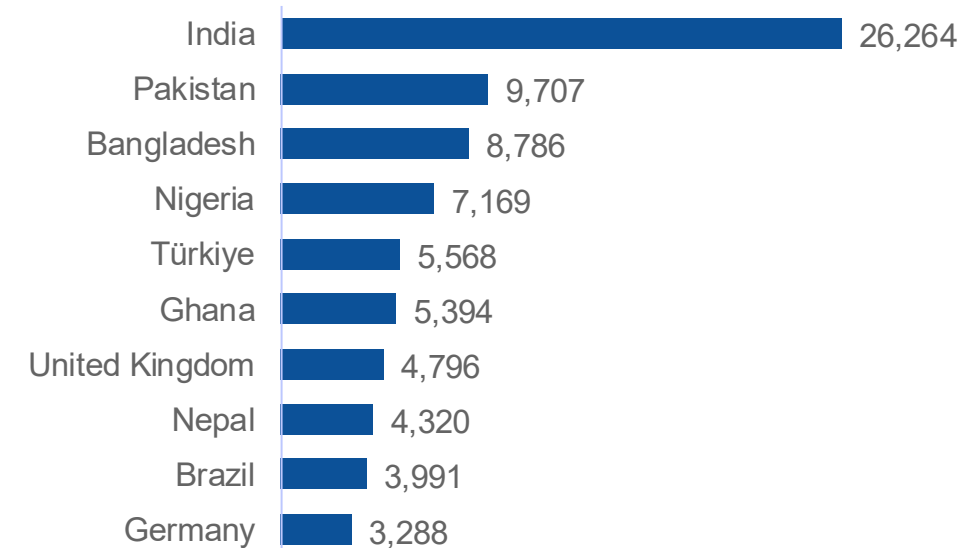
**In February 2025, international student interest in US programs fell by 61% year-over-year.\***

- Excluding China,<sup>1</sup> Bachelor's fell 17% year over year, Master's fell 68%, and PhD fell 54%.

**International Page Views**  
2024 - 2026



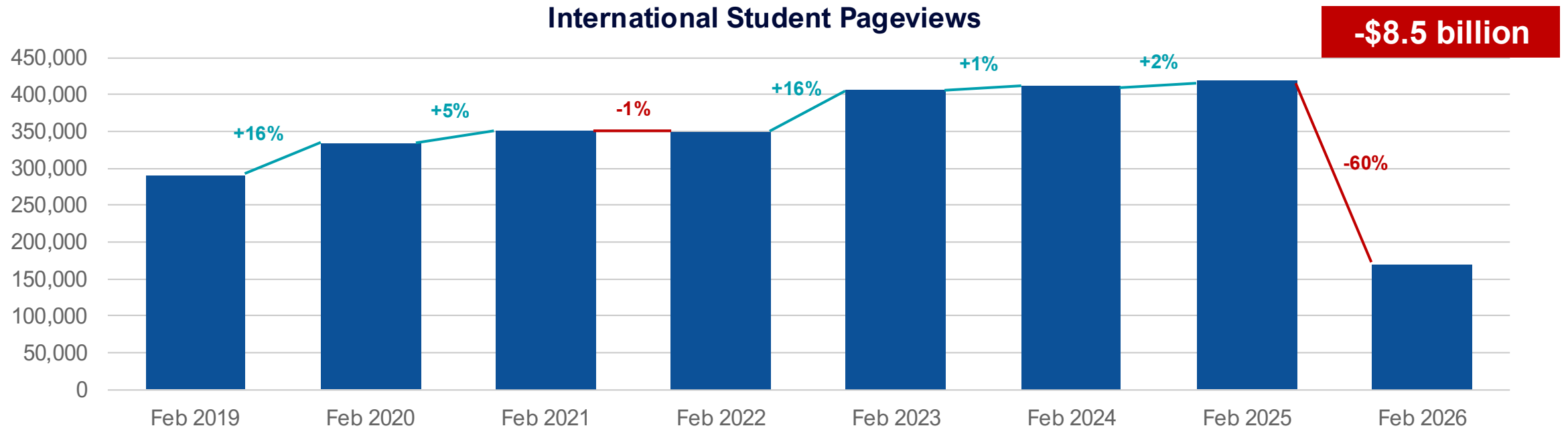
**Highest Page Views, Origin Countries**  
February 2025



1. We exclude China for YoY calculations, because we did not have data for China in 2025

\*Bachelor's, Master's, PhD only

# Losing international students may cost \$8.5 billion annually.



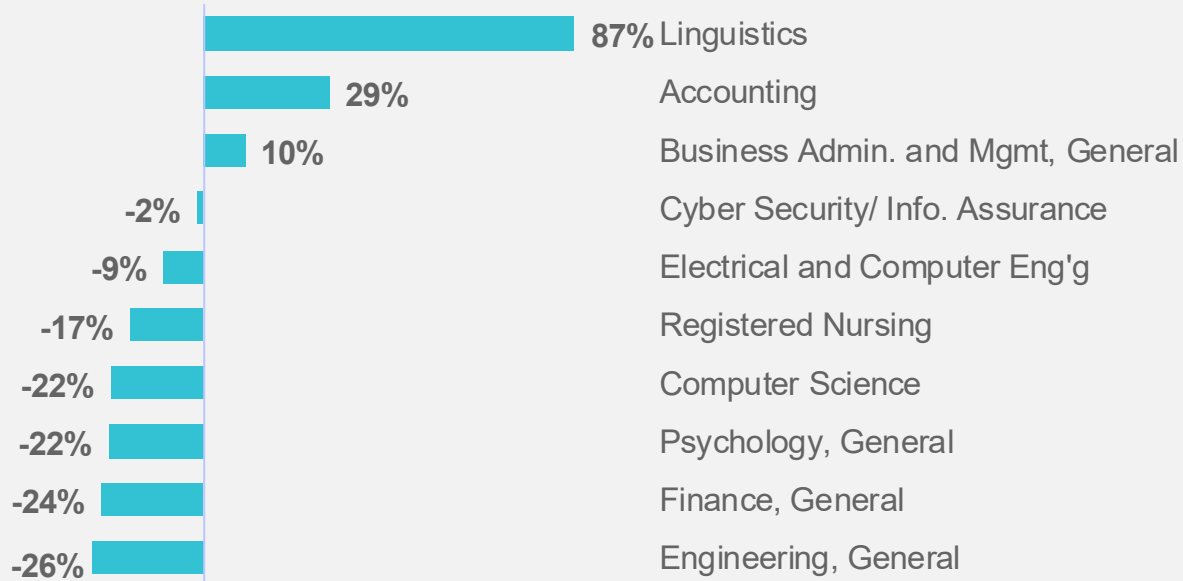
Sources: Gray DI Program Evaluation System, PES Markets, International Student Demand dashboard with data from Studyportals; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Institutional Characteristics component final data (2002-03 - 2023-24), Cost component final data (2024-25).

# International Page Views: February Fastest-Growing Programs Year-over-Year

**Bachelor's level: Linguistics increased the most.**

**Master's: Business programs topped the list.**

**Fastest-Growing Bachelor's Programs\***  
February 2025 YoY



**Least-Declining Master's Programs\*\***  
February 2025 YoY



\*Minimum 500 page views February 2025

\*\*Minimum 1,000 page views February 2025

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Student Demand Indicators

Employment: Current Indicators

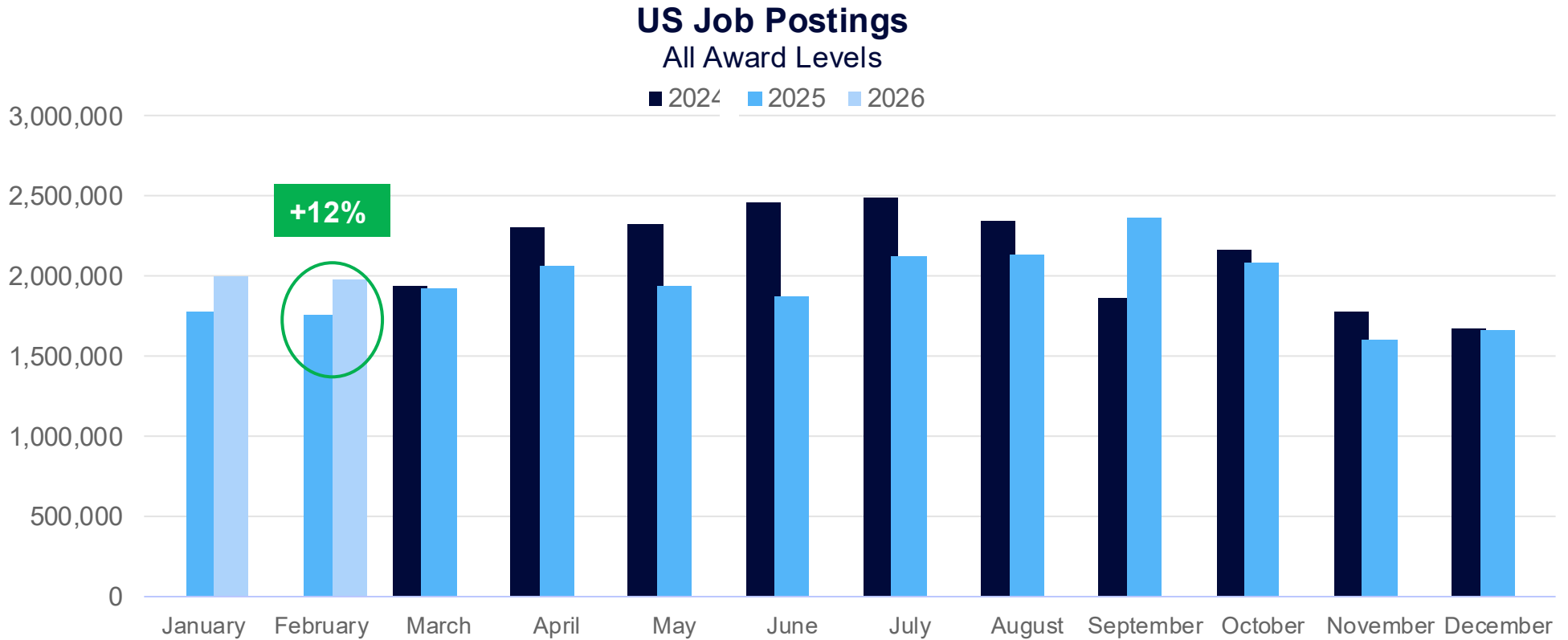
Program of the Month

AI: News from the Front

Summary

# US Job Postings Trends

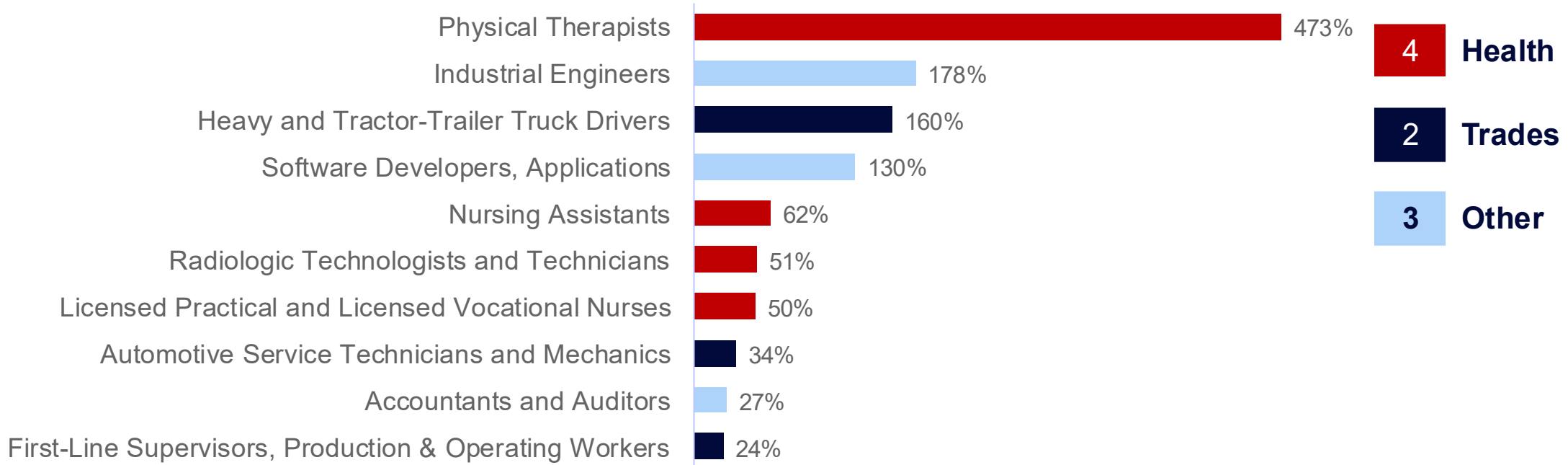
In February, job postings rose 12% year-over-year.



Source: Gray DI's PES Job Postings Dashboard

# Fastest-Growing Job Postings Year-over-Year

**Fastest-Growing Job Postings by Occupation\***  
February 2026

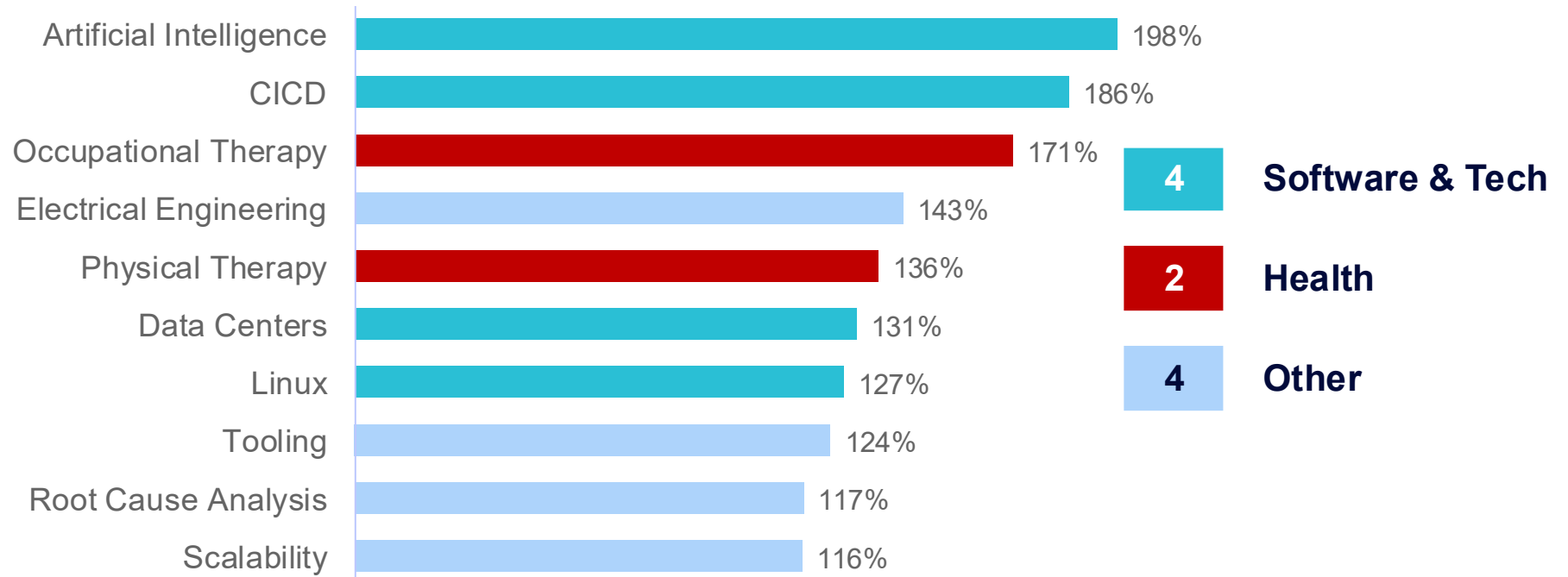


\*Minimum 8,000 postings volume  
Excludes unskilled labor job postings

# Which skills are growing in demand in the US?

In February, demand for AI skills had the highest year-over-year growth.

**10 Fastest-Growing Skills Volume in Job Postings\***  
February 2026 Year over Year



\* Minimum 10,000 Skills

## Alumni Career Paths: The Business Side of Healthcare

**Master's in Healthcare Administration graduates go into 645 occupations.**

- Only two of the 10 most reported occupations are directly related to a master's degree in the field.

### Highest Occupation Volume by Individual Profiles



**Direct Prep**

# Agenda

What is a Program Evaluation System?

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Summary

# Rank academic programs by market demand percentiles.

## US Bachelor's Programs

Program	Total Percentile	Student Demand Percentile	Employment Percentile	Competitive Intensity Percentile
15.1001 Construction Engineering Tech	94	88	94	70
40.0202 Astrophysics	93	91	80	90
52.1801 Sales/Distrib/ Marketing Ops, Gen'l	93	82	89	88
31.0504 Sport and Fitness Admin/Mgmt	93	97	75	81
30.7199 Data Analytics/Data Science, Other	93	87	92	67
38.0101 Philosophy	93	94	79	87
26.0101 Biology/ Biological Sciences, Gen'l	93	97	68	95
42.0101 Psychology, General (incl. 42.2799)	93	98	71	88
30.2701 Human Biology	93	94	71	97
09.0101 Speech Communication and Rhetoric	93	91	81	91
5.9999 Eng'g Tech and Eng'g-Related Fields, Other	93	85	94	68
11.0105 Human-Centered Tech Design	93	80	92	87
50.0404 Industrial and Product Design	93	91	77	96
26.0102 Biomedical Sciences, General	93	99	65	92
14.1003 Laser and Optical Engineering	93	61	92	99

Total Percentile	0	20+	40+	70+	90+	95+	98+	100
<b>Total Score</b>	-20	-16	2	15	27	34	43	66

# Let's look at market demand for a Bachelor's in Psychology.

## US Bachelor's Programs

Program	Total Percentile	Student Demand Percentile	Employment Percentile	Competitive Intensity Percentile
15.1001 Construction Engineering Tech	94	88	94	70
40.0202 Astrophysics	93	91	80	90
52.1801 Sales/Distrib/ Marketing Ops, Gen'l	93	82	89	88
31.0504 Sport and Fitness Admin/Mgmt	93	97	75	81
30.7199 Data Analytics/Data Science, Other	93	87	92	67
38.0101 Philosophy	93	94	79	87
26.0101 Biology/ Biological Sciences, Gen'l	93	97	68	95
<b>42.0101 Psychology, General (incl. 42.2799)</b>	93	98	71	88
30.2701 Human Biology	93	94	71	97
09.0101 Speech Communication and Rhetoric	93	91	81	91
5.9999 Eng'g Tech and Eng'g-Related Fields, Other	93	85	94	68
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14.1003 Laser and Optical Engineering	93	61	92	99

Total Percentile	0	20+	40+	70+	90+	95+	98+	100
<b>Total Score</b>	-20	-16	2	15	27	34	43	66

## Student Demand

### Psychology scores in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile for Student Demand.

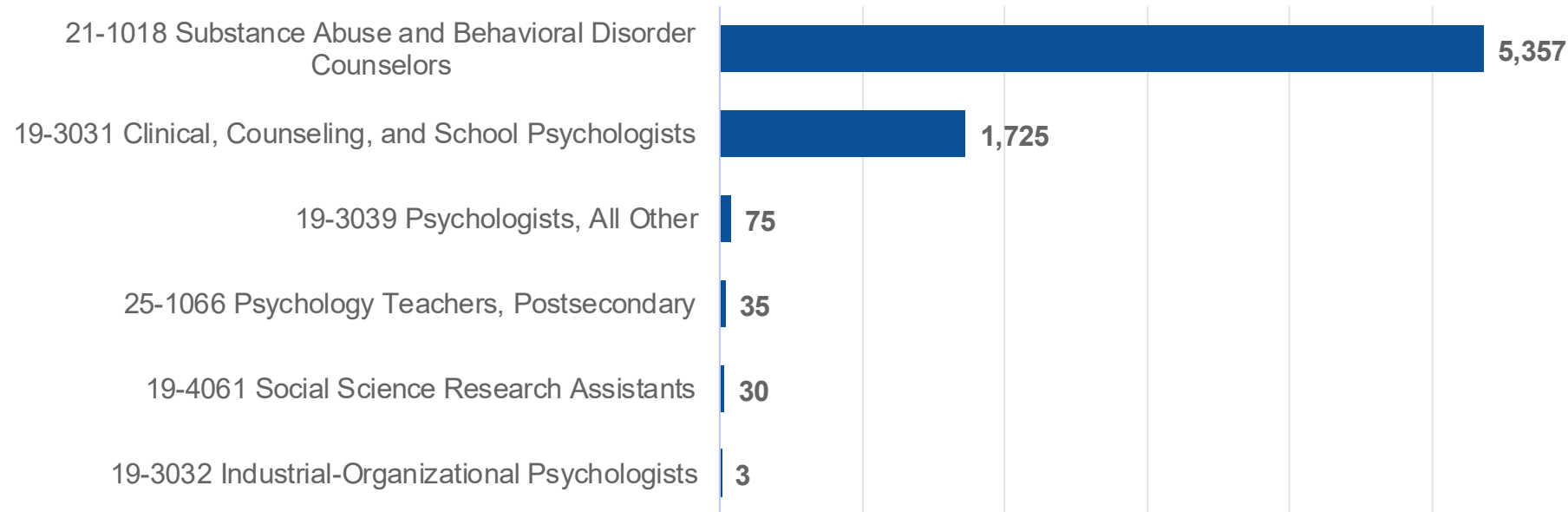
- All size metrics are strong.
  - Google searches are in the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile.
  - New student enrollment and overall completions are in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile.
  - International page views are in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- Growth metrics are mixed.
  - Recent indicators are better.
  - Google searches grew 14% year-over-year.
  - New student enrollment declined 1%
  - IPEDS completions rose 2%.

Student Demand		98		
Score	27.8	Percentile	98	
Criterion	Value	Pctl	Score	
<i>Size</i>	-	-	-	
→ Google Search Volume (12 Months)*	2,131,010	96	5.8	
→ New Student Enrollment Volume (12 Mo.)	67,623	99	5.9	
On ground Completions at In Market Institutions	110,788	100	6.0	
Online Completions by In Market Students	20,677	99	NS	
→ Sum of On ground and Online Completions	131,465	99	5.9	
<i>Growth: Year-over-year Unit Change</i>	-	-	-	
Google Search YoY Change (Units)*	269,150	95	NS	
New Student Enrollment Vol. YoY Change (Units)	-979	0	0.0	
Completion Volume YoY Change (Units)	1,883	99	2.0	
<i>Growth: Year-over-year % Change</i>	-	-	-	
→ Google Search YoY Change (%)*	14%	63	NS	
→ New Student Enrollment Vol. YoY Change (%)	-1%	47	0.9	
→ Completion Volume YoY Change (%)	2%	61	1.2	
<i>Size: International Demand</i>	-	-	-	
→ International Page Views (12 Months)	15,158	99	NS	

## What kinds of jobs can Bachelor's in Psychology graduates get?

According to direct prep crosswalks, there are six occupations for Psychology majors.

**US Direct Prep Job Postings, Psychology**  
February, 2026

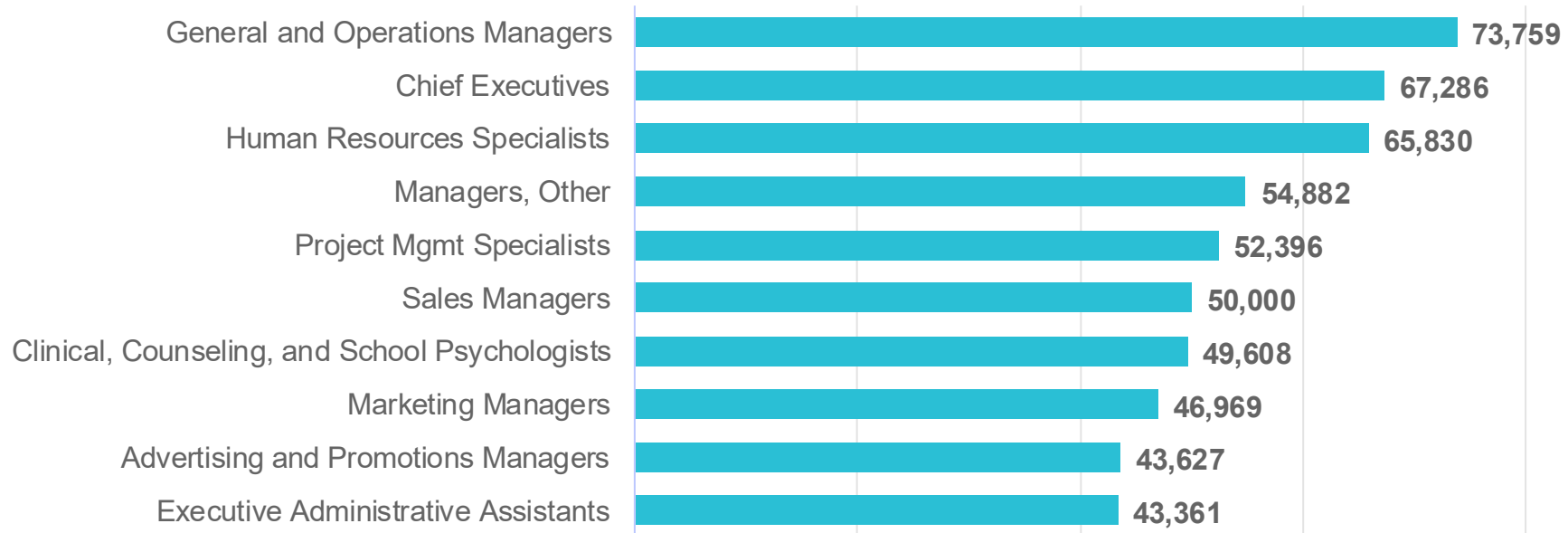


Sources: Gray DI's Job Postings Dashboard and NCES CIP-SOC Crosswalk

# Alumni Outcomes

Based on over one million profiles, Psychology majors go into 782 occupations.

**Highest Occupation Volume, Bachelor's in Psychology**  
By Number of Individual Profiles



Post Entry  
Median Pay:  
\$74,466  
(30<sup>th</sup> percentile)

## Employment Opportunities

### Psychology scores in the 71<sup>st</sup> percentile for Employment.

- Entry-level job postings, BLS Current Employment, and Annual Job Openings are strong: 99<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- Historical growth is healthy: 3-5%.
  - 84<sup>th</sup> percentile for year-over-year
  - 91<sup>st</sup> percentile for 3-year CAGR
- Job postings per graduate are average: 1.3.

Employment		71	
Score	19.4	Percentile	71
Criterion	Value	Pctl	Score
<i>Size: Entry Jobs</i>			
Job Postings Total (12 Months)	164,583	99	4.0
BLS Current Employment	1,005,429	99	1.0
BLS Annual Job Openings	93,284	99	1.0
<i>Growth: Entry Jobs</i>			
BLS 1 Year Historical Growth	3%	84	1.7
BLS 3 Year Historic Growth (CAGR)	5%	91	1.8
BLS 10 Year Future Growth (CAGR)	0.7%	77	0.8
<i>Saturation: Entry Jobs</i>			
Job Postings per Graduate	1.3	53	2.1
BLS Job Openings per Graduate	0.7	61	0.6

## Employment Opportunities

### Psychology scores in the 71<sup>st</sup> percentile for Employment.

- Only 5% of graduates go into jobs for which they are directly prepared.
- Wages are well below average.
  - Entry-level wages are in the 22<sup>nd</sup> percentile.
  - Bachelors post-entry median pay is in the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile.
  - Masters post-entry median pay is in the 24<sup>th</sup> percentile

Employment		71	
Score	19.4	Percentile	71
Criterion	Value	Pctl	Score
<i>Weighted-Avg BLS Wages</i>	-	-	-
→ Entry 25th Percentile	\$49,390	22	1.8
Post Entry Median	\$81,418	42	3.4
Post Entry w Associates Median		0	NS
→ Post Entry w Bachelors Median	\$74,466	30	NS
→ Post Entry w Masters Median	\$94,408	24	NS
Post Entry w Doctoral Median	\$117,361	53	NS
<i>Underemployed</i>	-	-	-
→ Underemployed Percent of Graduates**	51%	34	1.4
<i>ACS Bachelor's Degree Outcomes*</i>	-	-	-
% with Any Graduate Degree*	50%	76	NS
% with Masters*	35%	82	NS
% with Doct Prof Degree*	15%	75	NS
% Unemp. (Age <30)**	4%	14	NS
→ % in Direct Prep Jobs*	5%	44	NS

## Competition for Students

### Psychology scores in the 88<sup>th</sup> percentile for competitive intensity.

- 1,326 colleges offer this program.
  - In 2024, 14 fewer campuses had completions.
- At 32, the median program size is strong (96<sup>th</sup> percentile),
- Program size is flat.
- Marketing costs and competition are high.
- It is a strong online program.
  - There are 342 institutions with online programs.
  - 16% of completions are online.

Source: Gray DI's PES Markets

Competitive Intensity		88	
Score	11.2	Percentile	88
Criterion	Value	Pctl	Score
<i>Volume of In-Market Competition</i>			
Campuses with Graduates**	1,326	1	NS
Campuses with Grads YoY Change (Units)**	-14	99	NS
Institutions with Online In Market Students**	342	1	NS
<i>In-Market Programs</i>			
Average Program Completions	82	99	4.0
Median Program Completions	32	96	3.8
YoY Median Prog. Compl. Change (Units)	0	69	1.4
YoY Median Prog. Compl. Change (%)	0	69	1.4
<i>In-Market Saturation</i>			
Google Search * Cost per Click**	32	2	0.1
Google Competition Index**	0.5	20	0.6
<i>National Online Competition</i>			
National Online Institutions (Units)**	342	1	NS
Nat'l Online % of Institutions	24%	86	NS
Nat'l Online % of Completions	16%	77	NS

<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>93</b>
Score 58.4	Percentile 93

A general program that focuses on the scientific study of individual and collective behavior, the physical and environmental bases of behavior, and the analysis and treatment of behavior problems and disorders. Includes instruction in the principles of the various subfields of psychology, research methods, and psychological assessment and testing methods.

Student Demand			
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			<b>98</b>
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<i>Size</i>	-	-	-
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Underemployed Percent of Graduates**	51%	34	1.4
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<i>National Online Competition</i>	-	-	-
National Online Institutions (Units)**	342	1	NS
Nat'l Online % of Institutions	24%	86	NS
Nat'l Online % of Completions	16%	77	NS

Award Level	Enrollment %	Completions %	Completions % National
Certificate	1	0	0
Associates	25	12	12
Bachelors	62	82	82
Postbaccalaureate Certificate	0	0	0
Masters	9	5	5
Post-masters Certificate	1	0	0
Doctoral	3	1	1

Cost Benchmarking National	Value	Pctl
Average Cost per SCH Index**	0.81	78
Median Cost per SCH Index**	0.90	71

**Footnotes**

- \* - Google search do not filter by award level.
- \*\* - Percentiles are displayed in reverse (100% minus the percentile).
- Pctl - Percentile
- ACS - American Community Survey.
- NS - Not scored in Rubrics (Value=0)
- Definitions - Hover over the criterion row to view the data definition.

# Summary Overview

The program exhibits strong national completions and competitive demand but faces challenges with new student enrollment and salary prospects for graduates.

## Overview

With national completions at 131,465, the program ranks in the 99th percentile, highlighting its broad reach and appeal. Despite this, new student enrollment presents a weakness as it has decreased, holding a 0 percentile for Year-over-Year (YoY) unit change. Additionally, entry-level salary prospects remain low, ranking at the 22nd percentile, indicating a potential area for improvement.

## Student Demand

Google Search Volume for the program is notably high at 2,131,010, placing it in the 96th percentile, which signifies significant interest among potential students. The program's Google Search YoY Unit Change further strengthens this demand at 269,150, lying in the 95th percentile. However, the Google Search YoY Percentage Change is at 14%, indicating moderate growth in the 63rd percentile. New Student Enrollment Volume is robust at 67,623, achieving a 99th percentile, which is a strength. Yet, the difficulties with a New Student Enrollment Volume YoY Unit Change of -979 (0 percentile) suggest challenges in converting interest into actual enrollment.

## Employment

Employment prospects are mixed, with a BLS Current Employment figure of 1,005,429 ranking in the 99th percentile, showcasing high employment opportunities in the field. On the flip side, an Entry Level Salary of \$49,390 ranks in the 22nd percentile, suggesting that initial pay may not be competitive. Though job postings per graduate are moderate with a percentile of 53, the Post Entry Level Median Salary offers some promise at \$81,418, sitting in the 42nd percentile. Furthermore, a 3% BLS 1-Year Historical Growth rate impressively ranks in the 84th percentile. However, a high Underemployed Percent of Graduates at 51% holds a concerning 34th percentile, indicating graduates may struggle with job placement suitable to their qualifications.

## Competitive Intensity

The program's competitive landscape is challenging, with 1,326 Campuses with Graduates at just the 1st percentile, indicating widespread availability across campuses. Contrastingly, the Campuses with Graduates YoY Unit Change shows a reduction of 14, achieving a 99th percentile, which may ease competitive pressures slightly. The Average Program Completions at 82 is strong, corroborated by a 99th percentile rank, suggesting that many institutions see value in sustaining the program. However, with a Google Search Cost per Click of \$32.00 situated in the 2nd percentile, marketing the program online is expensive, implying tough competition for audience attention. Additionally, the Google Competition Index at 0.5 ranks in the 20th percentile, presenting moderate difficulty in distinguishing the program within a competitive online marketplace.

# Agenda

What is a Program Evaluation System?

Student Demand Indicators

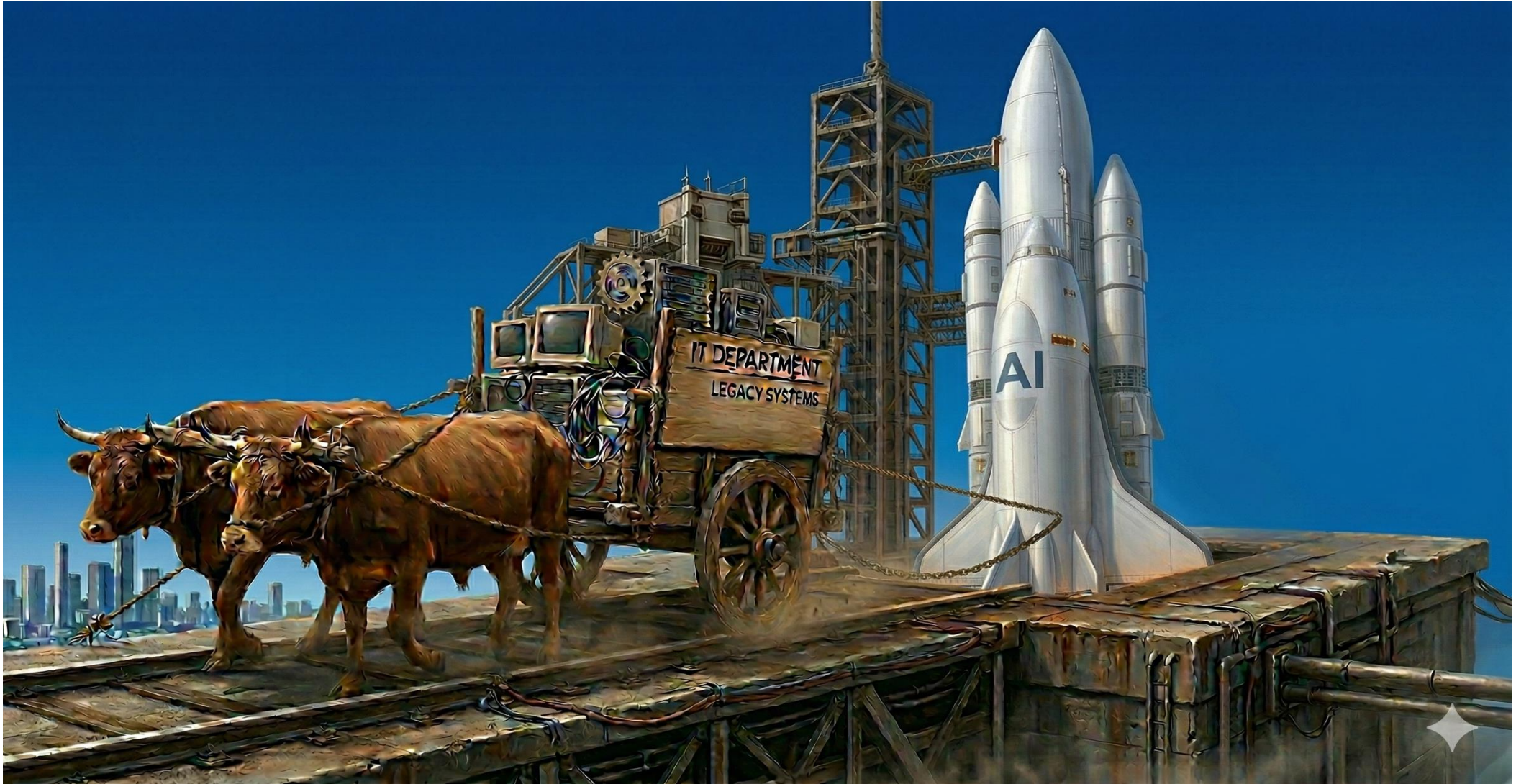
Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

AI: News from the Front

Summary

## **Poll: Barriers**





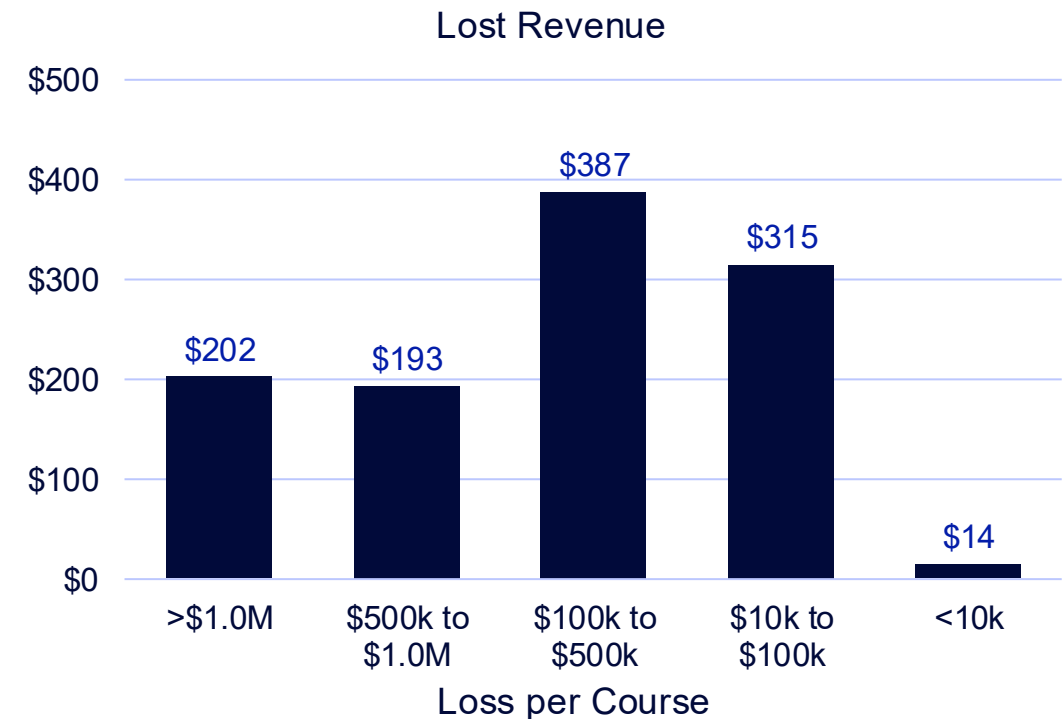
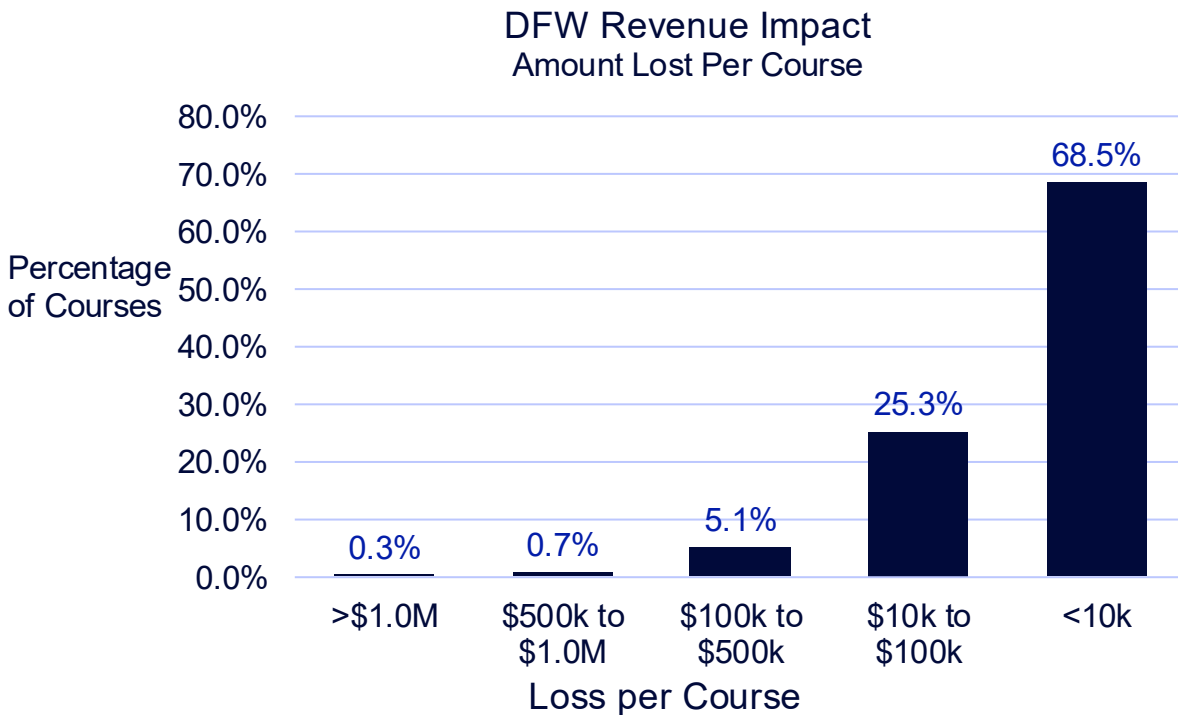
## Poll 2: Adoption

## This stuff works!

- It could have failed: new, unproven technology with an extremely complex task.
- It worked:
  - Faculty and students appreciated the opportunity to work with a well-developed tutor.
  - It did not do assignments.
  - It gave good explanations
  - It was appreciated for being non-judgmental: “I could ask dumb questions and not be embarrassed.”
  - It enabled “dynamic assignments” that encouraged critical thinking.
    - Simulated, interactive patient situations: “Had to use the nursing process.”
    - Improved scores on HESI tests went up
  - Surprisingly, the best students used it the most and saw their test scores improve 10%-20%
  - Saved faculty time creating simulations and tests.

## DFWs in 36,979 courses at private colleges are a ~\$1.0 billion opportunity.

- **0.3% of courses had losses of over \$1.0 million per year, for a total of \$202 million.**
- **25% of courses had lost revenue of \$100k to \$500k, for a total of \$387 million.**



# Agenda

What is a Program Evaluation System?

Student Demand Indicators

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

AI: News from the Front

Summary

## Summary

- In February 2026, Google searches for academic programs fell 26% year over year.
  - Interest in the arts is growing.
  - Interest in health-related programs is also growing.
- In Fall 2025, YoY enrollment at community colleges rose 7% for certificates and 2% for associates.
  - At the certificate level, Med/Health Management and Clinical Assistant grew the most over the last five years.
  - At the associate level, Cybersecurity grew the most in the same time period.
- Fall enrollment in bachelor's programs grew 2%; master's was flat.
  - At the bachelor's and master's levels, Data Analytics/Science grew the most on average annually since Fall 2021.
- In February 2026, US job postings rose by 12% year-over-year.
  - Physical Therapist was the fastest-growing occupation.
- Demand for a Bachelor's in Psychology is strong, but wages are low.
  - The most common occupation for graduates is General and Operations Managers.
- Initial acceptance and benefits of an AI tutor are strongly positive.

## Next up in our Master Class Series:

All classes are from 2-3 PM ET.

Date	Topic
Tues., March 10	Higher Education in the Roaring 20s
Tues, March 17	Market Demand for Academic Programs
Tues, March 24	Program Economics and Outcomes
<b>Tues, March 31</b>	<b>Predict Program Size and Remix</b>
Tues, April 7	Innovations in Academic Program Evaluation

## Demand Trends Monthly Webinar

**April 30<sup>th</sup>**  
**2 PM ET**



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