



GRAY[™]
DECISION INTELLIGENCE



Demand for Higher Education Programs

October 29th, 2026





In the Chat, please share:

- **Where are you joining from**
- **Your institution or organization**
- **What you or your family are dressing up as this Halloween**



"I agreed to give him a ride, but only if I got to wear the boots."

Agenda

What Is a Program Evaluation System?

Student Demand Indicators

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

2023 Emerging Programs Update

Summary



Program Evaluation System (PES) Overview



Agenda

What Is a Program Evaluation System?

Student Demand Indicators: Google Keywords

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

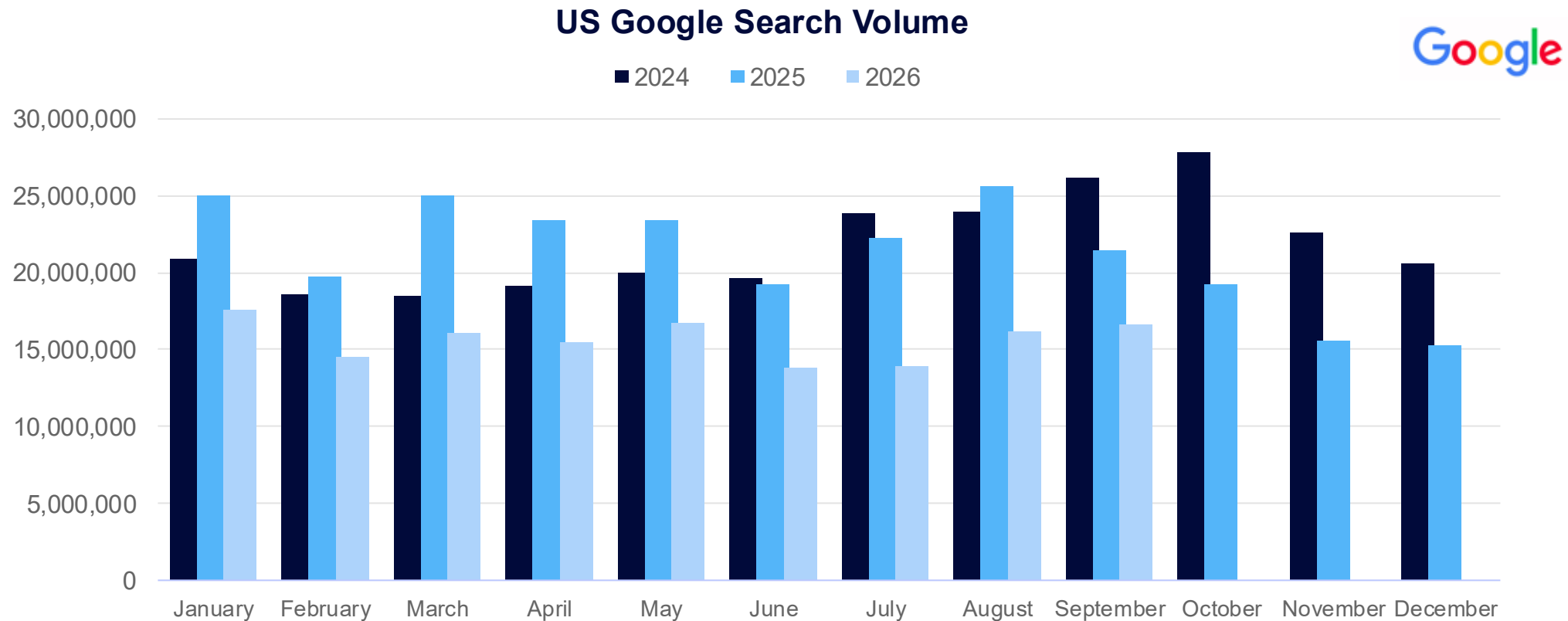
2023 Emerging Programs Update

Summary



Google Search Trends: Programs

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

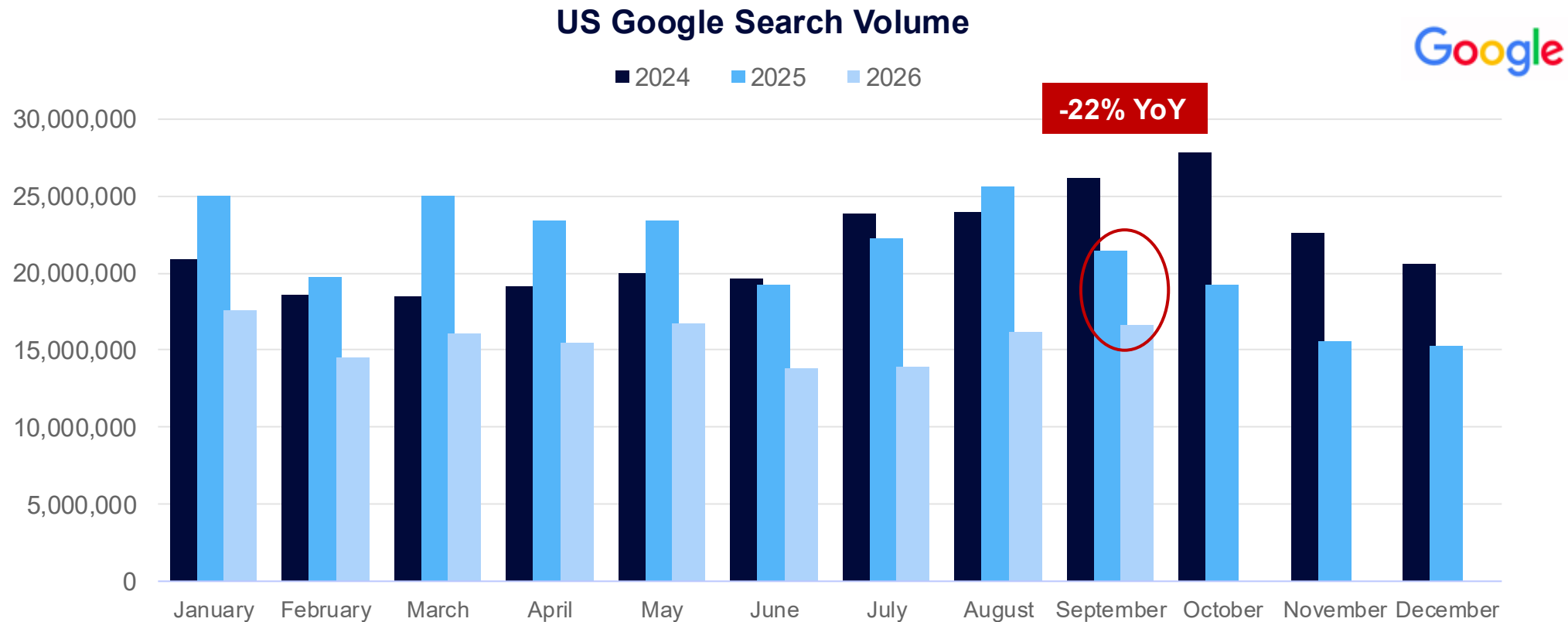


Source: Gray DI's PES Keyword Search Dashboard



Google Search Trends: Programs

In September 2026, total US search volume fell 22% year over year.



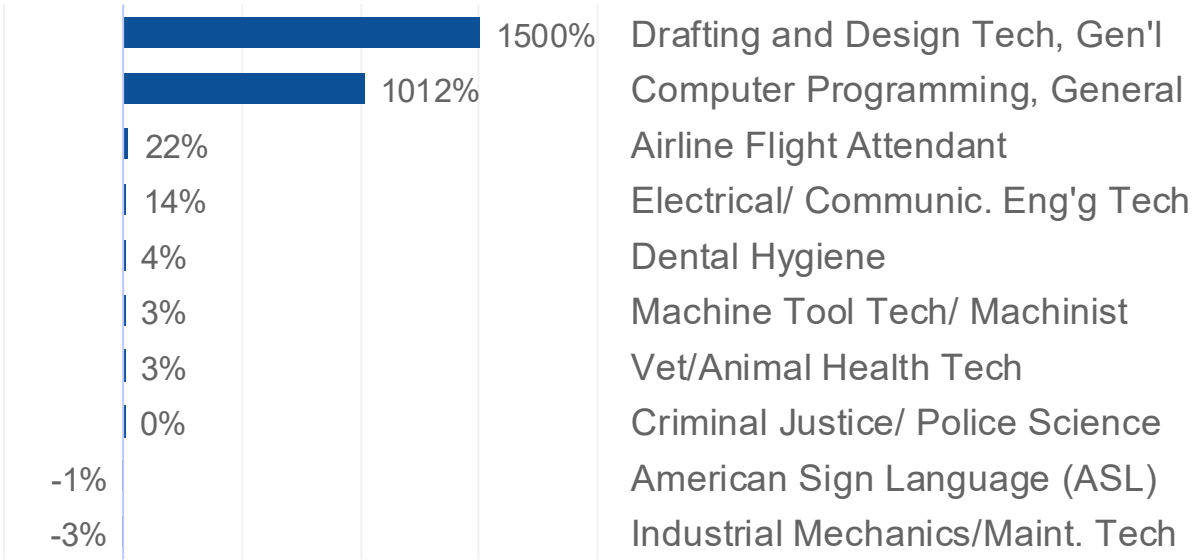
Source: Gray DI's PES Keyword Search Dashboard

Fastest–Growing US Search Volumes (Associate and Certificate Levels)

Drafting and Design Tech continues to dominate program keyword search growth.



Fastest-Growing Google Searches*
Associate and Certificate
 September 2026 Year over Year



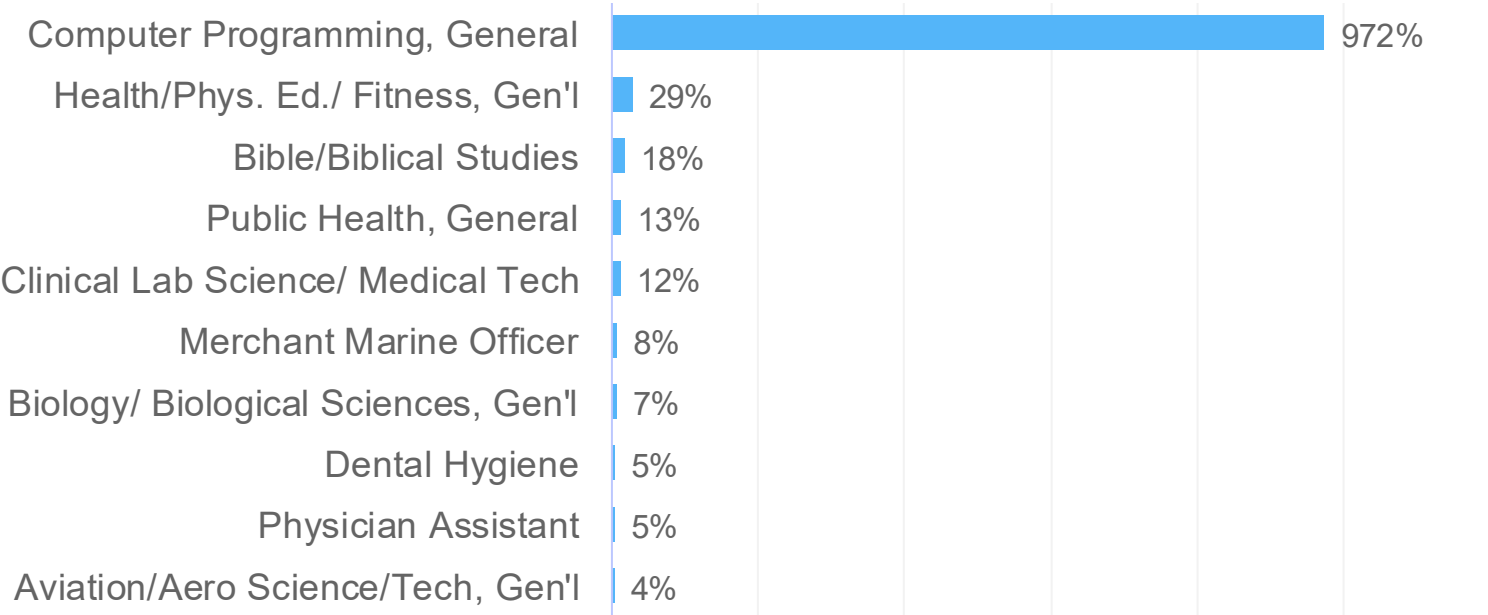


Fastest–Growing US Search Volumes (Bachelor’s and Above Levels)

Computer Programming grew 972% year over year.



Fastest-Growing Google Searches*
Bachelor’s and Above
September 2026 Year over Year



Source: Gray DI's PES Keyword Search Dashboard

*Minimum searches September 2025: 10,000

Agenda

What Is a Program Evaluation System?

Student Demand Indicators: Summer 2026 Enrollment

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

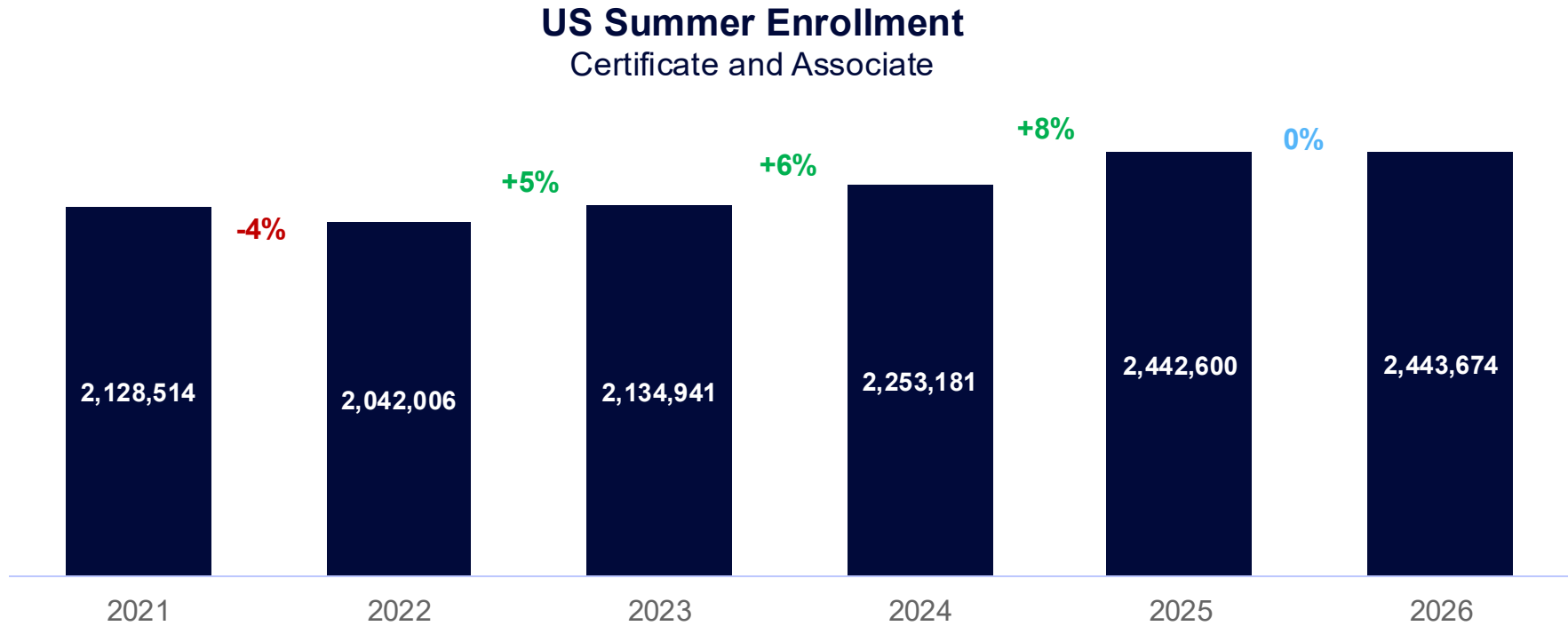
2023 Emerging Programs Update

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Summer Enrollment: Certificate and Associate Programs

In summer 2026, enrollment was flat year over year.

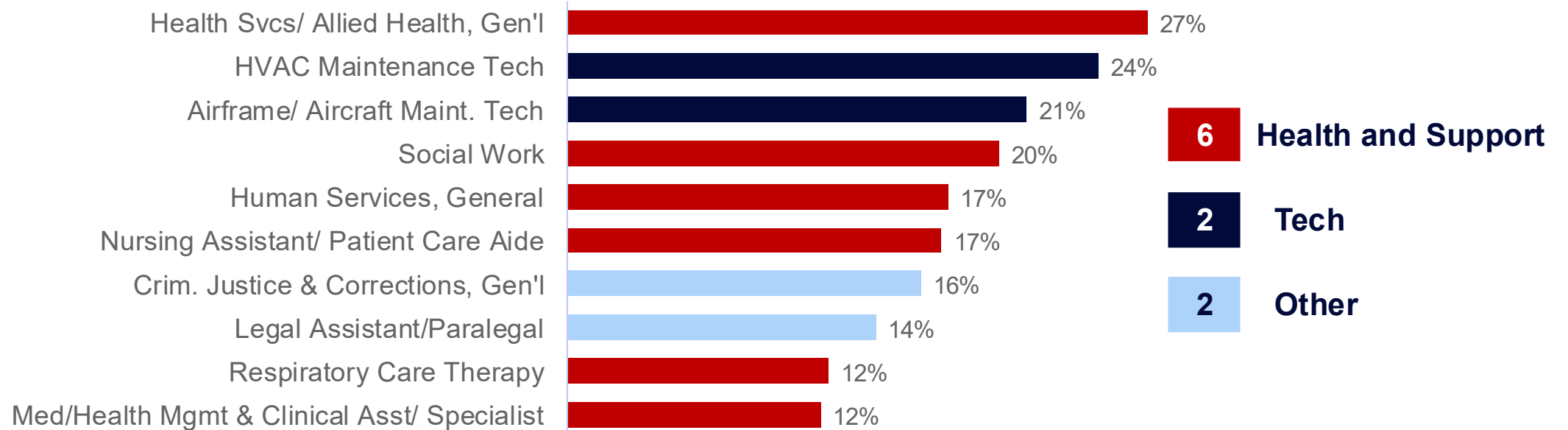


Source: Gray DI's PES Program Enrollment Dashboard

Associate and Below Summer Enrollment Year-over-Year Growth

In 2026, six of the 10 fastest-growing programs were in health and support.

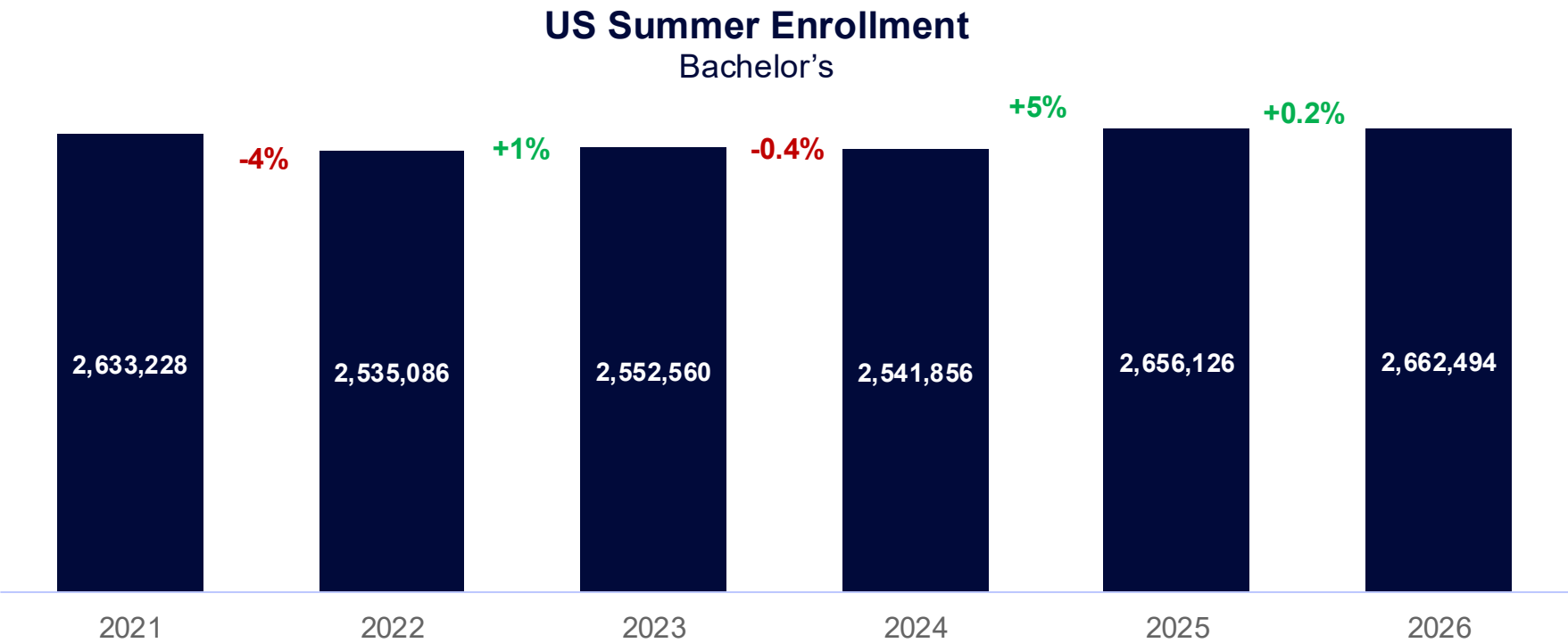
US Fastest-Growing Summer Enrollment* Certificate and Associate Programs YoY Change





Summer Enrollment: Bachelor's Programs

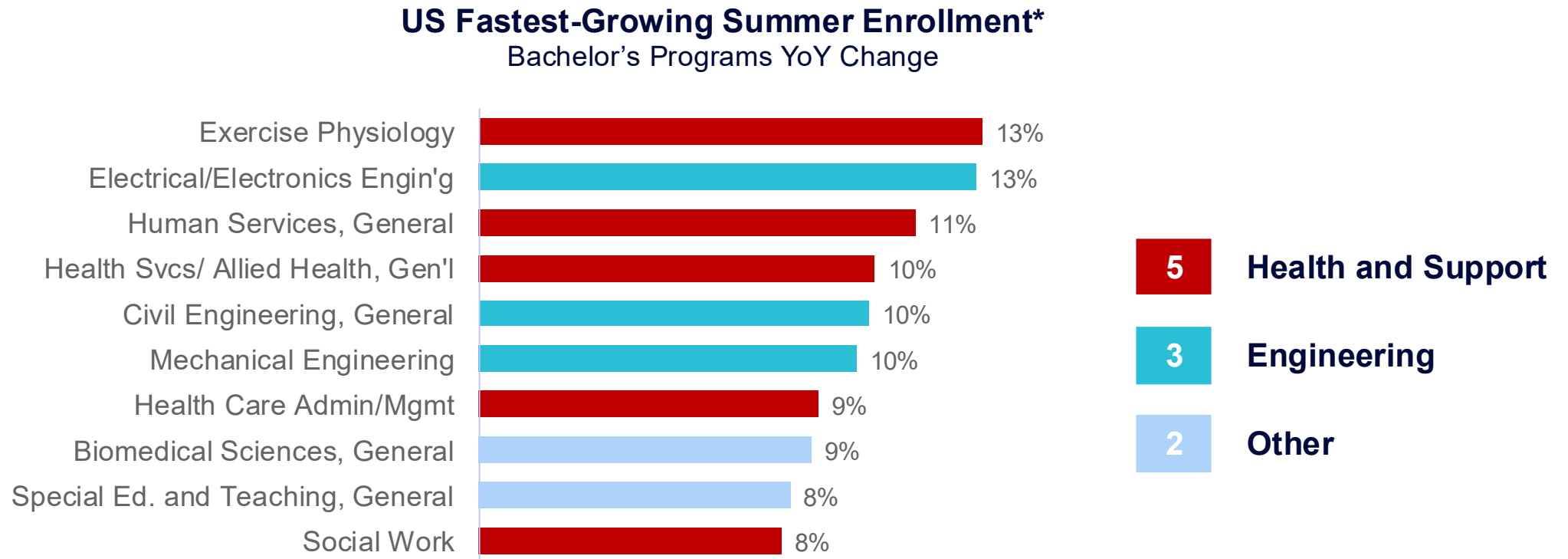
In summer 2026, bachelor's enrollment grew by 0.2% year over year.



Source: Gray DI's PES Program Enrollment Dashboard

Bachelor's Summer Enrollment Year-over-Year Change

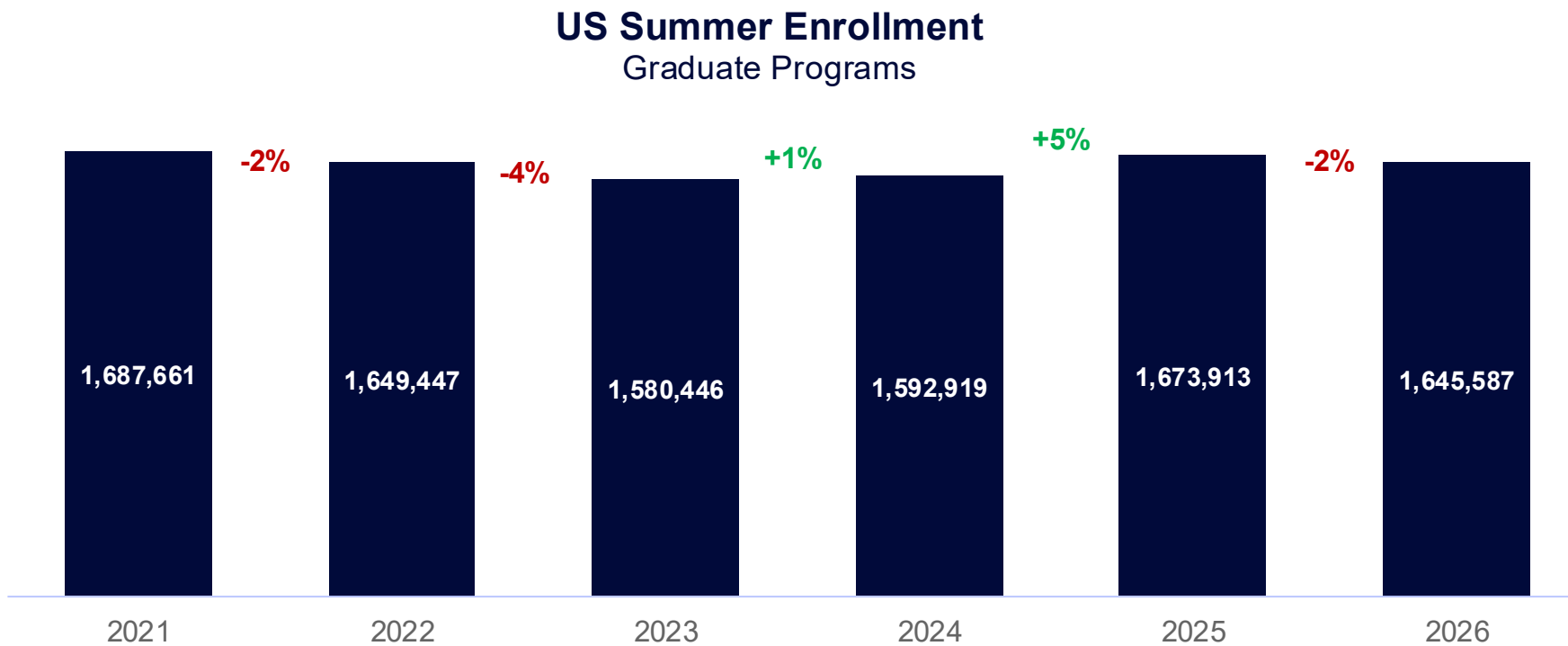
In 2026, Exercise Physiology grew 13%.





Academic Year Enrollment: Graduate Programs (Including Certificates)

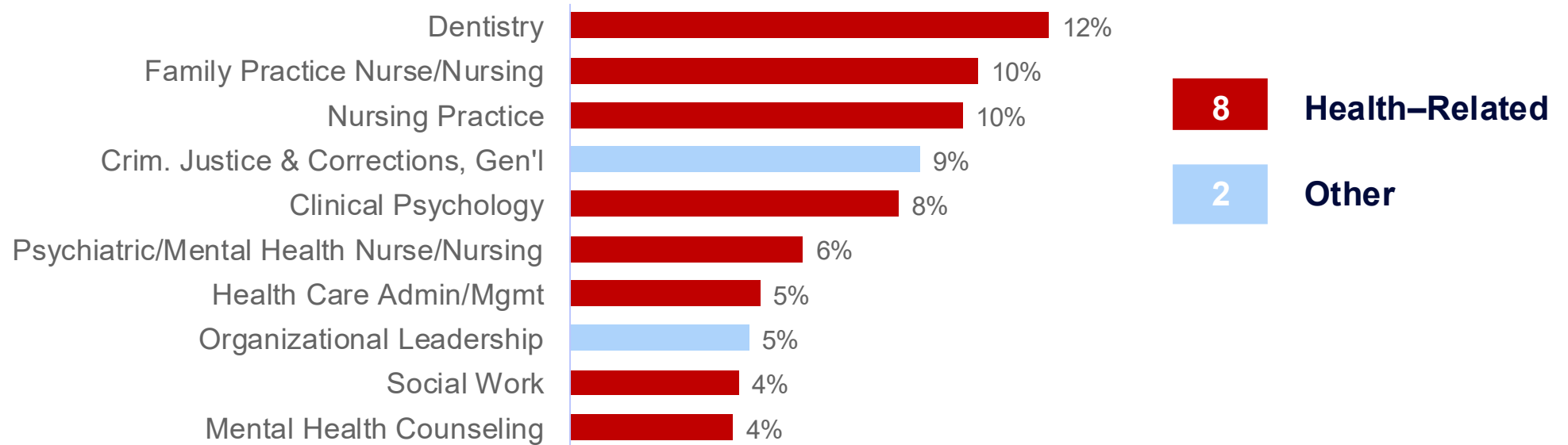
In summer 2026, graduate enrollment fell 2% year over year.



Master's and Doctoral Summer Enrollment Year-over-Year Change

In 2026, eight of the 10 fastest-growing programs were health-related.

US Fastest-Growing Enrollment* Graduate Programs YoY Change



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Student Demand Indicators: International Demand

Employment: Current Indicators

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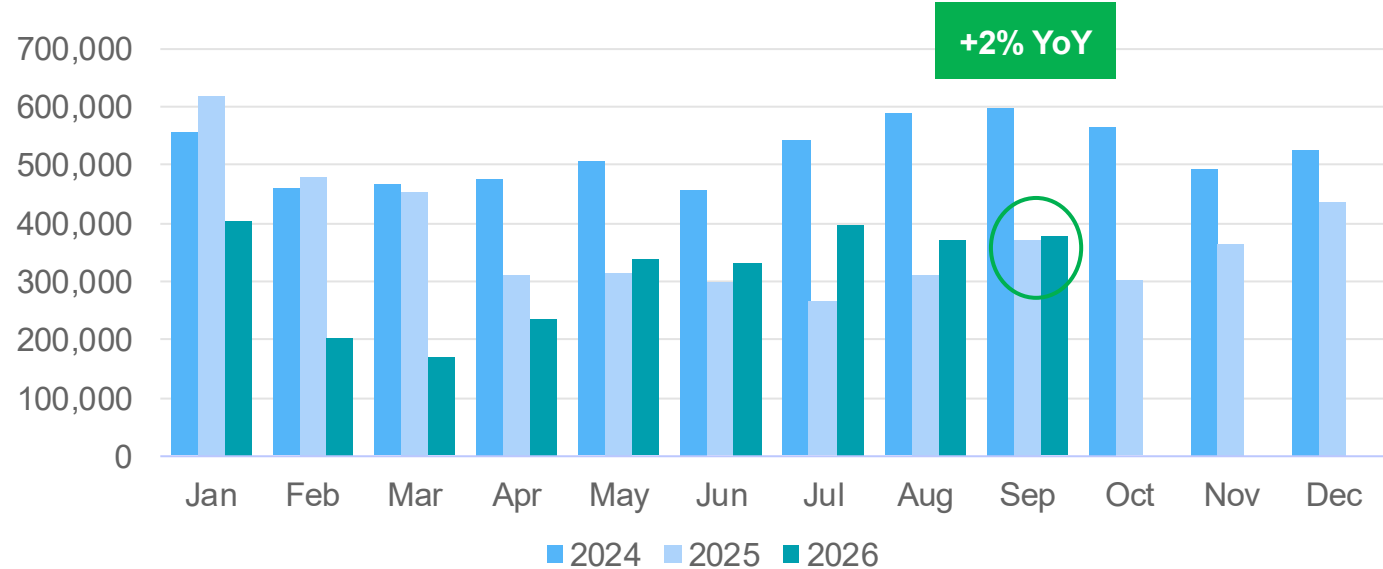


International Student Demand

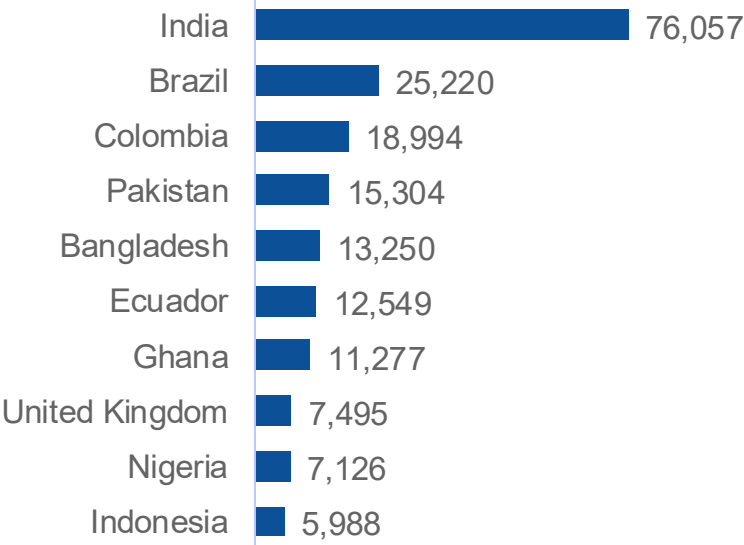
In September 2026, international student interest in US programs rose 2% year over year.

□ India had the highest page views.

International Page Views
2024 - 2026



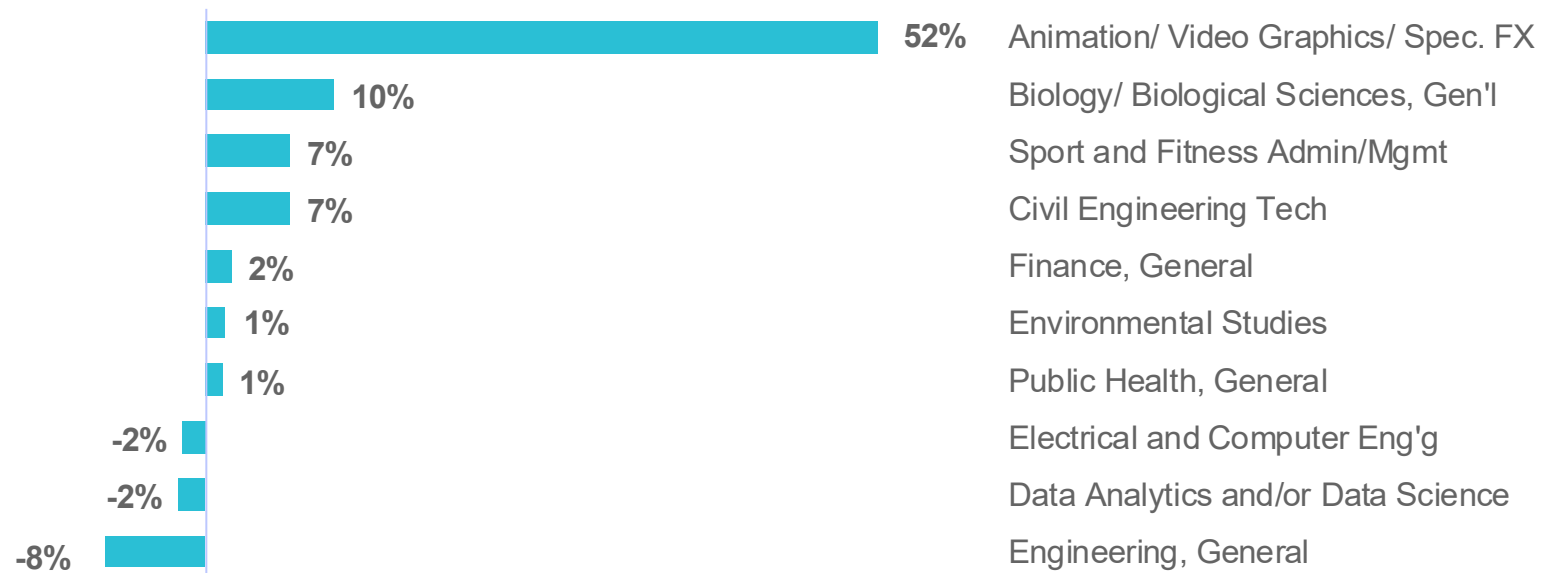
Highest Page Views, Origin Countries
September 2026



Int'l Page Views: Fastest-Growing Bachelor's Programs Year over Year

In September, Animation/Video Graphics/Spec. FX grew 52% year over year.

Largest YoY Growth, Bachelor's Programs*
September 2026



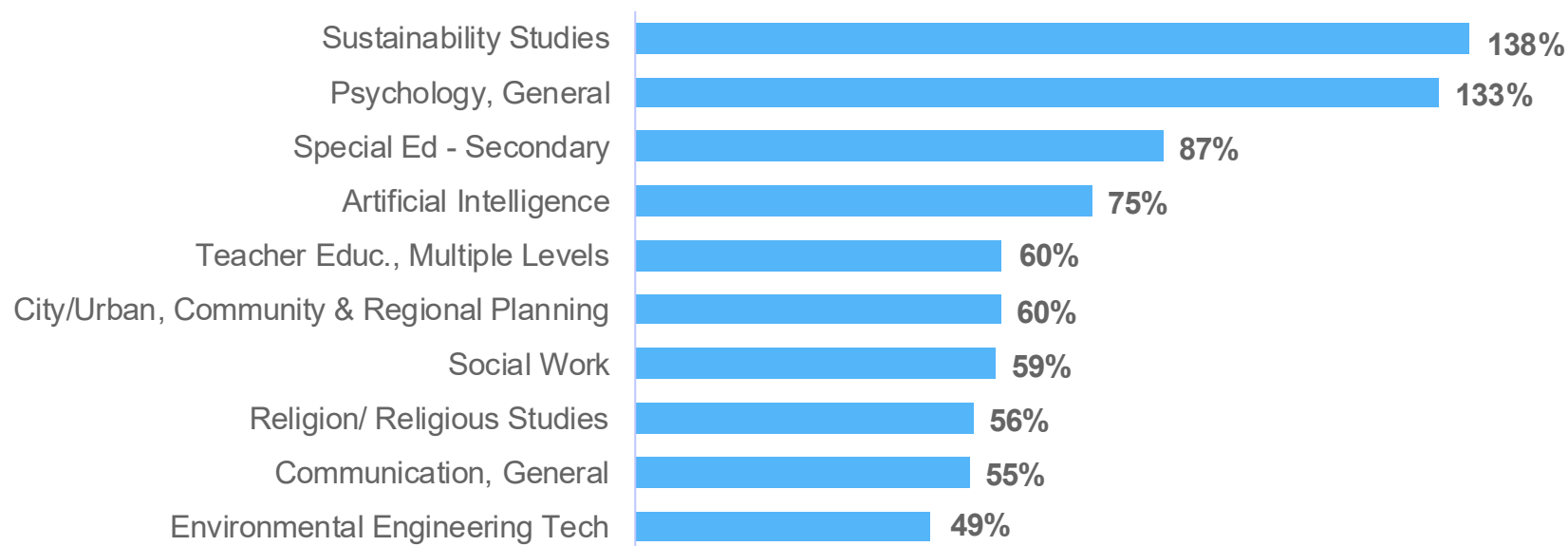


Int'l Page Views: Fastest-Growing Graduate Programs Year over Year

At the graduate level, Sustainability Studies grew 138% year over year.

Largest YoY Growth, Master's and Doctoral*

September 2026



*Minimum page views prior year: 1,000
Master's and doctoral only

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Student Demand Indicators: Coursera

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

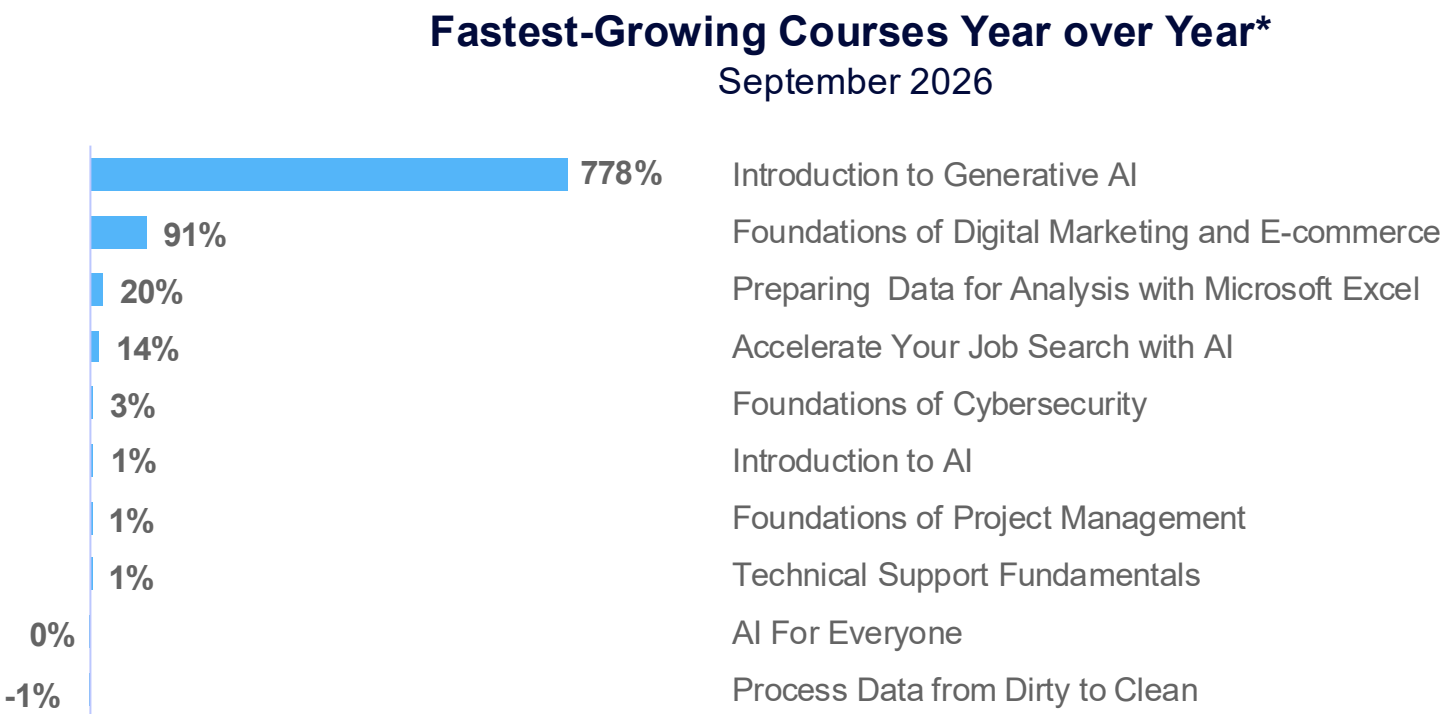
2023 Emerging Programs Update

Summary

Coursera: Almost 379 million learners since inception

In September 2026, Intro. to Generative AI was the fastest-growing course year over year.

□ Four out of the 10 fastest-growing courses were AI-related.



*Minimum enrollment prior year: 10,000

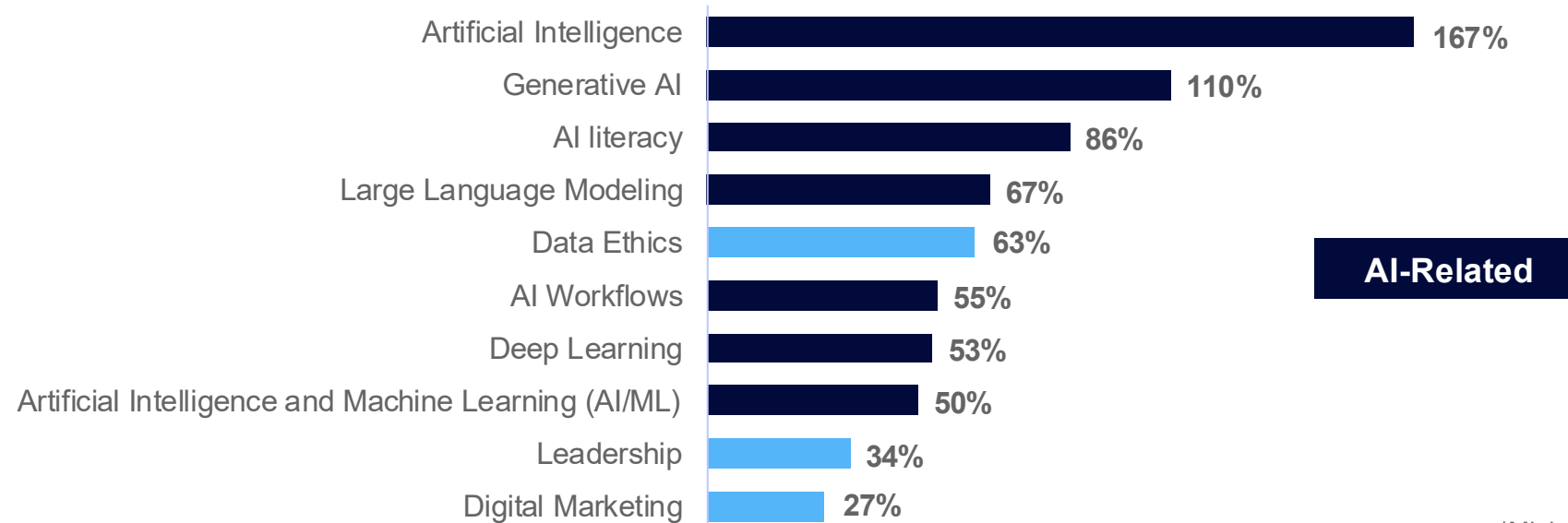
Coursera: Fastest-growing Skills

In September 2026, Artificial Intelligence was the fastest-growing skill taught.

□ Seven out of the 10 fastest-growing skills were AI-related.

Fastest-Growing Skills Year over Year*

September 2026



*Minimum skills prior year: 80,000

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US Job Posting Trends

In September, job postings fell 12% year over year. Median salary grew 11%.

Job Postings

Trailing 12 Mo.

24,250,835

Sep. 2026

2,086,935

687,652 ↑

2.9% ↑

Median Salary of Postings

Trailing 12 Mo.

\$59,280

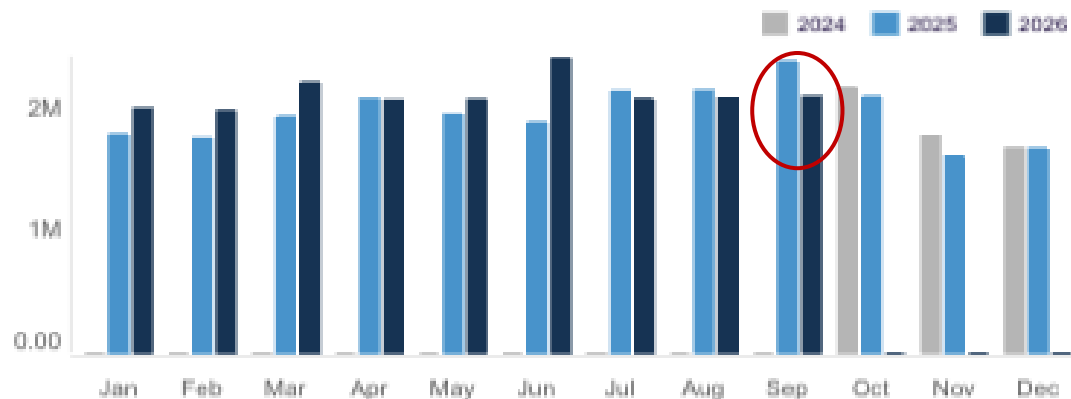
Sep. 2026

\$48,171

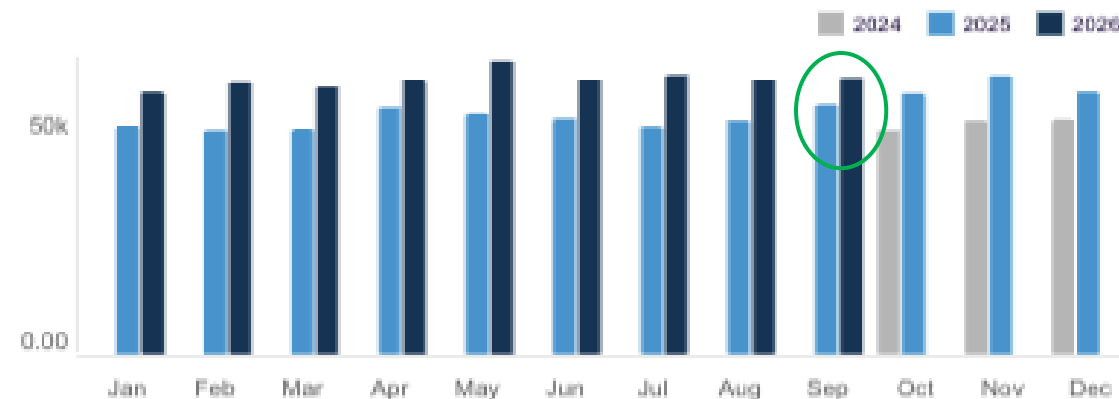
\$8,320 ↑

16.3% ↑

Job Postings



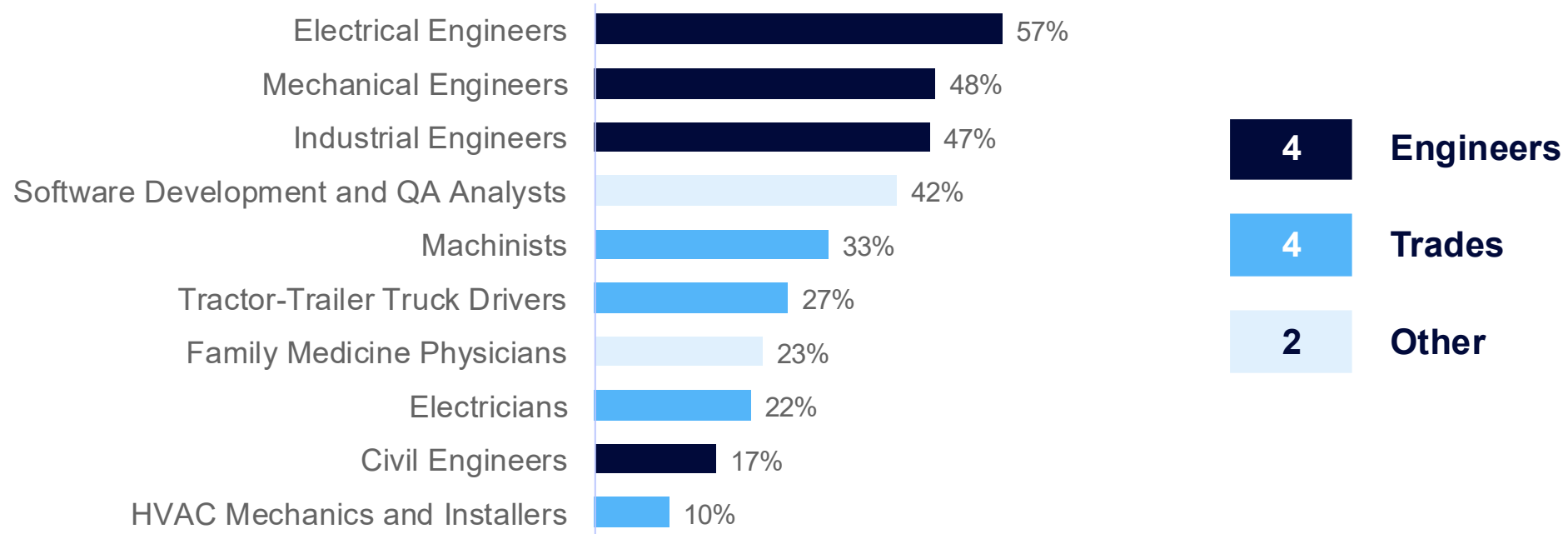
Median Salary



2026 Fastest-Growing Job Postings Trailing Three Months

From July to September, postings for Electrical Engineers grew 57% year over year.

Fastest-Growing Job Postings by Occupation*
T3M 2026 YoY



*Minimum 10,000 T3M postings volume
Excludes unskilled labor

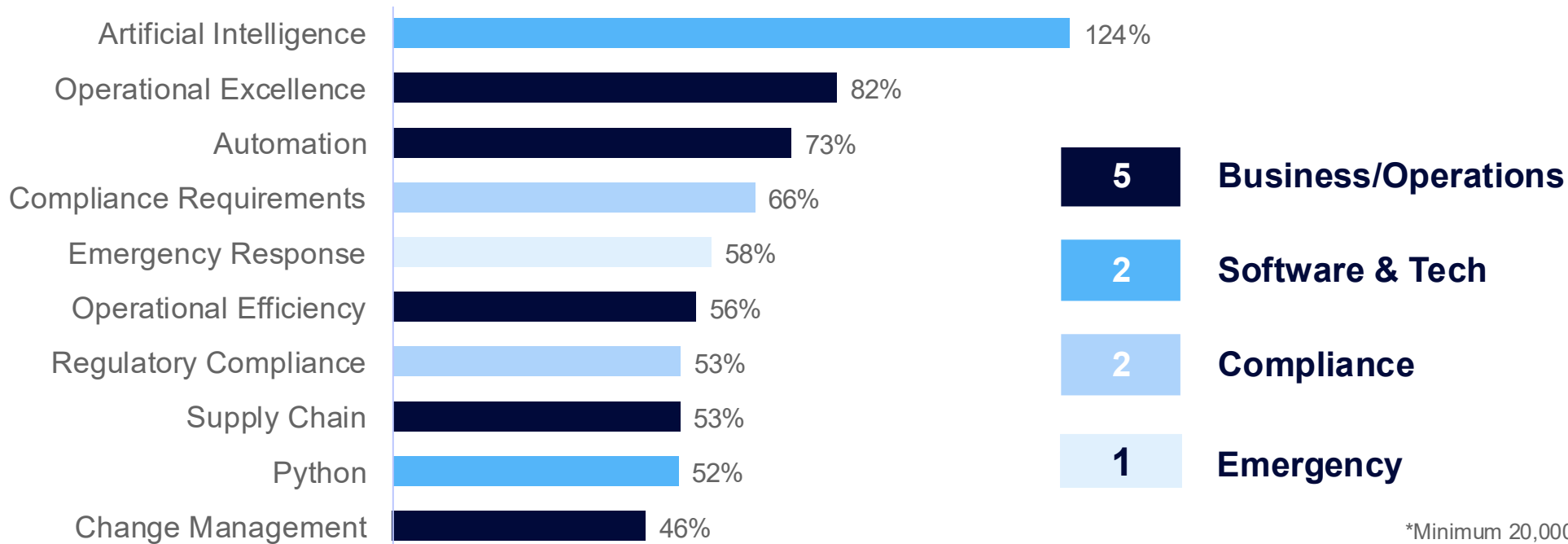


Which skills are growing in demand in the US?

In September, demand for skills in AI had the greatest year-over-year growth.

10 Fastest-Growing Skills in Job Postings*

September 2026 Year over Year



*Minimum 20,000 skills
Excludes unskilled labor

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But first... Spooky Programs

Notable Horror and Supernatural Academic Offerings

The University of Pittsburgh established a dedicated Horror Studies Center in the School of Arts and Sciences to explore the genre, host lectures, and develop specialized programs with plans for future expansion.

Duke University's Trinity College offers classes like Radical Magic (exploring witchcraft from Salem to pop culture) and American Hauntings: From Poe to Pop.

The University of Exeter offers a Master of Arts in Magic and Occult Science, which covers the history of esotericism, witchcraft, and ritual magic.

The University of Edinburgh provides courses in Parapsychology that examine hauntings, psychic abilities, and the history of the supernatural.



Percentile rank your programs for student demand, employment, and competition.

Let's look at a Master's in Mental Health Counseling.

Program	Total Percentile	Student Demand Percentile ↓	Employment Percentile	Competitive Intensity Percentile
30.7101 Data Analytics and/or Data Science	99	100	98	92
25.0101 Library and Information Science	88	99	51	95
42.2801 Clinical Psychology	90	99	69	79
→ 51.1508 Mental Health Counseling	92	99	68	85
42.0101 Psychology, General (incl. 42.2799)	93	99	75	77
51.1505 Marriage and Family Therapy/ Counseling	93	99	69	97
42.2803 Counseling Psychology	95	99	71	96
04.0201 Architecture (incl. Building Tech)	96	99	75	99
11.1003 Cyber Security/ Info. Assurance	98	99	95	78
14.9999 Engineering, Other	98	99	95	78
11.0102 Artificial Intelligence	98	99	94	89
30.7102 Business Analytics	99	99	98	94
14.0201 Aero/ Astro/ Space Engineering	99	99	94	99
14.0501 Bioengineering and Biomedical Engineering	99	99	93	97
40.0801 Physics, General	99	99	92	97
51.0912 Physician Assistant	100	99	99	96
50.0702 Fine/Studio Arts, General	78	98	41	91



Student Demand

Mental Health Counseling is in the 99th percentile for Student Demand.

- Size metrics are strong.
 - Google searches are in the 88th percentile.
 - New enrollment, online completions, and overall completions are in the 98-99th percentile.
- Year over year is decent.
 - Google searches rose 23% year over year.
 - New student enrollment grew 10%.
 - Completions grew 14%.



Student Demand		99		
Score	29.8	Percentile	99	
Criterion	Value	Pctl	Score	
<u>Size</u>	-	-	-	
Google Search Volume (12 Months)*	591,910	88	5.3	
New Student Enrollment Volume (12 Mo.)	15,405	99	5.9	
On ground Completions at In Market Institutions	5,634	98	5.9	
Online Completions by In Market Students	4,144	98	NS	
Sum of On ground and Online Completions	9,778	98	5.9	
<u>Growth: Year-over-year Unit Change</u>	-	-	-	
Google Search YoY Change (Units)*	110,360	90	NS	
New Student Enrollment Vol. YoY Change (Units)	1,360	99	2.0	
Completion Volume YoY Change (Units)	1,174	99	2.0	
<u>Growth: Year-over-year % Change</u>	-	-	-	
Google Search YoY Change (%)*	23%	74	NS	
New Student Enrollment Vol. YoY Change (%)	10%	67	1.3	
Completion Volume YoY Change (%)	14%	75	1.5	





Employment Opportunities

This program scores in the 68th percentile for Employment – mostly driven by low earning potential.

- Entry-level job postings and BLS employment are healthy: 98-99th percentile.
- BLS historical growth is strong.
 - Entry-level jobs rose 8% year over year.
 - They rose an average of 8% over the last three years.
- 1.7 job postings per graduate ranks at the 74th percentile.
- Wages at the master's level are low.
 - Entry-level wages are in the third percentile.
 - Post-entry median is in the second percentile.
- 25% of graduates are underemployed (78th percentile).

Employment

Score 18.1 Percentile 68

68

Criterion	Value	Pctl	Score
Size: Entry Jobs	-	-	-
Job Postings Total (12 Months)	16,561	98	3.9
BLS Current Employment	93,894	98	1.0
BLS Annual Job Openings	10,284	99	1.0
Growth: Entry Jobs	-	-	-
BLS 1 Year Historical Growth	8%	99	2.0
BLS 3 Year Historic Growth (CAGR)	8%	99	2.0
BLS 10 Year Future Growth (CAGR)	1.7%	92	0.9
Saturation: Entry Jobs	-	-	-
Job Postings per Graduate	1.7	74	3.0
BLS Job Openings per Graduate	1.1	85	0.9
Weighted-Avg BLS Wages	-	-	-
Entry 25th Percentile	\$58,965	3	0.2
Post Entry Median	\$80,851	2	0.2
Post Entry w Associates Median		0	NS
Post Entry w Bachelors Median		0	NS
Post Entry w Masters Median	\$79,954	0	NS
Post Entry w Doctoral Median	\$110,878	6	NS
Underemployed	-	-	-
Underemployed Percent of Graduates**	25%	78	3.1
ACS Bachelor's Degree Outcomes*	-	-	-
% with Any Graduate Degree*	43%	56	NS
% with Masters*	28%	59	NS
% with Doct Prof Degree*	15%	75	NS
% Unemp. (Age <30)**	3%	35	NS
% in Direct Prep Jobs*		0	NS



Profiles

9k

Avg Inferred Salary

\$82,977

Avg Yrs Since Latest Ed

6.6

CIP Code 51.1508 Mental Health Counseli...

Grad Year

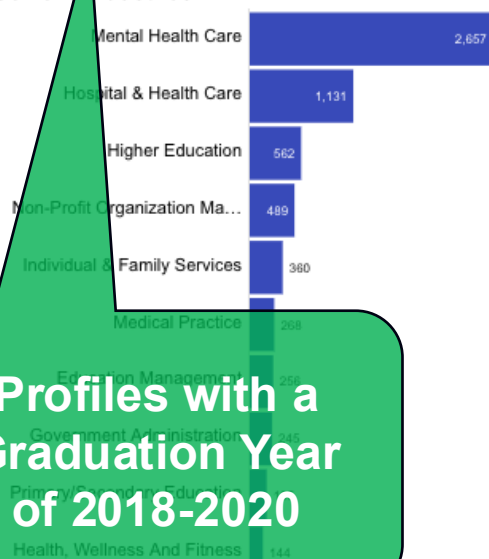
Current Employer

Award Level Masters

Current Industry

Current Occupation

Current Industries

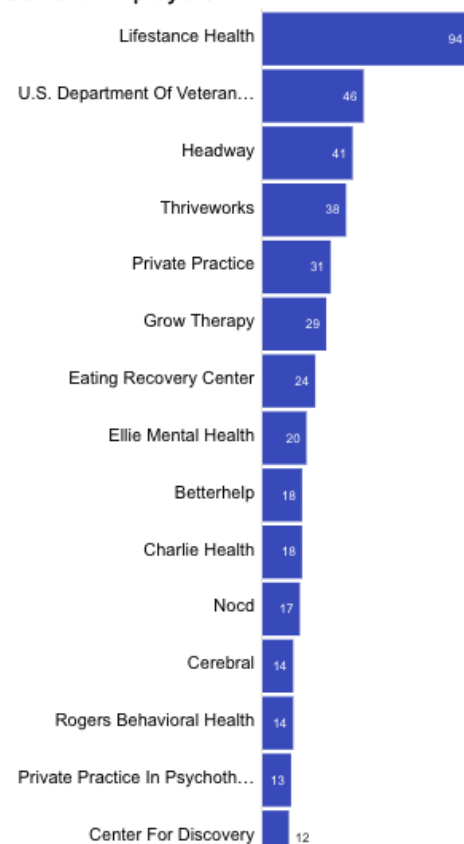


Profiles with a
Graduation Year
of 2018-2020



Alumni

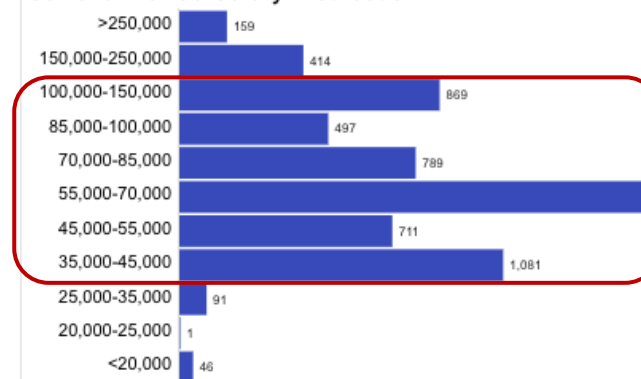
Current Employers



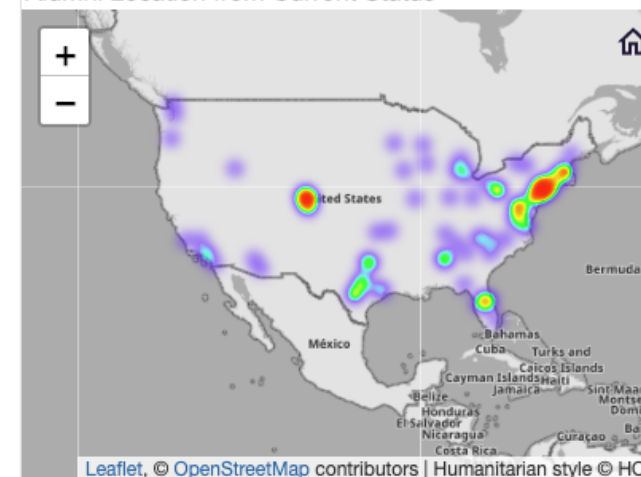
Alumni

Current Job Title	Total
Licensed Professional Counselor	590
Therapist	487
Mental Health Counselor	444
Mental Health Therapist	436
Licensed Mental Health Counselor	362
Psychotherapist	221
Owner	170
Outpatient Therapist	136
Clinical Supervisor	125
Counselor	119
School Counselor	94
Clinical Therapist	89
Primary Therapist	86
Psychotherapist In Private Practice	85
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor	84
Clinical Director	84
Adjunct Professor	71
Mental Health Clinician	69
Case Manager	60
Business Owner	51
Substance Abuse Counselor	41
Program Director	36
Clinician	34
Administrative Assistant	34

Current Inferred Salary Distribution



Alumni Location from Current Status





Competition for Students

This program scores in the 85th percentile for competitive intensity.

- 237 colleges offer this program (2nd percentile).
 - In 2024, 10 additional campuses had completions.
- Median program size is strong (95th percentile).
 - However, it fell 11% year over year.
- Marketing costs are high.
- 23% of institutions offer this program online.
- 42% of completions are online.

Source: Gray DI's PES Markets

Competitive Intensity			
Score	10.8	Percentile	85
Criterion	Value	Pctl	Score
<u>Volume of In-Market Competition</u>	-	-	-
Campuses with Graduates**	237	2	NS
Campuses with Grads YoY Change (Units)**	10	1	NS
Institutions with Online In Market Students**	66	3	NS
<u>In-Market Programs</u>	-	-	-
Average Program Completions	23	92	3.7
Median Program Completions	17	95	3.8
YoY Median Prog. Compl. Change (Units)	-2	28	0.6
YoY Median Prog. Compl. Change (%)	-11%	49	1.0
<u>In-Market Saturation</u>	-	-	-
Google Search * Cost per Click**	10	27	0.8
Google Competition Index**	0.4	33	1.0
<u>National Online Competition</u>	-	-	-
National Online Institutions (Units)**	66	3	NS
Nat'l Online % of Institutions	23%	60	NS
Nat'l Online % of Completions	42%	72	NS

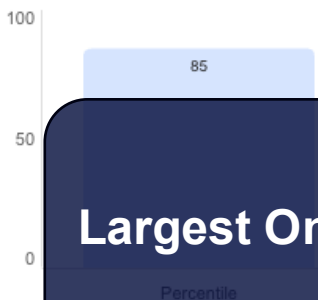
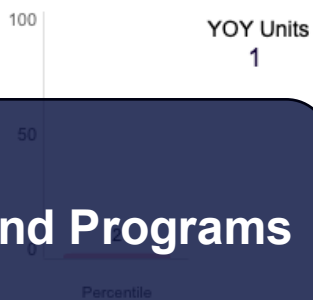
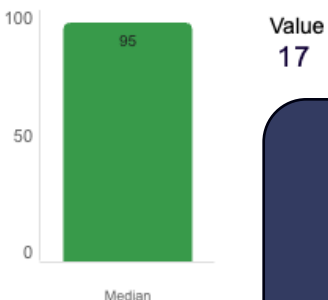
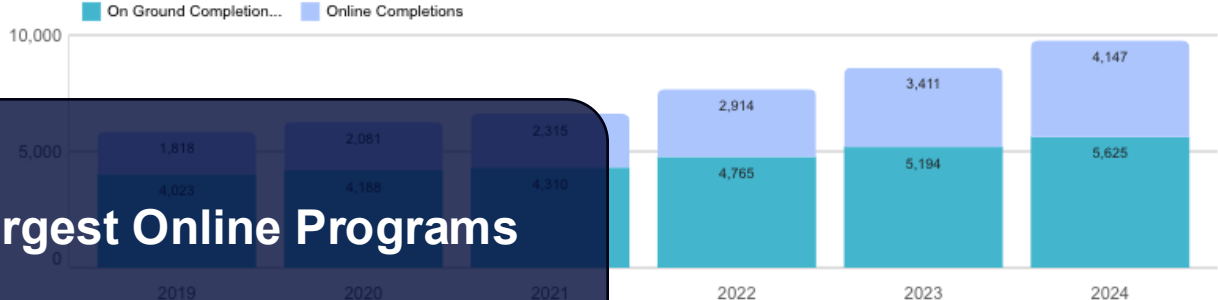


Competitive Intensity

Campus with Graduates

Median Program Completions

On-Ground and Online Completions by Academic Year

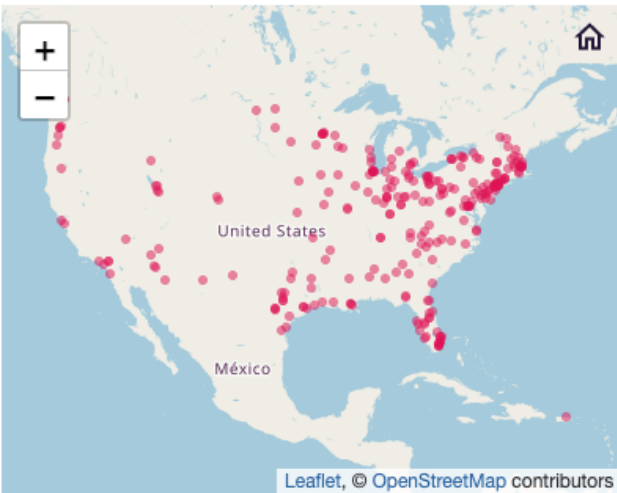


Largest On-Ground Programs

Largest Online Programs

Institutions with On-Ground Completions

Institution	2024 Total On-...
Lesley University	224
Cambridge College	124
CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice	111
Antioch University-New England	108
Saint Edward's University	104
The University of Texas at San Antonio	100
Palo Alto University	90
Southern Methodist University	73



Institutions with Online In-Market Completions



Campus	2024 Online Completions by In-Market Students
Walden University	879
Grand Canyon University	622
Capella University	480
Southern New Hampshire University	358
Colorado Christian University	215
University of Phoenix-Arizona	160
Bellevue University	130
The Chicago School at Los	95

Overall Score

Score 58.7 Percentile 92

92

A program that prepares individuals to provide evaluations, referrals, and short-term counseling services to help people prevent or remediate personal problems, conflicts, and emotional crises. Includes instruction in human development, psychopathology, individual and group counseling, personality theory, career assessment, patient screening and referral, observation and testing techniques, interviewing skills, professional standards and ethics, and applicable laws and regulations.

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Award Level	Enrollment %	Completions %	Completions % National
Certificate	0	1	1
Associates	2	1	1
Bachelors	0	0	0
Postbaccalaureate Certificate	0	5	5
Masters	83	90	90
Post-masters Certificate	6	2	2
Doctoral	9	0	0

Cost Benchmarking National	Value	Pctl
Average Cost per SCH Index**	0.57	69
Median Cost per SCH Index**	0.60	76

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.

Agenda

What Is a Program Evaluation System?

Student Demand Indicators

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

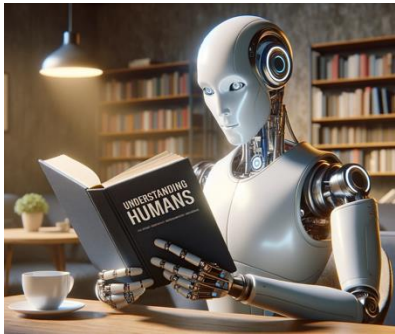
2023 Emerging Programs Update

Summary



Every January, we present five emerging academic programs to watch.

Blasts from the Past:



Applied AI



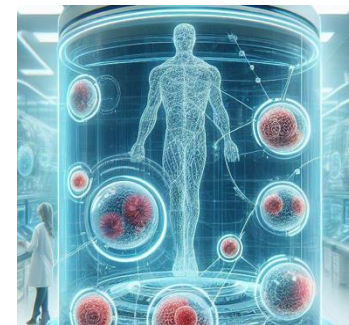
Energy Storage



Digital Bioacoustics



Space Commercialization



Regenerative Medicine



In 2023, one of our emerging programs was Energy Storage.

Where is it now?





The Energy Storage Industry in 2026

By 2026, the market transitioned from forecasts and pipeline to reality.





Addressing Workforce Gaps

One way higher ed is responding to employment demand: short-term training programs.



BINGHAMTON
UNIVERSITY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

S Syracuse
University

UB
University
at Buffalo

RIT



UNIVERSITY
AT ALBANY

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK





Academic Programs and In-Demand Skills



COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES

Master’s and PhD in
Advanced Energy Systems



**WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Master’s in
Mechanical Engineering:
Energy Storage and Vehicle Science (Online)



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

Master’s in
Electrochemical Technologies

Energy Storage Skills Demand Trailing 12 Months

Technical Skill	TTM Postings Volume	YoY Change
Energy Management	21,090	23.3%
Energy Modeling	1,685	18.6%
Energy Analysis	371	14.5%
Renewable Energy	71,230	12.4%
Energy Isolation	850	10.5%
Energy Management Systems	2,923	6.4%

Source: Gray DI’s PES Markets Workforce Insights

Agenda

What Is a Program Evaluation System?

Student Demand Indicators

Employment: Current Indicators

Program of the Month

2023 Emerging Programs Update

Summary



Summary

- In September, Google searches for academic programs fell 22% year over year.
 - Drafting and Design Tech grew the most in searches at the associate and certificate levels.
 - Computer Programming grew the most at the bachelor's and above levels.
- In summer 2026, enrollment was flat at bachelor's and below and fell 2% at graduate program levels.
 - Health Svcs/Allied Health grew the most at the certificate and associate levels.
 - Bachelor's: Exercise Physiology
 - Graduate programs: Dentistry
- In September 2026, US job postings fell 12% year-over-year.
 - Electrical Engineers was the fastest-growing occupation.
 - Artificial Intelligence was the fastest-growing in-demand skill.
- Student demand is very strong for a Master's in Mental Health.
 - However, graduates' earning potential is very low.
- Energy Storage has grown substantially as an industry since 2023.
 - Higher education is responding with certificates, concentrations in existing programs, and workforce training.





Upcoming Webinars

Our most popular webinar is back! Register here:

<https://www.graydi.us/2027-emerging-programs-registration-hub>

GRAY DI RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

Emerging Programs Intelligence Hub

Higher education leaders shouldn't have to predict the future alone. We've synthesized millions of job market signals, student interest data, and social, cultural, and industry trends, so you can confidently evaluate new academic programs, protect institution finances, to lead where the market is going next.

[Register for 2027 Webinar](#) [Explore Last Year's Picks](#)

Five Bold Ideas Academic programs that challenge convention	Real Signals Where student and workforce demand meet	Hundreds of Leaders Higher Ed leaders from around the country attend each year
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Monthly Demand Trends

November 19th

2 PM ET

