

LEAP

LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT + ADVOCACY PARTNERSHIP

The W Leads Mississippi Universities in Enrollment Growth

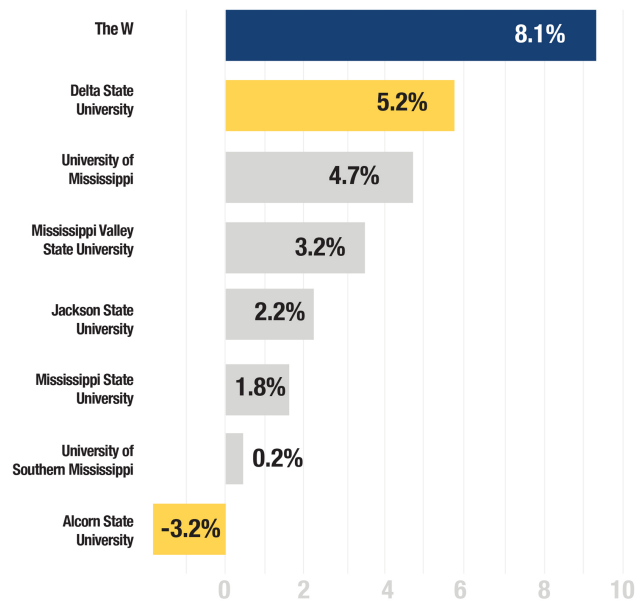
Across-the-board increases mark the university's strongest momentum in nearly a decade

The W has reported its largest enrollment increase in almost ten years, leading all of Mississippi's public universities with an 8.1% rise in total enrollment. The W's 2,371 unduplicated students for fall 2025 represent an increase that touches nearly every corner of campus: full-time and part-time, undergraduate and graduate, new and returning students alike.

"We had increases in both new students and in continuing students, so recruitment and retention strategies are having a positive impact," said President Nora Miller.

The W's success comes amid an encouraging statewide trend. Data released by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) show an overall 2.7% increase in enrollment across all public universities. The W's growth more than tripled that average, underscoring how its focused recruitment and retention efforts are resonating with students.

Mississippi Public Universities: Enrollment Growth 2024 to 2025



Data from Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning show the state's public universities continued growth in student enrollment, with a nearly three percent growth in enrollment in fall 2025 compared to fall 2024. Total student enrollment across the system is 81,961, compared to 79,817 in fall 2024.

— John Sewell, Director of Communications, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. (Nov. 3, 2025)

Growth That Reaches Every Program

The momentum is widespread. Both the School of Education and the College of Business and Professional Studies saw double-digit increases — 13% and 16%, respectively. In the College of Arts and Sciences, Music rose 32% and Art and Design grew 18%. The Vandergriff College of Nursing and Health Sciences, The W's largest academic division, also expanded across every nursing program.

Graduate enrollment climbed 8%, with graduate nursing programs up 26%. The university's full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment grew 6%, its largest increase since 2016. Today, men make up 23% of the student body and women 77%, reflecting The W's ongoing evolution as a coeducational university that still honors its historic mission.

Leading in Quality and Completion

For all its growth, The W remains focused on results. It continues to lead Mississippi's public universities in degree completion rate, awarding 33.3 undergraduate degrees per 100 full-time students, compared with the IHL system average of 23.9.

National recognition echoes that record of quality:

- U.S. News & World Report (2026) ranks The W No. 15 among Top Public Schools – Regional Universities (South), No. 9 for Best Value, and No. 21 for Social Mobility.
- Washington Monthly recently named The W one of its “25 Best-in-Class Colleges”, praising institutions that “show what’s possible when colleges put students and the public good first.”

Rooted in Mississippi, Reaching Forward

Eighty-eight percent of The W's students are Mississippians, with a growing number of transfers and adult learners choosing the university for its mix of tradition and innovation.

“It just shows that people are making a choice to be here and that we are serving a very important need for the state of Mississippi,” Miller said.

Be a Voice for The W!

The W moves forward because its people do. And that includes you. Your voice carries weight — with legislators, community leaders, alumni, and agencies that depend on accurate information. When you speak up, share updates, or correct misunderstandings, you strengthen The W's position.

Here's how you can take action right now:

- Share this newsletter with another alum or friend of The W.
- Reach out when an alert is issued.

- Tell your local legislators why The W matters to you and to Mississippi.
- Stay connected with the Development & Alumni team.

If you're ready to get involved, even in a small way, contact us at developmentandalumni@muw.edu.