Juris Doctor (JD) Enrollment Declines at All Illinois Law Schools and Colleges

Consistent with national trends, JD enrollment at Illinois law schools and colleges declined 20 percent between 2011 and 2015, from 7,015 to 5,578 students, according to the most recent Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) enrollment data. All nine law schools and colleges experienced enrollment declines, with enrollment at six of the institutions declining at least 20 percent. DePaul’s JD enrollment declined 24 percent during this time, from 990 to 750 students.

The John Marshall Law School remained the largest program in 2015, but its 30 percent enrollment decline resulted in a drop in Illinois JD market share, from 20 percent in 2011 to 18 percent in 2015. Illinois Institute of Technology—Chicago-Kent College of Law became the second largest JD program in 2015, followed closely by DePaul’s College of Law and Northwestern School of Law.

The law schools of University of Chicago and Southern Illinois University-Carbondale (SIU Carbondale) had the smallest enrollment declines during this time. These schools each increased their share of Illinois JD enrollment, from 9 to 11 percent and from 5 to 6 percent, respectively.

Source: IRMA. State and institutional enrollment from IBHE. IBHE’s most recent published data is from fall 2015. Dotted graph lines indicate missing Illinois enrollment data in 2013. DePaul IBHE figures may differ slightly from DePaul Fact File. For more information, contact Liz Sanders at liz.sanders@depaul.edu.