



Economic Impact Report - Foreword

Massachusetts and its Private Higher Education Institutions: A Powerful Partnership for the Region's Success

Massachusetts has earned its global reputation as the hub of higher education. For hundreds of years, colleges and universities have opened pathways to opportunity through learning, made incredible advancements in knowledge creation and brought lifechanging solutions to innumerable challenges affecting humanity. The Commonwealth and its higher education community provide the foundation for who we are, what we are known for, and together serve as the cornerstone for our status as a knowledge-based economic leader.

The 59 private, nonprofit colleges and universities that comprise the [Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts](#) (AICUM) are situated in every region of the Commonwealth, serving as anchors for neighborhoods, communities, cities and towns. They are rich in the diversity of their leaders, the students they serve and the programs they offer. They are a significant force in each region's ability to contribute to the Commonwealth's overall position as a leader in healthcare, life sciences, technology, arts and culture, education and the humanities.

And they all share the same overarching mission: to make higher education available to all students. Collectively, AICUM members educate the majority of Pell Grant recipients* and first-generation students attending a four-year college or university in Massachusetts, while also producing the majority of STEM, nursing and allied healthcare professions earning an Associate's degree or higher in Massachusetts** that will support the workforce for years to come.

This report reflects the first comprehensive assessment of the impact of our members since AICUM was formed nearly 50 years ago. It serves as a critical reminder of the tremendous impact of the private colleges and universities in the state. Our knowledge-based economy and access to talent is why companies relocate their headquarters to the Commonwealth; it's what helps our state economy better weather recession, and is often cited as an invaluable asset in state bond ratings. As a result, it's hard not to conclude that the Commonwealth and its higher education community are inextricably linked as powerful partners, supporting each other and contributing to each other's successes.

Demonstrating the Shared Benefits of the Sector

[Econsult Solutions, Inc.](#) (ESI) was commissioned by AICUM to gather relevant data to create this report and in doing so, provide a clear picture of the economic impact the private nonprofit colleges and universities deliver to the Commonwealth's cities, towns, neighborhoods and residents, year over year. The unique ecosystem of private higher education institutions in Massachusetts stands apart in the value and consistency of impact they deliver. In each of their unique histories, Massachusetts's private colleges and universities have advanced their critical academic work through periods of social and economic unrest – and a global pandemic – all while remaining stable entities supporting cities and towns as employers, purchasers, taxpayers, revenue generators and community partners. AICUM members serve enthusiastically as reliable anchor institutions for cities and towns across the Commonwealth with their ability to consistently generate the economic impact and benefits reflected in this report.

The Impact Beyond the Numbers

Certainly, the jobs we create, the taxes we pay, the revenue we generate and the other economic benefits are vitally important. But our impact goes far beyond ESI's data. Our private nonprofit higher education institutions contribute significantly to local economies and the public good. In some parts of the state, higher education institutions are an essential part of a vibrant ecosystem; in other regions, these institutions can be the leading source of employment of all skill levels, revenue, and other sources of economic impact.

Our colleges and universities provide hundreds of millions of dollars in scholarship funding annually to launch the dreams of students from across the state who wish to attend college. They grow and donate tons of food to populations in need; provide essential free legal services; offer no cost dental and eye screenings; promote music and art in our public schools; and turn empty city parking lots into athletic and recreational fields used by the entire community. And they partner with local government in providing essential services such as policing and safety, road maintenance and public realm improvements. Our partnerships and work in our communities are valuable activations of our nonprofit missions.

The shared successes of Massachusetts and the higher education community are longstanding and closely intertwined. As we look toward the opportunities and challenges of the future, we can take pride in our demonstrated commitment to work together to build and sustain a knowledge-based ecosystem that delivers significant impact to local communities and benefits the world.

Rob McCarron
President and CEO
AICUM
March 30, 2023

*National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Federal Student Aid Summary, January 2023.

**Source: The Integrated Postsecondary Data System, 2020-21 Completions, First Majors, Degrees Total, Grand Total, STEM-related CIP classification codes.

