



Students make their way to class at CEI – John Roark

CEI credit student enrollment up 11.1%

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College of Eastern Idaho saw an 11.1% increase in the number of credit students enrolled this fall in its programs over last year.

“We are continuing to see growth just in the sense of people discovering what the college does and the kinds of offerings we have,” College of Eastern Idaho President Rick Aman said. “... A lot of that is due to students who want to move into the first two years of a transfer degree or career technical.”

Currently, 1,772 credit-seeking students have signed up for classes, compared to 1,595 in 2022.

That number is expected to rise as high school students also continue to sign up for courses.

“At CEI, we are very excited in the increase of the number of students,” Aman said. “We’re six years old, and so we still haven’t completely gotten to a place where everybody knows us, and everybody is aware of what the college does.”

The community college started in 2017, after 71% of Bonneville County voters approved the creation of a community college district, adding general education programs and associate degrees that can be transferred to four-year universities, the Post Register previously reported.

While other community colleges in the state have existed for more than 50 years, Aman said, College of Eastern Idaho distinguishes itself with its career-ready trajectory and low tuition costs. “A lot of our students are changing careers. A lot of new high school graduates are looking for a career through the college,” he said. “We’re the most affordable college in the region at \$140 a credit. A lot of what we do is technical, meaning that you can get a job with a two-year degree.”

Eight of the college's programs have reached the maximum number of students they can accept. The nursing, cybersecurity/information technology and diesel programs are full, while the automotive technology courses have just a few openings. "We've just run into capacity problems, but it's a good problem for the college to have," Aman said.

The total number of credits students are taking also is up 6.8% over 2022.

Since its inception, College of Eastern Idaho has experienced 244% growth in the number of students, increasing from 1,008 credit students in 2017 to 3,468 credit students in fiscal year 2023, according to a college news release.

Additionally, the college is reaching out to diverse communities. Thirty-four percent of students enrolled this semester are first-generation college students, and 20% of the student body are Latino, the college said.

"Our career technical programs are preparing our students for in-demand jobs in the fields of health care, cyber, information technology and the trades," Aman said. "We are committed to providing students with the skills they need to secure promising employment opportunities and embark on successful careers."

With the rollout of the Idaho Launch program in 2024, which offers qualified graduating high school seniors up to \$8,000 in grants covering 80% of tuition and fees, college officials expect enrollment to continue to rise.

"Just with graduating seniors alone and dual-credit students in high schools, I think we're going to have three to five years of increasing enrollment," Aman said.



Jaxon Walker, right, and Isabel Olivares work on a math assignment at College of Eastern Idaho in this file photo - John Roark

College of Eastern Idaho maintains a 97% placement rate in its Career and Technical Education programs, the release said, lining students up with in-demand careers where they will continue to grow and develop.