

Early numbers show enrollment continuing to rise

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2151/early-numbers-show-enrollment-continuing-to-rise/>

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's preliminary numbers for the 2009-2010 academic year project an enrollment of more than 13,100 students — approximately 400 more students than in 2008-2009, with full time equivalent enrollment increasing by slightly more than 3 percent. While the enrollment report will not be finalized until later this semester, this projection includes about 1,900 new freshmen, nearly 1,000 new transfer students and 1,064 graduate students.

This fall, the number of first-year students and students transferring to UW Oshkosh will increase by about 3 percent. Total enrollment of military veterans is expected to top 300. Meanwhile, the number of nontraditional students has gone up 34 percent since 2002. Total enrollment has grown by 1,400 students — from 11,700 to 13,100 — over the last nine years.

“In a time of economic uncertainty, it is a positive sign to see students investing in higher education,” said Chancellor Richard H. Wells. “For our enrollment to grow so significantly during the last nine years is a testament to the value of Greater Wisconsin regional universities and UW Oshkosh's ability to continue to provide a quality, affordable, accessible education.”

Added Provost Lane Earns, “Growth Agenda funding received for the 2007-2009 biennium supported increases in enrollment; allowed for program expansion in high-demand areas such as biology/microbiology, health care, nursing and environmental studies; provide increased support for additional online and hybrid courses for non-traditional students; and allowed for additional support for the University's Graduation Project, which facilitates working-adult degree completion.”

In addition to a headcount enrollment increase of approximately 3 percent, the number of credits students are taking is expected to increase by almost 4 percent, reflecting an average credit load of slightly more than 13 per semester. Incoming freshmen are taking about 3 percent more credits with an average credit load of about 16 per semester.

"Our sense is that students understand that the sooner they complete their course work, the fewer costs they will incur," said Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Petra Roter. "We also believe that students are taking additional courses to enhance their educational experience and to enhance their marketability in a competitive job market."

“It is a testament to our outstanding deans, department chairs, faculty and staff that we are providing our students with more seats in classrooms despite shrinking resources,” said Earns. “The challenge is now to maintain quality and high-impact learning opportunities despite larger class sizes.”

“It is a constant challenge to properly balance our responsibility to be an affordable and accessible public good that provides our students with high-quality experiences,” said Wells. “As a public institution, we are continuing to do our best to optimize the balance between access and quality.”

Another indicator of growth for the state's largest Greater Wisconsin university is its fourth consecutive record-breaking graduating class size; 2,139 degrees were awarded in 2009 up from 2,073 in 2008 and 1,712 in 2000. UW Oshkosh also has seen a continued increase in enrollment in several off-campus programs, including organizational administration, accelerated nursing, fire and emergency response management and the bachelor of applied studies. Additionally, the College of Nursing's traditional program has added a cohort, allowing for a 14 percent increase in enrollment to meet the region's needs for baccalaureate-holding nurses.

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