

UW Oshkosh enrollment growth continues

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1146/uw-oshkosh-enrollment-growth-continues/>

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's preliminary enrollment numbers for the 2008-09 academic year reveal the continuation of an eight-year trend of a larger, more diverse student body and a significant increase in transfer students and students of color.

This fall, the number of students transferring to UW Oshkosh will increase 15 percent from last year and the number of first-year students will increase by 6 percent. Meanwhile, the number of nontraditional students has gone up 34 percent since 2002. Additionally, enrollment of new, first-year students of color is expected to be up by 20 percent this year. Included in these numbers are 317 military veterans.

Total enrollment has grown by 1,000 students – from 11,700 to 12,700 – over the last eight years, providing further evidence for the state to fully fund the 2009-2011 biennium budget request that includes funding for the second phase of the Wisconsin Growth Agenda. The first phase of the Growth Agenda allows for the University to add 500 students by 2010; the second phase would allow for an additional 250 students, bringing total enrollment to 13,500 by fall 2012.

“We greatly appreciate the funding we received from the Governor and the Legislature for the Wisconsin Growth Agenda, which has allowed us to add 27 new faculty positions and support continuing enrollment growth,” said UW Oshkosh Chancellor Richard H. Wells. “However, the second phase of the Growth Agenda is integral for UW Oshkosh to continue to provide more accessible, affordable and quality higher education to the citizens of northeastern Wisconsin's New North.”

Last week the Board of Regents approved a 2009-2011 biennial budget, which includes \$2.3 million of phase two Growth Agenda funding earmarked for UW Oshkosh. If approved by the Governor and Legislature, the Growth Agenda funding would support another increase in enrollment; allow 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 allow for additional support for the University's Graduation Project, which facilitates working-adult degree completion.

While the enrollment report will not be finalized until later this semester, the University is anticipating a combined total enrollment of approximately 12,700. This projection includes about 1,850 new freshmen and more than 900 new transfer students.

Another indicator of growth for the state's largest comprehensive university is its third consecutive record-breaking graduating class size; 2,073 degrees were awarded in 2008 up from 1,856 in 2005. UW Oshkosh also has seen a continued increase in enrollment in several off-campus programs, including organizational administration, accelerated nursing, and fire and the emergency response management program.

In addition, the University will witness an 8 percent increase in continuing sophomores, which may be an early indication of improved retention rates, according to Petra Roter, vice chancellor for student affairs.

“This is probably one of our most diverse student bodies, with an increase in the number of non-traditional adult learners, veterans, international students and students of color,” said Roter.

“Furthermore, the 2008 freshman class comes to us with a stronger academic profile, which has continued to improve during the past eight years, with 4 percent more of the students ranking in the top quartile of their high school class,” said Roter. This year’s class ACT mean score is projected to be 22.6, compared to last year’s score of 22.4.

“We are pleased with the academic quality of our students at UW Oshkosh,” said Interim Provost Al Hartman. “We remain focused on providing the students of northeastern Wisconsin’s New North with affordable access to quality degree programs.”