

Record-breaking enrollment growth projected

by Jaime Hunt - Wednesday, August 18, 2010

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/5351/uwo-projects-continued-record-breaking-enrollment-growth/>

Enrollment at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh continues to grow as officials predict a record-breaking enrollment of 13,600 for the Fall 2010 semester. Total enrollment at the University has grown by nearly 2,000 students over the last decade and by 400 since 2009-2010. Enrollment has steadily increased since 2001, when it first reached record levels.

While the enrollment report will not be finalized until later in the semester, the University is anticipating a combined total enrollment of approximately 13,600. This projection includes about 1,900 new freshmen and more than 1,200 new transfer students. The University is also anticipating a slight increase in graduate enrollment with 1,400 students registered. As part of the UW System's Growth Agenda, UW Oshkosh has committed to increasing its enrollment to more than 16,000 over the next decade.

"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 10 years is a testament to the value of Greater Wisconsin institutions, those public universities beyond Madison and Milwaukee."

Added Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Petra Roter, "While the number of incoming freshmen is expected to decline slightly, UW Oshkosh continues to be the transfer school of choice. The number of students transferring to UW Oshkosh is expected to increase by 12.6 percent, contributing to a total enrollment increase of approximately 3 percent. Meanwhile, enrollment of new, first-year students of color is expected to increase by more than 8 percent. Additionally, the academic profile of incoming freshman continues to be strong. Four percent more incoming freshmen graduated in the top quarter of their class."

"In Wisconsin's New North, only about 19 percent of adults hold four-year college degrees — which is 7 percentage points behind the state, 9 percentage points lower than the national average and 13 points behind Minnesota," said Wells. "States with higher rates of degree attainment have higher per capita incomes and achieve a greater quality of life."

Recent research also suggest that the jobs of the future will require an increasingly broad-based education. According to a national survey of employers by Hart Research Associates, employers expect increased emphasis on hiring people with bachelor's degrees from a four-year college. The survey found that "the vast majority of employers say their organizations are looking for employees to use a broader set of skills and have higher levels of learning and knowledge than in the past."

In response to the needs of the region, this fall the University will enroll students in its first doctoral program — the Doctor of Nursing Practice — which will help provide well-trained nurse practitioners for the state. The University also recently added a program in Environmental Health. Another example of a high-demand program is the Bachelor of Applied Studies (BAS), which provides a major in Leadership

and Organizational Studies for technical college associate-degree holders.

“These programs represent examples of how the University has aligned itself to respond to the educational, economic, healthcare and leadership needs in the New North region and beyond,” said Provost Lane Earns. “Meanwhile, our students benefit from a high-quality, broad-based education that provides them with the life skills they need to be successful and fulfilled global citizens. These essentials, which include such skills as critical-thinking, ethical reasoning and civic knowledge, are important in supporting a healthy, engaged citizenry.”

Another indicator of growth for the state’s third-largest university is its fourth consecutive record-breaking graduating class size; nearly 2,200 degrees were awarded in 2010, up from 2,073 in 2008. More than 6,300 individuals received degrees over the last three years.

“We will continue to do our part to help the UW System reach its goal of graduating more, better-prepared students over the next decade,” Wells said. “Many of the jobs of tomorrow are yet to be defined and the technical skills needed are yet to be determined. Consequently, we need graduates who are talented, liberally educated, technically skilled global citizens who are committed to lifelong learning. We are committed to providing the residents of Wisconsin’s New North with an affordable and accessible way of gaining a broad-based education that supports their future.”