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Spring Numbers Mean Another Record-Breaking Enrollment

Jan-27-2006

Eastern Illinois University 's record-setting fall enrollment has translated into a record-setting spring enrollment, as well.

But although President Lou Hencken is pleased that Eastern has been chosen as the school of choice by so many, he anticipates saying goodbye to a large graduating class at the end of the semester. As a result, numbers at the university may drop somewhat next year.

"This is the largest spring enrollment in the history of EIU," Hencken said, referring to the 11,414 students enrolled in on- and off-campus classes. "But as I said in the fall, it's an enrollment that stretches our faculty and physical resources, especially in a time without a significant increase in monetary resources from the state," he added.

The official Fall 2005 count was 12,129.

The number of seniors enrolled this spring - 3,293 - is significantly higher than the Spring 2005 figure of 2,849. Many of those will graduate in May; in fact, Hencken suspects Eastern will have its largest graduating class ever.

"Our students come to Eastern, in part, because we offer small classes and offer them the personal attention that they both want and need," Hencken said. "Any easing of the pressure on enrollment will help Provost (Blair) Lord and me to hold fast to our commitment of offering a quality education to our students, despite inadequate funding assistance from the state."

Lord added that Eastern's faculty have responded to the student demand creatively and willingly, thereby ensuring the continued quality of the Eastern experience. But he, too, is looking forward to an easing of the enrollment pressure in the coming year.

A breakdown of Eastern's total Spring 2006 student enrollment is as follows (with Spring 2005 figures in parentheses): undergraduate students, 9,687 (9,129) - freshmen, 1,814 (1,834); sophomores, 1,968 (2,000); juniors, 2,612 (2,446); and seniors, 3,293 (2,849). Graduate students number 1,727, an increase of 17 from last year's 1,710

The number of first-time undergraduate transfer students also rose from 331 a year ago to 409 in 2006.

Another noticeable increase was that of students enrolled in off-campus courses. This year there are 90 more students taking classes at EIU's satellite locations -- an 8.64 percent rise over Spring 2005's off-campus enrollment.

"The School of Continuing Education has had a record off-campus spring enrollment," said Dean Will Hine. "This strong growth points to the increasing demand for EIU's high quality off-campus classes and degree programs."

Minorities represent nearly 10.5 percent of Eastern's total enrollment. As a whole, the number of minorities increased from 1,016 to 1,196. Those enrollments, broken down, are as follows: African-American, 780 (664); Hispanic, 250 (220); Asian, 138 (109); and American Indian, 28 (23).

The number of international students attending Eastern is down slightly, with 137 enrolled in Spring 2006. The number a year ago was 142.

According to Hencken, Eastern officials will continue to study the university's enrollment during the coming months. The space concern will be somewhat alleviated, he added, with the eagerly awaited spring completion of Blair Hall, which was gutted by fire in April 2004.

The Doudna Fine Arts Center is also closed as it undergoes a nearly \$50 million renovation/expansion - a project tentatively scheduled to be completed for Fall 2007.