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EIU Fall Enrollment is Proof that Education is a Priority Among Illinois Families

Sep-09-2009

Fall 2009 enrollment figures at Eastern Illinois University indicate that higher education is still a priority, despite the many economic challenges being faced by Illinois families.

"We're very close to our optimum enrollment of 12,000," said Blair Lord, provost and vice president for academic affairs, commenting on the current on- and off-campus enrollment total of 11,966. "This tells me that our students realize the importance of a higher education and are willing to invest in EIU, trusting our institution to provide them with the knowledge, skills and experiences they will need to be successful in life and in their chosen fields of study."

Enrollment numbers reflect an on-campus enrollment of 10,788 and an off-campus count of 1,178. A year ago, the number of students taking on- and off-campus classes was 10,863 and 1,177, respectively, for a total enrollment of 12,040.

Given the budgetary challenges that our families are experiencing, this enrollment is really quite good, especially when you consider the uncertainty of Illinois' Monetary Award Program," Lord continued. "Nearly a quarter of our undergraduate population depends on MAP funding to assist with their education, and now a portion of that funding is questionable.

"In light of all of this, we're very pleased that our enrollment, essentially, has remained stable."

A breakdown of Eastern's 10,225 undergraduate students (down from 10,261 last year) is as follows (with Fall 2008 figures in parentheses): freshmen, 2,475 (2,649); sophomores, 2,055 (1,966); juniors, 2,456 (2,448); and seniors, 3,239 (3,198). The number of new transfer students rose by one -- from 1,112 in 2008 to 1,113 this fall.

Graduate students number 1,741, a slight decrease from last year's 1,779. Female students outnumber male students -- 7,039 to 4,927.

EIU officials are particularly pleased with a continued increase in minority students (1,783 from 1,655 in 2008). Minority students now make up 14.90 percent of total enrollment, up from 13.75 percent in 2008 and 12.22 percent in 2007. Those enrollments, broken down, are as follows: black, 1,280 (1,151); Hispanic, 316 (324); Asian/Pacific Islander, 134 (141); and American Indian/Alaskan Native, 53 (39).

Mona Davenport, director of Minority Affairs at EIU, called the minority enrollment total a testament to Eastern's enhanced recruitment and retention efforts.

"We've beefed up our efforts to actually get these kids on campus months before classes begin," Davenport said. "One of the ways in which we have increased enrollment is with a program called ACCESS Granted. We invite students down for a weekend, let them see what Eastern's all about and even develop a set of friends. I think it's made all the difference."