UA3/9/7 Enrollment Information

WKU President's Office - Ransdell

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Enrollment Information

Fellow faculty and staff:

Final Fall Enrollment
Our official fall 2015 enrollment census number is now final. This fall, when all dropping and adding and drop for nonpayment procedures have been completed, we have a current enrollment of 20,068 students. A breakdown of our student population is attached.

If you go to the last two lines on page two, you will see the crux of our challenge over the last few years—i.e., the loss of part-time adult learners (age 25+). We are working hard to try to recapture this market.

The 10-year enrollment trend line also reflects a downward trend beginning in 2012 when we raised our admissions standards to a 2.5 GPA or 20 ACT score. Our quality improved, but accepting fewer low-performing students and an improving job market which resulted in a loss of some of our adult part-time learners have combined to shape our current trends.

The most important message that I can convey now, and throughout the collegiate lives of these students, is that each and every one of us has a responsibility to help each one of these students to persist until they graduate from WKU. It is not only the right thing to do, but it is the prudent thing to do for them and for our own well-being.

High School Dual Enrollment
Perhaps the biggest shift in these enrollment figures is the growth in high school dual credit enrollments. This year 1,866 high school students (mostly juniors and seniors) are taking our courses and earning WKU credit. This saves these students considerable time and money. Dual enrollment high school students pay $210 a course as compared to the $1,185 tuition paid by other part-time Kentucky resident students for a three-hour course. While we do not generate as much revenue from these students as we do our fully enrolled students, we do help them come to us better prepared and closer to a baccalaureate goal because of their high school dual credit enrollment.

Expanded Markets
As we pursue state funding this spring, we will also be aggressively pursuing new and expanded markets for full-paying domestic, out-of-state, and international students. We intend to optimize all possible markets as we seek academic quality, diversity and financial stability. The international market place in particular is where we likely have the most potential for growth.

As we seek to grow the international diversity on our Bowling Green campus, I encourage all our faculty and staff to be mindful of the changing student life dynamics on our campus. A growing international population requires sensitivity on our part to cultural differences and strong traditions which we must respect. We are not bringing international students here to learn to be like us, rather we bring them here to help all of us—and especially our Kentucky students—to better understand the diverse cultural, geopolitical, economic, and religious differences across the globe.

State Performance Funding
I will be in touch over the next few months with regards to the higher education funding model which we will take to the General Assembly beginning in January. Suffice to say that at this juncture, however,
performance funding is now in play, and our performance will determine the degree to which any state appropriations may be earned. Degree productivity, graduation rates, persistence through 30, 60, and 90 hours will be measured as well. Our performance in enrolling underserved and minority populations will also be measured, as will our ability to produce degrees in the science, technology, engineering, and math plus health (STEM+H) disciplines. We will also be measured on the number of doctoral degrees we produce. Our performance in retaining and graduating our students at all levels will determine our level of state funding in the future.

We will be as aggressive as possible in the 2016 Kentucky General Assembly and do our best to help elected officials understand the critical nature of additional state funding. If additional state funding is to be forthcoming next year, then I will be in touch with regard to how we earn our share of new state funding through our performance. I will keep you posted on this process as it evolves.

Gary A. Ransdell
Attachment

Dr. Gary A. Ransdell | President