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FW: UND enrolls its most academically prepared and diverse freshman class, sees uptick in transfer, law and graduate students

1 message

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To: Rob Port <rob@sayanythingblog.com>

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Here you go, Rob.

Dave

From: Dodds, David <david.dodds@und.edu>
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2019 10:08 AM
Subject: UND enrolls its most academically prepared and diverse freshman class, sees uptick in transfer, law and graduate students



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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UND enrolls most academically prepared and diverse freshman class; sees uptick in transfer, law and graduate students, according to first-day report

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Number of new students increase over last year; four-year graduation rate also shows significant gain

UND's freshman class is shaping up to be the most diverse and most academically prepared ever, an achievement that represents the continuation of positive trends of the past few years.

According to first-day numbers, the University also showed enrollment growth in transfer and graduate students, including students in master's and doctoral programs and the UND School of Law.

In fact, this fall, the overall number of total new students at UND – new freshmen, new grad students, medical students, law students and transfers – is 3.3 percent more than on the first day of classes last year.

This fall, UND posted a first-day enrollment of 13,372, which includes the best-prepared cohort of new freshmen to date. Last year's freshman class at UND came in with a higher overall high school GPA – 3.46 – than any previous class. This year's incoming freshman class of 1,683 looks to make history again, having compiled an average high school GPA of 3.50. Since the launch of the One UND Strategic Plan, the collective GPA of UND's freshman classes have consistently made small but steady year-to-year increases.

The UND Honors Program has been an excellent partner in helping recruit academically qualified students to UND. Designed for especially motivated students, the Honors Program combines advanced coursework with opportunities to get involved beyond the classroom; and this year, the Honors Program has exceeded its enrollment goal for fall 2019 by 9 percent.

"Our first-day enrollment snapshot suggests our strategy of recruiting the most academically prepared freshmen is paying off," said Thomas DiLorenzo, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

"We're excited about the entering freshmen's record-high high school GPA, and delighted that the class members' own enthusiasm is boosting our Honors Program's enrollment beyond expectations. UND will be a better place because of the 10 percent increase in the number of diverse students in the fall 2019 class, too."

Welcoming climate

The incoming freshman class also is on track to be UND's most diverse. Based on first-day to first-day numbers, the fall 2019 class is up 10 percent in the number of students who report an ethnicity other than white/Caucasian. Again, last year's class was UND's most diverse ever, which means this year's class has reached another all-time high in the University's history.

Cara Halgren, Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs and Diversity, noted that the diversity numbers reflect campus-wide efforts in support of the One UND Strategic Plan.

"I'm very excited to see our One UND Strategic Plan's commitment to fostering a welcoming, safe and inclusive climate reflected in the increased diversity of our incoming freshman class," Halgren said.

"Our increased diversity provides opportunities for all of us to learn about how we are unique from each other as well as how we are connected by common goals and aspirations."

DiLorenzo also called attention to progress on another key goal of the One UND Strategic Plan: improving graduation rates. Starting with the class that entered UND in 2011 and tracking the numbers through the class that entered in 2014, UND's four-year graduation rate increased by 38 percent.

"A higher percentage of the fall 2019 class is likely to graduate on time than has happened with any other class in recent history," DiLorenzo said. "That's a testament to UND's concerted efforts to recruit better-prepared students, improve academic advising and remove barriers to graduation, all as the people of North Dakota expect."

The trade-off for an improved graduation rate can be decreased enrollment, as more students leave campus with their degrees rather than staying on as students for a fifth or sixth year. That's one reason why UND's overall headcount is down slightly – 73 students – from last year.

But UND officials planned for that decrease, and it's on par with what university administrators budgeted for, DiLorenzo said. That will let the University move forward without interruption with the plans that have been laid out for the year.

Furthermore, University officials are encouraged by the work being done to recruit new students across the board to offset the slight dip in overall enrollment caused, in part, by increasing graduation rates. UND recorded 3,534 new students in all categories on the first-day of classes this fall, 112 more than last year.

Upward trends

Transfer students are among the enrollment categories that have grown this year. This year's first-day number of new transfer students is 954, up 55 students or 6.12 percent from last year's number.

At the graduate level, UND is concentrating on yet another element of the One UND Strategic Plan: enhancing discovery through research, and at a level consistent with America's most research-intensive universities.

One result: a 36.4 percent increase in the number of new graduate students, which has grown from 538 on first-day 2018 to 734 on this year's first day. That's an increase of 196 students.

"UND has made incredible strides toward our strategic goals of increasing revenue generating graduate enrollment at the Master's level and investing in PhD programs," said Chris Nelson, Associate Dean of the School of Graduate Studies at UND.

"This will help drive us closer to Carnegie R1 status, through a combination of innovative programming, high-end enrollment and marketing strategies, and the development of industry partnerships," Nelson continued. "For example, we have 25 new graduate students at the Master's and PhD levels coming in this fall from Digi-Key and the Energy and Environmental Research Center as a result of the hard work and outreach of many here at UND."

Meanwhile, the UND School of Law also is reporting significant enrollment growth. North Dakota's only law school welcomed 84 first-year students for its week-long orientation program that began Sunday, August 18. That's a 33 percent increase over last year.

"I am so delighted about the strength and diversity of our incoming class of students," said Julia Ernst, Associate Dean for Academic & Student Affairs at the UND School of Law. "They bring a wealth of backgrounds and experiences into our law school community, so we look forward to working together with them throughout the coming months and years."

UND's official enrollment will be tallied on the North Dakota University System's Census Day, the week of Sept. 23. In years past, UND's enrollment has grown by several students between first day and Census Day as students continue to matriculate.

In Fall 2018, the overall first-day enrollment was 13,445, of which 1,844 were freshmen.

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