ENROLLMENT UPDATE
— Fall 2016 —

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
Enrollment Management Group
Greetings to all of you...our colleagues across campus.

This fall, we welcomed 2,348 new undergraduate and graduate students to Duquesne University. As those new students entered, the offices of undergraduate and graduate admissions were already well on their way to recruiting new students for 2017.

While it’s a busy time for admissions, we also know that it’s a busy time for many departments across campus. We view each one of you as a partner who contributes to the overall success in enrolling, retaining and graduating our academically talented students. To that end, we’d like to share some news about the successes and challenges for enrollment for Fall 2016 as well as the landscape for the future.

Higher education enrollment continues to face challenges with media coverage regarding college debt, high competition in the Northeast, consumer price sensitivity, declining job opportunities in select disciplines and other external forces.

We are not immune to these challenges here on the Bluff. Instead, we are organized to be efficient and successful, balancing market and mission. Our prior, current and future success in enrolling academically talented students into our undergraduate and graduate programs depends on the contributions, academic programs, expertise and service of our partners all over the University. We appreciate your continued partnership.

Warm Regards,

Paul-James Cukanna
Vice President for Enrollment Management
Freshman Enrollment

The Fall 2016 class is the largest in University history, with an enrollment of 1,556 freshmen, based upon the University census, achieving slightly more than 101% of our total enrollment target.

Students and families choose Duquesne for a number of reasons. In a survey of the newest freshman class about their primary reasons for choosing DU, they cited “program of study,” “urban location,” “size,” and “academic reputation.” Approximately 95% of incoming freshmen said DU was a top choice.

This is the most diverse freshman class in University history. Our percentage of minorities in the incoming freshman class rose to nearly 19% (17.1% in 2015 and 13.7% in 2014). Increasing diversity on campus and sustaining an environment where diversity is valued have been among the core goals of the Enrollment Management Group (EMG).

Other new freshman attributes:

- The acceptance rate is 74%—one of the most selective in University history
- The mean SAT score is 1144, the highest in University history
- Approximately 68.4% are PA residents (71.6% in 2015)
- Out-of-state residents represent 30 states plus Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico
- Citizens of 12 countries including China, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Norway, Vietnam and others
- Approximately 22% have relatives who are DU alums
- This is the first year that students could enroll via test-optional admission in business and music, and the second year for liberal arts; the initiative was very successful with approximately 200 academically talented students taking advantage of this option

Transfer Enrollment

Transfer enrollment continues to grow. In Summer 2015, a new associate director for transfer enrollment was hired. With this new position, we have been able to make further inroads on transfer enrollment, with 357 new transfer and nursing second-degree students, meeting 116% of full-time enrollment targets.

Graduate and Law Enrollment

Overall, graduate enrollment met approximately 96% of the enrollment objective (-32 students). It has been a year of success, but also demonstrates that further efforts will be required to continue to develop graduate enrollment at Duquesne.

The Office of Graduate Admissions began leveraging the Recruiter CRM over the last enrollment cycle. This enabled prospective students and applicants to receive University level messages along with the school/program messaging that is already in place. Graduate admissions also worked with several schools to optimize all aspects of the admissions funnel—from prospective student to enrolled students.

When asked which factors were important in their decision to attend Duquesne, new graduate students ranked “area of study,” “quality/reputation of Duquesne University” and “opportunity for professional advancement” as their top reasons. Cost is regularly mentioned as a major concern for students attending Duquesne.

A main source of graduate students at Duquesne is our own undergraduate students. We appreciate the efforts of our school colleagues to continue to encourage their own students to consider graduate education at Duquesne.

We continue to work with colleagues from across campus to evaluate the in-demand program areas and determine if there are any opportunities to expand the portfolio of offerings at Duquesne. Many schools already have new graduate program ideas in process and are looking at current programs to determine if there are opportunities to retool.
Retention

Our 87% freshman-to-sophomore retention rate for the incoming class of 2015 represents an increase from the year prior (86.6%). Our retention rate continues to be above the national average for private universities.

A strong freshman-to-sophomore retention rate is important because it can influence our financial profile, credit ratings, graduation rates, faculty recruitment, opinion surveys and how academically talented, prospective students and their parent/s perceive our University.

We continue to leverage our retention funds to support those students who demonstrate short term financial need. It is key to our mission of service to students. The awarding of these funds has proved beneficial in helping students bridge the fiscal gap between being able to register or stopping out due to a relatively small dollar amount. Our University-wide Retention Committee continues to be innovative and responsive in order to provide the best possible service to our students.

Duquesne’s 87% retention rate continues to be above the national average

Looking Ahead

We anticipate continued intense competition for undergraduate and graduate students. Program offerings, differentiation, outcomes, value and scholarship strategy are key components of enrollment success. Trends we’re watching include:

- The number of high school graduates continues to fluctuate, with projected year-over-year decreases expected nationally and in PA for 18-19. Growth tends to be outside of our region. We continue to have great competition in the Northeast given the number of high school students and the high number of colleges and universities.

- We anticipate an increasing number of first-generation college students. Roughly 15% of Duquesne’s incoming freshman class reported themselves as first-generation, while the National Center for Education Statistics estimates that 30 percent of all entering freshmen are first-generation college students.

- Nationally, graduate enrollment is stable. Between Fall 2005 and Fall 2015, the health sciences, engineering, mathematics and computer sciences had the largest 10-year average annual changes in total enrollment. Occupations typically requiring a graduate degree for entry are forecast to grow the fastest through 2024.

The EMG will continue to leverage technology—including our CRM, website and virtual campus tour, promotional campaigns and personal outreach—to communicate the unique education and value offered at Duquesne University.

EMG LEADERSHIP

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