State university attendance hits record level

Milestone passed as enrollment of in-state students drops for fourth consecutive year

By CHRIS GREEN
Harris News Service

TOPEKA — The state’s four-year universities enrolled a record number of students this fall, topping a combined enrollment of 90,000 for the first time ever.

Yet those same institutions also will be educating slightly fewer students hailing from inside the state, according to statistics released by the state Board of Regents Thursday.

Four of the state’s six universities saw in-state enrollments decrease this fall and combined resident attendance at Regents institutions declined slightly for the fourth consecutive fall semester.

Since the fall of 2003, in-state enrollment has dropped by 1,219 students or 1.6 percent. Nonresident attendance has increased by 3,682 students or 19 percent over that same period, largely fueled by the growth of online courses at Fort Hays State University.

The headcount for all six schools totaled 90,063, a 0.6 percent increase from last year’s mark of 89,506. Residents still make up nearly three-quarters of all students attending the state’s four-year universities.

The enrollment changes occur at the same time that most state universities have increased in-state tuition at faster rates than out-of-state tuition. Since 2002, in-state tuition has more than doubled at two schools and increased annually by an average of at least 8 percent at the other four.

However, higher education officials also cite statistics showing that the state’s institutions remain affordable compared to those in neighboring states. Some

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aid generated by tuition increases has been used to fund scholarships for low-income students.

Board of Regents spokesman Kip Peterson said the factors influencing changes in enrollment tend vary from campus to campus. As a result, he said he couldn’t speculate on why individual university enrollments might have changed in recent years.

Only Fort Hays State, which gained 177 Kansas students, and Pittsburg State University, which added 126 Kansas students, saw their resident student populations increase this fall.

Fort Hays State, which continues to see growth in its virtual college enrollment in Kansas and China, scored the biggest overall increase. It gained 466 students to increase its attendance by 5.1 percent. Pittsburg State added 228 students to grow 3.3 percent.

Those schools joined Kansas State University and Wichita State University in recording overall enrollment increases.

K-State reached an all-time record enrollment of 23,322, officials there said, despite losing 175 in-state students from last fall. The school enrolled a record number of black and Latino students and its international enrollment reached a 15-year high.

Pat Bosco, dean of student life and associate vice president for institutional advancement, said that a declining number of in-state high school graduates helped push his school’s in-state enrollment downward.

Emporia State University saw the steepest drop among state institutions, losing 185 students or 2.9 percent of its from enrollment last year, including 126 resident students. In a news release, Emporia State officials partially attributed the decrease to a drop in the number of its non-degree seeking students.

The University of Kansas lost 431 students, including 337 in-state students, but the KU Medical Center added 78 students, making KU’s overall drop 1.2 percent.

KU officials said much of the decline could be attributed to more rigorous application of academic standards in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which led to the dismissal of 884 students last year, about 350 more than the year before.

“That drop is so small — 1.2 percent — we really consider it stable enrollment,” KU spokeswoman Jill Jess said.
USM promotes peace

BY DAYNE LOGAN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Students and faculty at the University of Saint Mary gathered together Friday to share ideas and lend support to one another as part of the International Day of Peace.

The day's main event was a conference that featured songs performed by the USM Concert Chorale, speeches from a number of peace advocates and prayers from two religious leaders.

The first person to speak was Sandra Van Hoose, academic vice president at USM. Van Hoose said that USM and the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth have always been advocates for peace and understanding between all people. She added that it was that passion for peace which made university officials want to do something special in honor of the international celebration.

This year, that something special was a lecture from guest speaker Salwa Kader. Kader is the founder and president of the United States Federation for Middle East Peace. Her organization's mission is to promote respect, understanding and tolerance between the American public and the people of the Middle East. That mission is accomplished by educating

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TIMES PHOTOS/DAYNE LOGAN

Top photo: William Krusemark, director of the University of Saint Mary Concert Chorale, leads the group in a song about peace. Peace was the subject of many songs and speeches Friday during the university’s International Day of Peace Conference.

Right photo: George Steger, director of the Lawrence D. Starr Global Studies Institute, speaks about the correlation between peace and patience.
Speakers encourage the pursuit of peace

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everyday Americans about the culture, traditions, history and issues that pertain to the Middle East and the people who live within that region.

"We must strive more earnestly for mutual understanding," Kader said.

She also said that the only way to gain mutual understanding on a broad scale is by pulling as many people as possible into the worldwide discussion.

"Peace can only be achieved if more and more people are brought into the public discourse," Kader said.

She was very complimentary of the steps that USM is taking to encourage students to think about the world beyond their immediate surroundings. This work includes the encouragement of foreign language skills, the creation of study abroad opportunities and the availability of courses that discuss global issues.

"The work being done at the University of Saint Mary is a directly significant part of beginning the grass roots efforts (to encourage peace)," Kader said.

Charles Bangart, assistant vice provost of international programs at the University of Kansas, said he agreed that educational institutions are often the best starting points for peace dialogues.

"(Educators) are challenging students to find where they connect," Bangart said. "Students realize that there's a world out there that we are responsible for."

George Steger, director of the Lawrence D. Star Global Studies Institute, encouraged those present to also be mindful of another important component of the peace effort, patience.

Steger said that
regardless of the views of Americans on the war in Iraq, people across the board are losing patience with the situation in the Middle East.

“We don’t have much patience as a people,” Steger said.

He added that Americans often lose patience because they fail to understand the complexities associated with creating a lasting peace in such a diverse world.

According to Steger, this is because people are too consumed with what’s immediately in front of them to listen to the points of views of others.

“Resolution of problems begins with listening,” Steger said.

Following prayers from members of both the Jewish and Islamic faiths, William Krusemark, director of the USM Concert Chorale, led the assembly in a song. The last verse of that song aptly reflected the sentiment of the day:

“Let there be peace on earth,” the group sang.

“And let it begin with me.”
Approximately 170 students at the University of Kansas were recently selected as resident assistants, scholarship hall proctors, food board managers and housing organization officers. The following Leavenworth County residents were selected: Joseph Fox, resident assistant from Easton; Ryan Agnew, resident assistant from Leavenworth; Sean Hall, resident assistant from Leavenworth; and Samuel Park, desk manager from Leavenworth.
More than 900 students received degrees from the University of Kansas after the 2006 summer session. Registrar Cindy Derritt announced. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many of these graduates will return as members of the Class of 2008 to take part in commencement exercises May 18.

KU offers more than 85 undergraduate and more than 190 graduate or first professional degrees. First professional degrees are law, medicine and pharmacy. The summer graduates represent 52 counties in Kansas, 37 other states and U.S. territories, and 24 countries outside the United States.

Area graduates include, from Leavenworth: William Eugene Griffith, Graduate Master of Science in Education; Jennifer Rose Klemp, Graduate Doctor of Philosophy; Sarah Neal Kruse, daughter of Miriam Wyrick and Mark Kruse, Bachelor of Arts; William Craig McKim, Graduate Master of Business Admin; Kimberly Lane O'Dell, Graduate Master of Music Education; Stephanie L Odore, daughter of Mary Cranmore, Bachelor of General Studies; Brandi Sue Pogue, daughter of Robert Pogue and Kimberly Pogue, Bachelor of General Studies; and Gary D. Richmond II, son of Laurel Richmond, Graduate Master of Science in Education.

Lansing: Laura Elaine Lillich, Graduate Master of Science; and Donald Scott Stephenson, Graduate Doctor of Philosophy

Basehor: Rebecca Anne Knowles, Graduate Master of Science in Education.

Tonganoxie: Joseph Stanley Sibinski, son of Stanley and Anne Sibinski, Bachelor of Arts.
More than 900 students received degrees from the University of Kansas after the 2006 summer session, including Jennifer Leigh Henderson of Fredonia, master’s degree in education.

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KU offers more than 85 undergraduate and more than 190 graduate or first professional degrees. First professional degrees are law, medicine and pharmacy.
College notes

More than 900 students received degrees from Kansas University after the 2006 summer session including Kathryn Capps, Rachel Dempsey, Peter Hickman, Jordan Rose, Easan Selvan and Nina Zuna, all of Eudora.

Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many of the graduates will plan to return as members of the Class of 2008 to take part in commencement exercises in May.
More than 490 students received degrees from Kansas State University this summer, including Kelly Dyan Maze, who received a Bachelor of Science degree.

Maze, daughter of Charlie and Betty Maze of rural Hiawatha, is a 2003 Hiawatha High School graduate.

Also receiving a degree from K-State was Abraham D. Meyer of Sabetha, Bachelor of Science in agriculture.
COTTONWOOD FALLS, KS, September 12, 2007 - The Kickapoo tribal language and culture play a key role in the production of “The Only Good Indian,” a movie that is being shot here and in Topeka, Lawrence and other locations in Kansas.

“The Only Good Indian,” which stars popular Native American actor Wes Studi (Dances With Wolves, Geronimo, Heat), is a fictionalized account of the removal of Indian children from their homes and forced attendance at Indian boarding schools.

About 20 members of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas also are appearing in the film and the Kickapoo language is spoken throughout the movie.

“Currently, The Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas is the only tribe in the United States whose language and culture is being represented by tribal members in a movie production,” said Tribal Chairman Steve Cadue during a recent visit to the movie set.

During the visit, Cadue had the opportunity to meet Studi, a full-blood member of the Cherokee tribe in Oklahoma, and presented him an official Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas flag and a T-shirt that emphasizes the Kickapoo’s Plum Creek water project and the need for a comprehensive water plan for the Kickapoo reservation near Horton.

“Wes is a real gentleman and very sympathetic to our cause,” Cadue said.

Tom Carmody, a Lawrence film producer and screenwriter is producing “The Only Good Indian.” The director is Kevin Willmott, an assistant professor of film at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. The release of the film is scheduled for 2008.
Five area students were among 567 women who pledged to sororities at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, during fall formal recruitment, the KU Panhellenic Association has announced.

Students include:

• Shelby Gail Kueser, Garnett, pledged to Alpha Gamma Delta. She is the daughter of Gail and Debra Kueser. She graduated from Anderson County High School, Garnett.

• Danielle Marie Hanson, Baldwin City, pledged to Gamma Phi Beta. She is the daughter of Lee and John Hanson. She graduated from Baldwin High School, Baldwin City.

• Stephanie Lynne Hermreck, Ottawa, pledged to Chi Omega. She is the daughter of Dale and Linda Hermreck. She graduated from Ottawa High School.

• Nicole Marie Lane, Ottawa, pledged to Sigma Kappa. She is the daughter of Kevin and Karen Lane. She graduated from Ottawa High School.

• Sierra Lynn Wright, Ottawa, pledged to Kappa Alpha Theta. She is the daughter of William and Robin Wright. She graduated from Ottawa High School.
EDITORIAL

College shouldn't be priced out of reach

Everybody knows college tuition isn't cheap.

But as some students know far better than others, base tuition is only part of the bill. Course fees are jacking up the cost of some degrees by thousands of dollars, leading to concern that some students won't be able to afford diplomas in the costlier fields of study.

At The University of Kansas, for instance, a student pursuing a master's degree in business is charged an extra $156.80 per credit hour in course fees. A pharmacy student pays an extra $140.25.

In many cases, the extra fees are needed to provide special equipment and materials for students. Since pharmacy students need labs and lab materials, for example, it stands to reason that the field would require more expenditures than, say, philosophy.

But the extra fees create a dilemma for leaders in higher education.

Should the fees be balanced out by spreading them across the entire student body? Is it fair, for example, to ask a philosophy student to pay more for his or her degree in order to decrease the burden on a pharmacy student?

And if students shouldn't have to pay extra, who should?

The latter question is one that Kansas lawmakers may field in the upcoming legislative session. Their answer shouldn't be state taxpayers — at least not entirely.

Granted, Kansans should support the state's colleges and universities. Tax dollars invested in the institutions yield not only educational opportunities for state residents but jobs, support for state commerce in the form of research and development and many other types of economic development.

So far, there's no hard evidence to prove how many, if any, students are shying away from majors...
with high course fees in favor of fields that are cheaper, such as English and foreign languages. But there's anecdotal evidence suggesting steep fees are forcing students to pursue less expensive degrees.

That should give pause for concern.

Nobody wants to see students priced out of certain majors because of course fees. Or, to look at it another way, it's disconcerting to think some degrees eventually would be attainable only by the wealthy.

University officials say they're not happy with the discrepancy in pricing. And it goes without saying that many of the people who are paying the higher fees probably aren't too thrilled about it, either.

But again, here's hoping taxpayers aren't asked to shoulder the burden alone.

If and when legislators delve into the issue, they should require university administrators to prove they're keeping course costs at a minimum and are making all reasonable efforts to obtain scholarships for students who otherwise couldn't afford higher fees.

After all, Kansas taxpayers don't exactly have to strain their memories to remember when they were presented with a pricey bill for higher education. It happened last spring, when the Legislature approved a funding package of more than $300 million for backlogged maintenance on state college campuses.

To help shield taxpayers from future bills for upkeep, the Kansas Board of Regents adopted a policy requiring universities to set aside existing funding or obtain donations to provide for maintenance of all new buildings.

Here's hoping lawmakers keep that arrangement in mind when tackling the issue of high course fees.

The Topeka Capital-Journal Editorial Board