

L&C Enrollment Grows for 32nd Consecutive Fall and Spring Semester

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Lewis & Clark **NEWS**
Community College

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Godfrey, Ill. – While the majority of community colleges across Illinois experienced downward trends in enrollment for Fall 2011, Lewis and Clark Community College saw yet another increase – now in its 32nd consecutive fall and spring semester of growth. The accomplishment is a fall semester enrollment record, with an official credit headcount of 8,451, or one percent over Fall 2010. Lewis and Clark continues to have the longest continuous growth trend in Illinois.

“The fact that we've had 16 years of fall and spring increases is a result of the quality of Lewis and Clark's academic programs and faculty. Individuals recognize the value of a Lewis and Clark education and appreciate how the college can help achieve their goals,” said Kent Scheffel, vice president of Enrollment Services at L&C.

The number of part-time students increased 7 percent, while full-time enrollment dropped 11 percent, due in part to current economic conditions. As budgets tightened, many students waited until the last minute to enroll, and the demand for financial aid has increased, Scheffel said.

The number of black non-Hispanic students also increased 15 percent, from 566 last fall to 653 in 2011.

Moving forward, Lewis and Clark and the Illinois Community College Board are putting more emphasis than ever on completion, and success rates above headcount.

“We expect enrollment to be strong in the spring semester as well,” Scheffel said.

“While some potential students are facing economic challenges in enrolling in classes,

many realize that furthering their education will aid them in finding or retaining a job. A degree or certificate has been a key factor in helping many individuals gain employment.”

In addition to 16 years of consecutive enrollment growth, Lewis and Clark also ranks among the top community colleges in Illinois with the highest enrollments based on the population of the college district (headcount per 1,000 residents). There are 29 community colleges in the state that serve metropolitan centers. Lewis and Clark ranks fourth, slightly behind two Chicago area colleges and Parkland in Champaign, which serves a large number of University of Illinois students who are from out of district.

"Our market penetration rate is extremely high, and we need to focus on our products and services to ensure that our students stay with us and that we continue to reach such a large segment of the population," Lewis and Clark President Dale Chapman said. "We want this growing number of students to complete certificates and degrees, and we plan to continue developing new academic programs to meet their needs."

Chapman also referred to the college's recent economic impact study, which further illustrates the economic benefits that Lewis and Clark provides the district through its growing number of graduates.

"We are drawing students from within our district, providing them with an affordable, high quality education, and when they graduate they become nurses, dental hygienists, police officers, fire fighters, paralegals, automotive technicians, process operations technicians and numerous other professionals who work and raise their families in our community," Chapman said. "That is what really multiplies the impact we have economically on our district, and more importantly, why our students' success is so vital to this region."