

# L&C Preparing More Students for Growing Career Fields and Transfer Opportunities: College Continues Growth Trend for More Than 15 Years

November 4 2010 3:13 PM

Godfrey, III. – Another semester of increased enrollment for Lewis and Clark Community College means that more people are receiving the advanced training and quality education to prepare them for their future careers – at a minimal cost.

Credit enrollment at Lewis and Clark increased three percent this fall from 8,179 (Fall 2009) to 8,406 (Fall 2010). Total credit hours increased 5 percent to a new record high - 68,971.

“The increase is significant, not just because Lewis and Clark is experiencing yet another increase in enrollment, but also because this increase means that Lewis and Clark is providing career opportunities in the jobs of the 21st century,” L&C President Dale Chapman said. “The fact that more and more students choose Lewis and Clark each year is based on the reputation of our quality education for a fraction of the cost of other colleges and universities.”

The low cost to attend Lewis and Clark, coupled with a down economy played a significant role in this semester’s increase, Chapman said. “We often see a larger number of people return to school when the economy is down, either because they have been laid off, or because they fear a lay off may be eminent.”

Connie Vick, planning and program manager with Madison County Employment and Training, said she has seen an increase in displaced workers in the community interested in seeking higher education.

“Maybe one-fourth to one-third of the people we see are interested in going back to school. It has definitely increased,” Vick said. “More people are selecting that option to try to re-train in a job that’s got more growth opportunity. Either that, or they look at this as an opportunity to change their career to something else they would rather do.”

Lewis and Clark’s recent enrollment increase means it continues to hold the record for longest enrollment growth trend in the state of Illinois, seeing consistent enrollment increases for the past 30 fall and spring semesters – or 15 years.

Two areas that continue to see large enrollment increases are online students and students enrolled at the N.O. Nelson Campus in Edwardsville. Online students increased 4 percent (1,575), with a 5 percent rise in online credit hours taken (16,339). N.O. Nelson's credit students total rose 16 percent.

“Last year we served nearly 2,000 Lewis and Clark students on the N.O. Nelson campus, which doesn't include the number of Edwardsville High School students who also utilize this campus every day,” Chapman said. “We knew we would continue to see increases in enrollments on that campus, but 16 percent was much more significant than we had anticipated this fall.”

Lewis and Clark's High School Partnership program also witnessed a 15 percent increase in the number of students receiving high school and college credit. The Edwardsville School District reached an all time high by offering 46 dual credit courses this semester – the most ever offered by a high school in the dual credit program.

“We were amazed to see such a large number of courses and students from one school district who are taking advantage of the dual credit offering,” Vice President of Enrollment Kent Scheffel said. “I believe that more parents are realizing the value of their student earning college credit – at no cost to them – while they attend high school. I am sure this college savings is even more significant given the current economy.”

Scheffel said overall the High School Partnership Program serves 18 of schools throughout the area, and witnessed a 30 percent increase in the number of credit hours being taken by area high school students this fall.

“This fall's credit hours taken by high school students represent a savings of \$1,122,264 for district parents, and that number is based on Lewis and Clark's tuition,” Scheffel said. “This figure would increase drastically based on other college's tuition rates.”

Board Chairman Robert Watson said he is pleased that Lewis and Clark continues to experience growing enrollments. “It of course means more people are choosing Lewis and Clark, but even more importantly it means that more individuals and their families are saving a great deal of money on their College tuition, and it means that Lewis and Clark is playing a vital role in creating a strong regional workforce. Lewis and Clark continues to offer a top-rated college education for a minimal cost, which means even more today in our tough economic times.”

Watson applauded the entire staff for their continued efforts to keep costs low, while also expanding program offerings that meet the needs of students today. “Our faculty and staff are ahead of the game when it comes to understanding the needs of employers in our region, and developing state-of-the-art training programs to create a highly trained work force.”

[Like RiverBender.com on Facebook!](#)