

Exciting News About Our Students and Our Work Together

September 10, 2013

Colleagues and Students,

This afternoon, I had the honor of presenting fall enrollment numbers to the Board of Trustees. We are again welcoming the largest and one of the most academically distinguished first-year classes in our history. Consider just a few of the numbers:

- 1) A record 4,702 first-year students, joining our largest study body ever of 29,400 students.
- 2) 105 National Merit scholar students, up from 71 last year when UK ranked among the Top 15 public universities in the country and record numbers of students with composite scores between 28 and 36 on their ACTs.
- 3) 555 African-American and 200 Hispanic students, both the largest in our institution's history and the continuation of consistent growth since 2008.
- 4) An increase of more than 1 absolute percentage point in our first- to second-year retention rates and significant percentage point increases in our third- and fourth-year rates as well. We have been committed to growing our enrollment. But we also are committed to providing the best possible educational experience for our students.
- 5) And at the graduate and professional level, we have become more successful at helping students graduate in a timely manner with time-to-degree-completion rates now above the national average. A news release with more details can be found at <http://uknow.uky.edu/content/record-first-year-enrollment-increases-quality-diversity-uk>.

Our institution is increasingly seen as a first choice for the best students in our state and in the region. These students and their families are attracted by a renowned faculty, which has created a core curriculum garnering national attention for its creativity. They see an honors program, growing to offer more opportunity to interact across disciplines. They are excited by an expansion of living and learning communities that offer rich educational experiences both inside and outside the classroom. And they understand the investments we are making to revitalize our campus core with high-tech living, learning and research spaces that are making an already remarkable place even more special.

In short, these kinds of numbers don't happen by accident or in short order. They result from the efforts of many people – families and students, faculty, staff and administrators – over many years. And certainly, our dedicated enrollment management team, led by Don Witt, deserves special recognition for the sustained and tireless efforts to recruit and nurture these students.

Of course, much work remains. Recruitment is only part of the equation, and the competition is becoming more fierce. We must work to retain and graduate them, to prepare them successfully for a world in which they must invent or reinvent their jobs. That process never ends. But I am thankful to be at an institution where students at every level are at the center of everything we do. Thank you.

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