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A Good Problem to Have: University of Dayton Readies More Classrooms, Residence Halls, Labs for First-Year Students

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NEWS RELEASE

(Editors: Students begin move-in Saturday, Aug. 16. Classes start Wednesday, Aug. 20.)

A GOOD PROBLEM TO HAVE: UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON READIES MORE CLASSROOMS, RESIDENCE HALLS, LABS FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

DAYTON, Ohio – University of Dayton administrators, faculty and staff are hustling to feed, house and educate what could be the largest first-year class UD has seen since the baby boom years of the 1960s.

With classes scheduled to start Aug. 20, deposits from first-year students were 2,005 on Aug. 10 – about 230 students above target and 13 percent above last year.

That means adding course sections, hiring additional instructors, finding additional living space and even buying more glassware for science labs for a booming number of science majors.

"Coping with an entering class of this unexpectedly large size poses challenges in many areas, but it's a good problem to have," said Paul Benson, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "This increased interest is a wonderful testament to the quality of a UD education."

The University needs more housing for the overflow. Connie Robertson, associate director of residential services for assignments, said UD has rented living space for 50 students in the privately owned Irving Commons apartment complex on Irving Avenue.

Sophomores from the Marycrest Complex and Marianist Hall were invited to move to the 10 townhouses and 5 flats to make room for first-year students in the residence halls, she said.

Since every first-year student must take some classes in the College of Arts and Sciences, the college has been particularly affected. At least 60 sections were added for the fall term, according to Associate Dean Mary Brown.

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Two additional full-time faculty members have been hired; one for religious studies and one for mathematics, while an uncounted number of part-time instructors have been recruited, she said.

A continuing trend of rising enrollment in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) students is pushing departments like chemistry in several ways, she said. With a record number of about 700 students enrolled in entry level chemistry classes, evening labs have been added.

An additional \$6,000 in glassware for first-year labs was needed, coupled with about \$18,000 more for organic chemistry equipment targeted to sophomores, said Mark Masthay, chemistry department chair. Students in one section will have the rare opportunity to learn from the chair of the department himself.

"It's unusual for a department chair to teach a lab class," Benson said. "It shows how UD faculty members are going far beyond the call of duty to ensure a high quality experience for our first-year students."

According to Sundar Kumarasamy, vice president of enrollment management, enrollment is up in several significant categories, notably out-of-state and international students, as well as a record number of science majors.

He's particularly pleased that the number of students from far away California have nearly tripled and first-year international student enrollment is up 81 percent.

"Our goal is that we bring in the most talented students who fit the University of Dayton mission -- students who will most benefit from what UD has to offer," he said. "We are telling students who we are. We want to make very clear, in introducing ourselves to the market, that our core is our mission. We're making clear what a Marianist education is and how it is different."

The University's recent Top 10 ranking for "Happiest Students" by the Princeton Review will also help spread the word about UD's high level of student satisfaction, Kumarasamy said.