Move-in day is always a historic day for incoming students and their families, but this year when the class of 2016 arrives Saturday, Aug. 18, they'll make University of Dayton history.

The University is welcoming the largest, most academically prepared and most geographically diverse class in school history. For the first time, more than half the first-year class is from outside Ohio, and the University broke last year's record number for international students, according to Sundar Kumarasamy, vice president for enrollment management and marketing.

More than 2,100 new students are expected to start classes next week, besting the baby boomer-era record of 2,073 set in 1967. It's the third straight year the University has exceeded its enrollment target, although about 1,000 fewer applicants than last year were offered admission, he said.

"The makeup of this year's class shows our top-quality education, excellent value and Catholic, Marianist traditions are resonating with students and families," Kumarasamy said. "The University is in an excellent position to address coming demographic shifts while continuing to build momentum in growing our global reputation."

About 56 percent of the new students are coming from outside Ohio. Since 2006, that figure has jumped 17 percentage points. The greatest growth is coming from students hailing from the states of Illinois, Indiana, New York and Missouri.

The University also expects to enroll more than 1,500 total international students for fall semester — another new record, according to Kumarasamy.

"The growth in the number of international students is coming primarily from China, although we're seeing more students from the Middle East as well," Kumarasamy said. "This demonstrates the University of Dayton's growing global reach and reputation as a top-quality school that equips students to succeed in a rapidly changing world."

This year's class is also expected to have the highest average test scores in the University's history, making it one of the best academically prepared classes as measured by college entrance test scores and high-school grades. Kumarasamy said improving over last year's record levels for these indicators demonstrates the University's appeal to top students in the nation.

With fewer students offered admission, the University's selectivity rate is expected to improve about 20 percentage points. Selectivity is an indicator of academic excellence and a key measure in how universities are nationally ranked. The gains have been made without compromising academic quality while also maintaining affordability and socioeconomic diversity, he said.

Other new developments for the 2012-13 school year:

- Orientation will again include a service component, with first-year students asked to donate shoes and socks to Shoes 4 the Shoeless, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing properly fitting footwear for Dayton-area children in desperate need. Last year's service effort netted $8,500 in donated school supplies.
- Upperclass Blue Crew members — students who traditionally volunteer to help with move-in day — will be joined this year by 80 first-year students who arrived a week early for the new Camp Blue program, getting a head start on life as a Flyer with tours of Dayton, leadership exercises and a day of service.
- With the launch of the University of Dayton China Institute in Suzhou Industrial Park, students will now have a chance to live, learn and work in China during their academic careers.
- As the 2013 launch for Common Academic Program nears, some 25 new courses will be piloted this year in preparation for the first major revision of the undergraduate curriculum in 30 years.
- The 2012 First-Year Read selection is This I Believe II: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women, edited by Jay Allison and Dan Gediman. Students have been assigned to read the book, a compilation of essays from famous and not-so-famous people; they'll discuss the book and personal philosophies during orientation.

With nearly $30 million of new campus construction projects completed or under way, visible changes occurred during the
summer:

- About 400 upperclass students are moving into the brand-new Caldwell Street Apartments, a $25 million residential development along Brown and Caldwell streets.
- In the first phase of a $20 million multiyear modernization of the Science Center, improvements included new windows and air conditioning.
- A $12 million two-year project will give Roesch Library a facelift and transform the interior into a modern learning center with more spaces for students to study and greater electronic learning tools.
- The $51 million GE Aviation Dayton Electrical Power Research Lab continues to rise on River Park Drive.

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