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A Strong First-Year Class

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One of most uncertain admission environments in memory is proving to be a blessing to the University of Dayton, a national Catholic university and Ohio's largest private university, with an incoming class that is shaping up as one of the most academically prepared and diverse in the school's history.

"While it has been a challenging year for many private schools, we have had tremendous success in balancing all the goals we have for a first-year class," said Sundar Kumarasamy, vice president of enrollment management. "We think that all of the investment and preparedness we have done in the past few years, anticipating a drop in number of potential high school seniors, has paid off this year."

Kumarasamy said, for 2009, the University has met the budgeted first-year enrollment target while exceeding departmental goals in science, business and engineering, with incoming science students exceeding the target by 18 percent. With a record 12,126 applications, the University's incoming class will represent stronger selectivity, academic preparedness and geographic and ethnic diversity.

It's expected to be the best academically prepared class in the University's history, with significant increases in college entrance test scores, high school GPAs and high school rankings. Kumarasamy said rises in these indicators demonstrate the University is increasingly attractive to some of the top students in the nation.

Ethnic diversity is also expected to reach historic levels and make up nearly 9 percent of the entering class. With increased recruiting in Puerto Rico, deposits from Hispanic students increased significantly as have those from Asian students. Kumarasamy said while there is a small drop in African-American enrollment, academic preparedness increased.

Out-of-state enrollment is expected to jump three percentage points from last year to 46 percent; that's up from 39 percent in 2007. One of the University's strategic goals is to increase geographic diversity in its student body.

"We saw more applications this year from Illinois, New York, Maryland, Virginia and Massachusetts, among others," Kumarasamy said. "The word is getting out about the quality of our programs and how happy our students are with their educational experience here."

Kumarasamy said with students from more than 95 countries submitting applications, international applications were also strong.

Selectivity has continued to increase for the University, he said. This year's rate of 73.3 percent is nearly a nine percentage point difference from 2007.

Kumarasamy said the economic crisis may have brought the University's advantage into sharper focus for some students who had looked at pricier private schools.

"I think we are becoming more and more attractive to out-of-state students because of our academic reputation and affordability. Some of our students also looked at private, East Coast schools that cost more than \$50,000 per year," he said. "When they look at our academic quality, they see we offer a better value for a better price. The University of Dayton's growing national reputation makes it a first-choice school for many students," Kumarasamy said.

With many families experiencing economic uncertainty, Kumarasamy said deposits are continuing to arrive. He expects to work with students and families throughout the summer.

The University of Dayton has attracted record applications in six out of the last seven years. Last year was a near-record for incoming students, with a first-year class of 1,995. The University typically enrolls 1,750 to 1,800 students in its first-year class.

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