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GREETINGS FROM IUPUI

September 2013

IUPUI's official headcount for fall 2013, a total of 30,488 (which includes Columbus's 1,732 students) is our third-highest headcount on record, following 2010 (30,566) and 2011 (30,530). I remember well, five years ago, when we broke the 30,000 mark for the first time, and there's been no looking back!

Our fall 2013 student enrollment census also marks the 18th consecutive year of record-setting increases in credit hours taken at IUPUI. We've actually had 19 consecutive years of increases in credit hours, but we missed setting a record 19 years ago!

What this means is that more students are attending full-time and making faster progress toward graduation. This fall, full-time enrollment is at 71% of the entire student body, compared with 61.3% in 2007 and 50.4% in 1996. Looking at undergraduates only, full-time students account for 78% of the total—and 87.6% of all freshmen. The freshman class is up 5.7% in Indianapolis from last year, but their credit hours taken is nearly double that, up 11%.

At the same time that we are teaching more full-time students more classes, we are also assisting their progress, with special attention to new beginners. Beginning students are up 14.1%. They are smarter than ever, with average SATs and high school GPAs continuing to go up year by year.

At the same time, 35% of all beginners are the first in their families to attend college, and 26.3% of them are minorities. These students can be especially vulnerable as they adjust to college life because they may have less family experience.

To help our students succeed, we continue to improve our award-winning first-year experiences—like Themed Learning Communities, as part of academic course work—and Residential Based Learning Communities incorporated into on-campus student housing.

The idea behind learning communities is to offer students the opportunity to live or study with others with whom they share an academic focus, professional interest, or life experience. Having others around with common backgrounds or aspirations can be a powerful factor in student adjustment to the academic community by promoting self-confidence, peer support, and resilience to setbacks. Extracurricular activities also play a role in engaging students in campus life and campus spirit. More than 1,400 attended a Jaguar soccer match on September 3rd and more than 1,000 attended a concert on a Friday night. What a difference!

For the 2,000 or so students in on-campus housing, we have 14 Residential Based Learning Communities, including several in the new 560-bed University Tower. They focus on Out-of-State Student Experience, Living Your Freshman Experience, First-Generation Experience, and Sophomore Year Experience, as well as those based on academic linkages, such as Kelley School of Business majors or students interested in such disciplines as criminal justice and pre-law or STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math).

U.S. News and World Report annually recognizes IUPUI for Themed Learning Communities. This year, we offer 40 TLCs on a variety of topics. To highlight IUPUI's strength in health sciences, we debut two new ones this fall: "Molecules into Medicine: The Chemical Biology of Life" and "Pandemics and Plagues: An Unusual Look at Health Care." The latter includes a service learning experience related to preparedness with the American Red Cross.

Other TLCs, like "We Are All in This Together: Understanding Peace and Conflict in Contemporary Society," incorporate service through a one-day campus domestic violence forum. The TLC "Changing the World: Where Do I Start?" offers an opportunity to explore how others have sought to make a difference in our world, locally, nationally, and globally.

University of Wyoming President Robert J. Sternberg's February 7, 2013, essay on "Research to Improve Retention," in www.insidehighered.com summarizes studies that have guided our thinking. Feeling part of the academic community right away, taking at least one course for interest's sake rather than only those filling requirements, engaging in extracurricular activities that support academic goals, finding linkages through service or experiential learning between classroom work and potential careers—all go a long way toward getting students through that crucial first year and keeping them on track to graduation.

IUPUI's commitment to evidence-based practice in academics and student life is fueling steady increases in recruitment, retention, and graduation rates—good news for growing the number of degree holders in Indiana as well as for making the state a talent magnet.

IUPUI's progress confirms my belief that an innovative faculty and staff motivated by a strong sense of an urban research university's community engagement is the future of higher education and the key to meeting local and national goals for increasing the college-educated populace across the country and around the globe.

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CHANCELLOR CHARLES R. BANTZ



Send your comments to chancllr@iupui.edu

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