

From the Desk of the Chancellor – August 21

As the fall semester gets under way, we will embark on a strategic planning process that will lead us to imagine IUPUI 20 years from now. This column will be my place to suggest things to think about, articles I've read or trends I've noticed that have me intrigued (or worried), circumstances we should take into account, opportunities that might propel us forward, or obstacles that could slow us down. What talents and resources are required to meet changing needs? How do we find the right niche and define our distinctiveness as an urban public research university? I hope you will take a few moments to think about and comment on these "probes of the week."

This week, let's consider our freshman class — in many ways the same, but in other ways different. Even though we increased our admission standards, we anticipate the largest entering class ever of students who are attending full-time and enrolled at IUPUI for the first time. Simultaneously, it is the most academically prepared freshman class, and we expect it to be the most diverse class. We are drawing students from more of Indiana. In 2001, 73% of new freshman were from our eight-county central Indiana service area (Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Marion, Morgan, Shelby). In 2011, this percentage had dropped to 55%.

What does this mean? We draw significantly more students from Indiana outside the metro area than we did 10 years ago. We are also attracting more international students (almost 4%) and more out-of-state students (3%) — not in huge numbers, but increasing. Thus, it is no surprise that we have also filled all available campus housing, including 260 students across the White River in Park Place! And more than 200 are on the wait-list.

So — as we think of the next 20 years — how should these trends stimulate our planning? We need to be bold. Remember just 42 years ago, our enrollment was less than 11,000 students. Last fall, there were 30,500. Because of our size, our unique history, our location, and by the sheer scope of opportunities we offer, imagine what an impact we could make if we make the right choices for our future?

Comments? Write_chancellor@iupui.edu.