

PRESS RELEASE

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Chicago State University Nearly Doubles New Freshmen Class Cites enhanced programs and new recruitment efforts

CHICAGO, IL (September 5, 2017) - Census data reveal that student enrollment is up for both new freshmen and transfer students at Chicago State University. The overall increase points to a promising enrollment trajectory. University officials attribute the positive numbers to new more concentrated outreach initiatives, enhanced program options, growing community support, and a collaborative galvanizing spirit.

The new data show that overall new admittances are up by more than 8.7% compared to the enrollment figures from fall 2016. The most significant area of improvement is in the recruitment of 411 new undergraduate students which represents an even higher number — a 51% increase over fall 2016.

“To those who may be unfamiliar with the impact of the recent two-year-long state budget impasse and the fallout for small and mid-size public institutions of higher learning, this number may seem inconsequential. But in light of our overall student enrollment and the reputational damage that Chicago State and other universities endured, a 51% increase is indisputably a sign of progress,” said Dr. Rachel Lindsey, Chicago State University President. “It suggests that our program offerings and education history still resonate and that not only are people interested in acquiring a post-secondary education but more importantly, that Chicago State is still a necessary university and a viable choice.”

The data also reflect a decrease in a few graduate admission categories such as doctoral enrollment and graduate students at-large. However, out of the 16 combined graduate and undergraduate categories, 11 (69%) show increases. These include general enrollment, new freshmen enrollment, transfer students, and graduates seeking post baccalaureate degrees and other graduate certifications.

“It has been well-publicized that Chicago State, like similar state universities whose funding was withheld, has suffered multiple setbacks — from reputational concerns to maintenance and morale,” said Dr. Lindsey. “I am particularly proud that the campus community came together, worked together, and prioritized recruitment at a time when the need is so great. They galvanized resources and we are beginning to see encouraging results.”

“We are incorporating strategies aimed at recruiting long-term students who take their education seriously and who would look forward to graduation and to making CSU their alma mater,” said Dr. Michael Ellison, Vice President of Enrollment Services. “We are adding to that concept an array of tools, opportunities, and incentives that we believe will be attractive to new students.”

“I am convinced that by enhancing, expanding and supporting programs and services, we will continue to overcome obstacles and make long-needed improvements in our academic offerings,” said Dr. Lindsey. And, through the tireless efforts of Paul Vallas, our chief administrative officer, we are likewise aligning fiscal management with best practices. We have also begun to aggressively explore innovative ways to lessen our dependency on state funding.”

“Building partnerships at the high school and community college levels and identifying new revenue streams and opportunities are essential,” added Vallas. “We are supporting our academic growth with options for such special interests as ROTC, Veterans Affairs and even day care for parents who make up the largest portion of CSU’s transfer student population.”

For more than 20 years, Dr. Lindsey served as dean of one the campus’ largest colleges, Arts and Sciences. As interim president, her term ends next year. “One of my goals is to make sure that the new permanent president will be able to make a smooth transition and, from a leadership perspective, that we do everything possible to restore institutional integrity as well as dignity and pride in being a CSU student and alum,” she added. “We’ve only just begun, but I strongly believe that we are moving in the right direction.”

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About Chicago State University:

Chicago State University (CSU) is a public, comprehensive post-secondary institution that provides access to higher education for students of diverse backgrounds and educational needs. CSU fosters the intellectual development and success of its student population through a rigorous, positive, and transformative educational experience and is committed to teaching, research, service and community development including social justice, leadership and entrepreneurship. Founded in 1867 to meet the demand for a trained teaching force, Chicago State University (CSU) was originally recognized as the Chicago Teachers College. Today it is home to Illinois’ oldest College of Education and stands distinctively as the state’s oldest public university. CSU has traditionally maintained a record for graduating the highest percentages of Black American students in Illinois and has recently established global competitiveness as one of its four core priorities. It is currently celebrating its 150 year anniversary.

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