Freshmen boost university enrollments to records

BY TIM BARKER • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Tuesday, August 24, 2010 12:25 am

As expected, several universities across the region opened for business Monday reporting record fall enrollment, fueled by large numbers of incoming freshmen.

The numbers won't be official for several weeks, but leading the way was the University of Missouri-Columbia, which expects to set records both in total enrollment and freshman enrollment.

Mizzou brought in 6,160 freshmen, nearly 10 percent more than last year's class of 5,620 freshmen. The school's total enrollment is just more than 32,000, compared with 30,831 last fall, officials said.

The jump in enrollment at Missouri and other schools is attributed, at least in part, to the fact that the state just had its largest high school graduating class in decades — with the children of baby boomers moving through the system. That surge is expected to fade away over the next few years.

Most schools have looked toward this enrollment increase as a way to relieve some of the pain caused by the state's slashing of higher education funding.

Elsewhere, the University of Missouri-St. Louis said overall enrollment was up nearly 3 percent, topping last year's record of 16,548. The largest bump was seen in the college of education, which had a 12.4 percent increase in students.

At Missouri State University's campus in Springfield, enrollment is up just more than 1 percent, at 18,870 students, bolstered by a jump in transfer students, the school said.

Also in Springfield, Drury University said its opening day enrollment edged its way to a new record — 1,633 versus 1,615 in 2007.

Officials at the University of Illinois Edwardsville were not available Monday to comment on enrollment figures.
Record number of freshmen enroll at Missouri

8/24/10

COLUMBIA | The first day of school at the University of Missouri's flagship campus means a record number of freshmen along with a sizable increase in the number of minority students.

School officials count more than 6,100 first-year students at the Columbia campus. That's a nearly 10 percent increase from last year's freshmen enrollment numbers, which also set an all-time high. Total enrollment as of Monday is 32,009. That figure includes graduate students.

The number of first-year minority students increased nearly 20 percent, with 1,042 enrolled.

Students on average are also coming to Columbia with higher standardized test scores, and the number of students earning merit scholarships for academic performance has also grown.
Mizzou students start school year with roar

MU has another record census.

Tyler Eaton, center, leads a pack of new students through the Columns at Francis Quadrangle Sunday as part of the annual Tiger Walk at the University of Missouri.

By Janese Silvey

Monday, August 23, 2010

With backpacks strapped over their shoulders, students crowded the sidewalks of campus, scurrying to get to class on time, occasionally darting out of the way to let a bicycle whiz past or
glancing down at half-folded maps, inconspicuously navigating the maze of red and white buildings.

The University of Missouri campus is alive again, with more students than ever starting classes this morning.

“We’re off and roaring,” MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said. “The Tigers are off and roaring.”

MU experienced another record-breaking enrollment year with 6,160 freshmen, an increase of 9.6 percent, on campus this fall and an all-time high of 32,009 students, which includes 24,759 undergraduates.

To accommodate the influx, the university has stretched its normal school day to 8 p.m. instead of mid-afternoon, when classes ended in previous years, Banken said. That allowed faculty members to add sections of general education and high-demand courses. Faculty and instructors will take on the extra workload in exchange for pay raises funded through the increase in freshman tuition, Banken said.

The crowd proved a little overwhelming for some new students.

“It’s much bigger than what I’m used to,” said Miranda Eckhardt, a transfer student from Miami University of Ohio. “The people are more diverse here than there, that’s for sure.”

MU is more diverse than ever, with 1,042 minority freshman students enrolling this year, up 32.7 percent from last fall.

The university also welcomed more high-achieving freshmen this year. There are 512 Bright Flight scholars in the freshman class, an increase of 8 percent, and 511 Curators Scholars, up 18.8 percent. Bright Flight scholarships are given to students who earn at least 30 on the ACT college entrance exam, and Curators Scholars are students who ranked at the top of their high school graduating classes. The average ACT of freshmen this year remained the same as last year at 25.6.

Freshmen were welcomed to campus yesterday with the 15th annual Tiger Walk, a tradition that lets new students run through the Columns at Francis Quadrangle. The event included a welcome from Mayor Bob McDavid, a preview of the marching band and a pep talk from men’s basketball Coach Mike Anderson.

The event “was a lot of fun,” said Katie Buer, a freshman from St. Louis. “It was a little overwhelming, though.”

Buer is undecided but considering a pre-med career path. Her schedule is stacked with the basics: biology, psychology, college algebra.
Josh Lackner, a junior computer science major, is trying to finish his general education requirements, too, signing up for a Greek Culture class to get a humanities credit out of the way. He’s a little nervous about the class, he admitted, adding that he’s not a fan of humanities.

Lackner is taking a wait-and-see attitude about the start of another school year. Asked this morning if he was excited to be back on campus, he said: “We’ll find out once my classes start.”

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MU opens to a record freshmen class

By Missourian Staff
August 23, 2010 | 8:54 p.m. CDT

A record number of MU freshmen began their studies Monday, with 6,160 students enrolled in fall classes.

That number represents a 9.6 percent increase over last year's freshman class of 5,620, according to Ann Korschgen, vice provost for enrollment management.

The number of undergraduates rose to 24,759, and the overall MU student enrollment is 32,009, she said.

The rise in student enrollment is also accompanied by a bump in minority student groups.

The university has seen the increase in the past nine years, Korschgen said. The freshman population included 1,042 minorities, including black and Hispanic students.

Despite the additional freshmen, several students said Monday that they didn't notice any real difference around campus.

“The record for incoming freshman seems to get broken every year, so it's not a big deal,” said Kevin Hooshmand, a 20-year-old MU sophomore.

He has noticed a few minor problems, though. “Memorial Union gets super crowded, and it is hard to find free computers,” he said.

Fellow student Kristin Dieterle, 20, agreed.

“Parking has been a problem for me compared to previous years,” she said.

Residence halls
MU’s 6,400 residence-hall beds are nearly full now, with only about 30 spots left as of Monday afternoon, said Frankie Minor, director of Residential Life.

Of those beds, about 5,500 are occupied by freshmen and the rest by returning students. This was the first year transfer students were initially turned away, though they might be able to take advantage of the limited vacancies as Residential Life receives cancellations.

Mark Twain Hall, which had been scheduled to close for renovation this year, remains open to accommodate the record freshman class.

This fall, Stafford and Cramer halls will be leveled to make way for a patient care tower at University Hospital. Stafford is scheduled to be demolished beginning Wednesday and Cramer sometime in October, Minor said.

To handle the surplus of freshmen, about 100 of them are staying in Prunty Hall at Stephens College, and others are at the TRUE Scholars House, Tiger Diggs and Mizzou Quads.

"Our goal is to provide as much housing for the students who want it," Minor said. "Our first priority is going to be the new students who are making the most difficult transition."

**New student center**

The new $63 million MU Student Center, previously expected to open in spring 2011, made its grand opening ahead of schedule on Wednesday.

This building has five new restaurants, a fireplace, an entrance to the adjacent University Bookstore, and enough seats and tables to accommodate 600 students at one time.

The new restaurants include:

- Do Mundo’s Churrascaria for barbecue.
- Infusion Cafe, a bakery and coffee bar.
- Pomodoro Pizza and Pastas.
- Kate & Emma’s Deli.
• Sunshine Sushi.

Feedback from the students has been positive, said Michelle Froese, public relations manager for the bookstore.

The restaurants offer a variety of choices, including fresh doughnuts at Infusion Cafe grilled vegetable skewers at Do Mundo's Churrascaria and handmade sandwiches at Kate & Emma's Deli.

During the first week of school, the Student Center is holding several events to get students involved, including giveaways, free samples, music and more. On Thursday, the Student Center will hold a party to celebrate the arrival of MU students, and a formal dedication will take place in October.

**Dining operations**

Though student enrollment is up this year, Campus Dining Services is only slightly feeling the strain of serving more students.

The estimated number of customers served Monday was 23,000, said Andrew Lough, marketing manager for Campus Dining Services. Last year, 100 to 150 fewer students were served on opening day.

It takes roughly 175 full-time employees and about 550 student employees to staff the dining locations across campus each year, Lough said. At this point, Campus Dining Services has hired only 300 student employees but expects to be fully staffed as the year goes on, said Julaine Kiehn, director of Campus Dining Services.

The dining services budget, which includes food costs, staffing costs and supplies, was forecast in November to be $2,791,741 for the 2010-2011 school year, Kiehn said.

This covers the total cost for all operations from July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011. This forecast is lower than that of last year but will be revised in November, Kiehn said.

She expects the amount to increase because of the higher-than-expected number of students living in residence halls.
Storage for the large amount of food needed is not a problem for Campus Dining Services, since shipments are frequent, Lough said. Coolers, freezers and dry storage areas at each dining location receive deliveries from U.S. Foodservice, a supply company based in St. Louis. This allows the dining locations to serve fresh food at every meal.

The 23,000 customers looking for a meal can lead to long lines. At Plaza 900 dining hall, Megan Zagorski, a freshman, was waiting at noon Monday for the lunch line to die down.

“I chose to come to Plaza for lunch because I had a couple of free hours and it is really close to my dorm, Schurz,” she said.

Long lines at both the new MU Student Center and Plaza 900 are expected for at least the first couple of weeks of the semester, Lough said. Students, especially freshmen, choose to eat at Plaza 900 because they usually make a stop there on campus tours before they start school.

As the year progresses, students will start dispersing to other locations across campus, Lough said.

He does not expect the new dining options at the student center to affect the number of students eating at the dining halls because those who live on campus have dining plans, which makes them more likely to eat in a dining hall.

The purpose of the new restaurants at the Student Center is to provide more dining options for those who live off campus and staff members who might otherwise need to bring a lunch or leave campus to eat.

*Amanda Rhodes, Matthew Dixon, Mary Daly and Whitney Fenzel contributed to this report.*
Students enjoy the first day of classes Monday inside the new MU Student Center. The $63 million project is funded through activity fees and from MU auxiliary services.

By Janese Silvey

Monday, August 23, 2010

Margo Myers pored over an upper-level physiology textbook this morning from the comfort of a table at the renovated University of Missouri Student Center.

“I really like that it’s open,” said Myers, a junior, while surveying the spacious study and eating area around her. “It’s another place students can go study or hang out until their next class.”
The second phase of the new Student Center opened last week and is getting good reviews. The atrium, next to University Bookstore, has 600 seats spread out to give students a little leg room.

This morning — on the first day of classes — students were making themselves comfortable, using the space to work on laptops, get a head start on studies or grab a cup of coffee before class.

“It’s so nice,” said Mystle Schellhorn, a junior, who remembers the former student center. “It was smaller and darker, very compact. This is much more inviting.”

The $63 million project is funded through a $35-per-semester increase in activity fees paid by all students and from self-supported auxiliary services at MU.

The center has been a hit not only with returning students but also with parents and freshmen, said Michelle Froese, spokeswoman for MU Student & Auxiliary Services. “It was great to see parents’ faces as they were dropping off freshmen,” she said. “They were like, ‘Wow. We wish we’d had something like this.’ ”

In addition to the spacious seating area, the center has five restaurants serving pizza, barbecue, sushi, sandwiches and baked goods. While students have been sampling all of it, the fire-baked pizza has emerged as a hit, Froese said.

The university is unveiling the center to students this week with a string of activities, including welcome tables set up at lunchtime throughout the week that will provide music, giveaways and free samples from the eateries.

A more formal grand opening will be held this fall, when the third phase of the Student Center will be near completion. That phase includes a second-level sitting area that will double as a gallery of all things Mizzou. The Mizzou Traditions lounge will include visual displays of the university’s history and traditions, Froese said.

“It’s another way to come in and find out what constitutes a Mizzou experience,” she said.

Brett Renfroe, a sophomore, gave the new Student Center four out of five stars. Renfroe had high expectations — he was told on a student tour that the center would open as a state-of-the-art facility, giving him a different image than the completed version.

“But it’s pretty nice,” he said this morning. “I’m not going to complain.”

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Missouri is a locomotive that is acting too much like a horse-drawn carriage.

Kit Bond

That was the upshot of a discussion today headlined by Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo., who is looking for ways to unleash the potential of the state’s renewable energy sector before he leaves office at the end of the year.

Bond painted a picture of Missouri that included vast forests of untapped “scrub timber” in the south and fields rich with corn and native grasses in the north. Missouri, he said, is a veritable powder keg of biomass.

But too often, Bond said, lawmakers are focused on unreliable energy sources such as wind, and they pour money into “green jobs” initiatives that require huge subsidies for the production and installation of a relatively meager amount of solar panels. Lawmakers, he said, tend to shy away from things that must actually be “burned.”

“Well, what the hell do you think happens to that wood if you don’t burn it?” Bond asked in feigned outrage. “It lies on the forest floor, it decomposes and releases carbon dioxide. … Duh!”
Bond pointed to one of the nation’s fastest-growing industries, computer data centers, as a new market for the state’s agriculture and timber industries. Many of these companies have self-imposed mandates to include renewable energy as a part of their energy portfolio.

“Folks, data centers are not going to be powered by hamster wheels,” Bond said.

As if to back that up, Jim Grice, a Kansas City-based attorney who is leading a development team working to attract tenants to Columbia’s Ewing Industrial Park, said he plans to fly to New York tomorrow to meet with an unnamed “Fortune 50 company” interested in building a multibillion-dollar data center in Columbia.

That company, Grice said, wants to build a 100-megawatt renewable energy power production source on site. The company is keenly interested in the possibilities offered by biomass — woodchips, grass and corn stover, among others.

“The biomass opportunity is our opportunity,” Grice told the crowd.

Bolstering Bond’s argument was Gene Garrett of the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry.

In a presentation, Garrett attempted to quantify the untapped potential by showing that less than 10 percent of the state’s 13 million acres of forest is “under a management plan,” meaning it is available for selective, sustainable harvesting.

Garrett said a typical 70-year-old acre of contiguous forest has about 20 tons of material that is typically considered waste products by logging companies. That woody biomass could be used as biomass fuel.

Additionally, Garrett said, the state has more than 1.35 million acres of designated Conservation Reserve Program land, mainly in the north part of the state, which could be used to plant and cultivate millions of tons of native grasses and other biomass materials.

Finally, Garrett pointed out that Missouri has nearly 3 million acres of corn fields that can produce an estimated 7.3 million tons of dry matter known as corn stover each year. The stover provides an ideal product to burn in biomass plants.

Much of this potential, Garrett said, is sitting dormant.

“I’ve made a living off of recognizing opportunities,” Garrett said. “And we collectively in the state of Missouri have an unbelievable opportunity to create a new industry. ... I can’t imagine a state that is better positioned than we are.”

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Sen. Kit Bond calls for tax incentives, increased clean-energy output by businesses

(The roundtable discussion occurred in the Bond Life Sciences Center.)

By The Associated Press
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COLUMBIA — Missouri Sen. Kit Bond is urging state lawmakers to make it easier for new businesses to turn sawdust, wood pellets and other unused forest products into a source of cleaner energy.

The retiring Republican senator hosted a round-table discussion Monday intended to promote cleaner energy sources as a way to boost the state's economy. The U.S. Forest Service estimates that nearly 80 million cubic feet of logging residue sat idle in privately owned Missouri forests in 2007. State lumber mills accounted for another 80,000 tons of leftover sawdust.

Bond encouraged several state lawmakers, local elected leaders and business owners to support tax incentives to encourage the use of wood waste and other biomass products. That's the approach used by some southern states to promote the industry.