

# UIS enrollment up 2.3 percent over last spring

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The University of Illinois at Springfield posted a 2.3 percent increase in the number of students enrolled this spring, mostly because of a larger 2008 freshman class.

A total of 4,535 students are attending UIS, 105 more than last spring. The total includes students taking online classes.

Marya Leatherwood, director of enrollment management, said Monday that more students tend to enroll when the economy is struggling.

"During times like these, they think about investing in an advanced degree, earning a certificate, or even pursuing another area of study in order to make a career change," she said.

UIS's online degrees and evening and weekend formats make it easier for working adults to consider going back to school, she added.

Leatherwood said UIS is seeing a steady proportion of students who aren't seeking degrees. Many of those students, particularly at the graduate level, are pursuing certificates in professional areas of study, she said.

A total of 2,785 undergraduates are enrolled at UIS this spring, up 5.7 percent compared to last spring. However, the number of graduate students — 1,750 — is down 2.5 percent from last year. The 2008 freshman class of 309 students, as well as 352 new transfer students and 342 new graduate students, are reasons enrollment is up over last year.

Undergraduate programs with the highest enrollments are business administration, psychology, liberal studies, computer science and accountancy. At the graduate level, teacher leadership, computer science, management information systems, public administration and business administration have the

highest enrollments.

Students majoring in fully online degree programs are at an all-time high for a spring semester, said Ray Schroeder, director of the Office of Technology-Enhanced Learning.

There are 1,177 online degree majors this spring, an increase of 98 students from last spring.

UIS offers 16 programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels that are fully online.

Just more than half of enrolled students are taking at least one online class this spring.

Schroeder said UIS has begun to offer more “blended learning” classes (where some of the class meetings are on campus and some are online).

That initiative, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, has resulted in a significant increase in blended enrollments — 237 students taking at least one blended class this spring, compared to last spring’s 88.

Schroeder said 155 UIS faculty members are teaching at least one online class.

Looking ahead to fall, Leatherwood said applications for the freshman class are up 25 percent compared to last year at this time.

“More of our applicants are deciding earlier to make their enrollment deposits to ensure a place in the freshman class,” she said.

Deposits are up slightly more than 50 percent compared to last year.

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