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NDSCS REPORTS LARGEST STUDENT ENROLLMENT SINCE 1997

WAHPETON — The North Dakota State College of Science has registered 2,484 students for fall semester, marking the third consecutive year for a fall enrollment increase.

The report is complete through Tuesday, the 15th instructional day of the semester. The total of 2,484 represents an increase of 16 students over last year's head count. The slight increase marks the highest enrollment total at NDSCS since 1997.

The college's full-time equivalency, the statistic used for determining budgets, is 2,142, down only 1.6 percent from last year. NDSCS made a transition this year to a per-credit tuition model, and administrators anticipated an FTE decline of closer to 5 percent this year, according to Dr. Sharon Hart, NDSCS president.

"The message from this enrollment report is clear," Hart said. "NDSCS is getting stronger each year. It is quite common for colleges and universities to experience a drop in enrollment after changing to per-credit tuition. I'm pleased to say that's not the case at NDSCS. This college boasts an unequalled mix of outstanding liberal arts options and traditional career and technical education programs, and learners of all ages recognize the value in that broad academic base."

The fall enrollment includes 1,545 full-time students and 939 part-time students. Hart pointed out that the college's part-time enrollment increased a whopping 82.7 percent over last year.

"Colleges and universities nationwide are seeing more and more part-time students," she said. "This astounding increase shows NDSCS's additional efforts to serve students who are not able to attend college in the traditional fashion, and that accessibility is one of the cornerstones for higher education in North Dakota. These part-time students have many alternative options in today's world, and they have made NDSCS their college of choice."

The higher number of part-time students can be attributed to many factors, Hart said. NDSCS again has increased the number of courses and academic options available via distance education delivery methods such as the Internet, interactive video network and off-site classes. Additionally, NDSCS continues to work with high schools in the area to offer post-secondary dual-credit options for juniors and seniors.

The enrollment data shows three other trends continuing at NDSCS. The college maintains its high level of recruitment across North Dakota. Students from all 53 counties are registered for classes this year. Last year, NDSCS had students from 52 of the state's counties. Historically, NDSCS enrolls students from more counties in North Dakota than any other state college or university.

Secondly, the total number of students from North Dakota comprises 67.8 percent of the college's student population, a number consistent with previous years. Finally, the number of out-of-state students rose another 3.6 percent to 782. As in past years, approximately two-thirds of those out-of-state students come from Minnesota.

NDSCS is a two-year, comprehensive, residential college in Wahpeton. The State College of Science offers degrees, certificates and diplomas in over 80 academic options in traditional career and technical studies and in the liberal arts. Approximately 97 percent of graduates from its technical programs find jobs in their chosen fields.

Unlike most two-year colleges, NDSCS offers a university atmosphere for its students, complete with residence halls, 35 affiliated clubs and organizations, music groups, theater productions, intercollegiate athletics, intramural athletics and numerous social activities.

NDSCS celebrated its centennial last year. The college opened in 1903 as the North Dakota Academy of Science.

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