
An Important Message from UMUC President Javier Miyares on Fall Enrollments

Tue, Oct 21, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

Our fall 2014 enrollment numbers have now arrived, and they are *very* encouraging. Before this news becomes public, I want to share it with you.

As of October 15, stateside total enrollments are up by 5 percent from last fall. This increase was driven by a 20 percent rise in new students as well as increases in re-enrollment rates. At the same time, Europe is back on track after last year's sequestration-impacted decline, and Asia isn't far behind. So our worldwide headcounts are up by 3 percent.

Over the past two years, we have weathered a challenging and deeply painful period in our history. Faced with steep declines in enrollments and revenue, we responded decisively, cutting \$60 million from our budget and reducing our workforce by some 300 employees.

At the same time, we have strengthened our strategic focus on academic quality and innovation, new enrollments, retention, and student success, while also mapping our long-term path to a sustainable future through a new business model.

I am pleased to report that our collective efforts are proving successful.

As just one example of our improved efficiencies, compared to this time last year, we have spent 20 percent less on advertising—while experiencing the 20 percent *increase* in stateside new student enrollments. Senior Vice President Joe Adams and his teams in Strategic Enrollment Management can be justifiably proud of their efforts.

The increases in retention and course completion rates we have seen as a result of the Undergraduate Curriculum Redesign of a few years ago continue, and comprehensive improvements to our admissions and advising processes have also helped our student success measures. We have also introduced the use of data analytics to help us identify and aid at-risk students *before* they find themselves in trouble. In addition, the new registration and drop period plan, which limits last-minute enrollments and extends the time for a student to drop a class without financial or academic penalty, has contributed to student success. And, as always, the commitment of our faculty to student success continues to serve our students well.

Our Maryland Completion Scholarship program, under which Maryland community college graduates can earn a four-year degree from UMUC for a total cost of \$20,000 (for both the associate's and bachelor's degrees), has proven quite popular. To date, we have awarded 881 scholarships. Meanwhile, our first-of-its-kind alliance with the federal government's Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has resulted in more than 1,700 courses taken by federal workers, their spouses, and dependents.

All of this serves as gratifying, tangible evidence that we are on the right path forward.

We saw the enrollment challenge, prepared for the worst, took decisive action, and we are now experiencing positive, measurable results. More to the point, *your* hard work and your commitment to this process and our institution are paying dividends, and for this I thank you.

The long term challenges facing UMUC and all of adult higher education remain. We are not out of the woods yet, but we are on the path to a positive future, and I believe we will not need additional personnel reductions to balance the FY2016 budget.

Bolstered by this positive momentum, we will continue to invest strategically, strive for greater efficiencies through technology, and reallocate resources to growing—as well as new—academic programs and initiatives. In other words, we will continue to shape our organization in ways that provide the best opportunities for institutional growth and success.

In the coming weeks, I will be sharing more about our business model and a series of important initiatives resulting from your input over the last several months. These include creating a new strategic plan for UMUC; clarifying the university's vision, mission, and goals; and defining our aspirations for our institutional culture.

We all want a better tomorrow, and together we can get there. Together, we will continue to turn words into action, delivering results that endure.

Sincerely,

Javier Miyares
President
University of Maryland University College