

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Howard College Fall Enrollment Sets Another Record

BIG SPRING – For the past nine years, Howard College has seen steady growth in numbers and the Fall of 2009 semester proved no different with the college setting yet another record enrollment.

After the 12th class day, non-certified total enrollment for the Fall 2009 semester tallied in at 4106 which represents an impressive 15% increase over the 2008 Fall semester.

“We couldn’t be more thrilled with our enrollment numbers as this is the first time we have seen them reach the 4000 mark,” said Dr. Cheryl T. Sparks, President of Howard College.

One area of particular growth was seen in the San Angelo campus enrollment as it grew by 331 students from 1990 in Fall 2008 to 2321 in Fall 2009. The 17% growth is no surprise to officials.

HC has experienced a new opportunity this fall to begin offering the Associate of Science (AS) and Associate of Arts (AA) degrees through the San Angelo campus. With this new capability, the numbers increased greatly.

“We are very excited to be able to offer the traditional AS and AA programs through this campus,” added LeAnne Byrd, Provost for the San Angelo campus. “We knew there was a need within our community and we are pleased to be able to create the programs to meet that demand.”

In addition to the new degree plans available on the campus, the dual credit classes continue to be a big program for the campus.

“We have a highly respected dual credit program working with San Angelo ISD and will continue to work hand in hand with our partners within the school system,” said Byrd.

Concurrent classes, also known as dual credit classes, for the district make up approximately 32% of the district’s student population and 28% of the San Angelo campus population.

“Dual credit classes offer many opportunities for the high school students who are wanting to get a jump start on their college academic or career and technical education,” said Dr. Amy Burchett, Vice President of Instruction.

“It is an important part of the way we meet the needs of our communities and we are proud to work so closely with our school districts within the service area.”

The enrollment numbers also continue to support HC’s designation as a Hispanic Service Institution (HSI) with 36% of the district’s enrollment and 42% of the San Angelo campus enrollment being Hispanic students.

“This designation is important for us as it allows us more opportunities to seek grant funding as a designated HSI,” said Dr. Sparks. “We see our culture and demographics changing in Texas and we want to keep up with that evolution and meet the needs of the prospective and current students, communities and families. We can do a better job of that with additional grant funding through the HSI programs.”

It’s no secret that college and university enrollment numbers tend to increase when there is a downturn in the economy but officials are quick to add that although that trend is real, so is the growth trend seen at the district over the last 10 years.

“We have seen our enrollment grow to more than double over the last 10 years,” said Sparks. “Going from 2041 students in 1999 to 4106 students in 2009 is phenomenal and speaks volumes to the level of commitment from the communities within the service area and how the collaborative efforts benefit us all.”

The community support for Howard College has continued to be a driving force in enrollment growth at all campuses. Partnerships with school districts, Economic Development boards, local hospitals, counties, cities, and educational councils have proven to be effective in making sure Howard College moves forward in numbers as well as services.

“It creates a win-win situation for us as we continue to strengthen the bond within our communities and develop programs and services to meet their needs.

Whether we do that in Big Spring, Lamesa or San Angelo, we have an opportunity for our numbers to continue growing which increases our ability to offer more to our students,” said Sparks.

The Big Spring campus enrollment tallied in at 1546 representing a 180 student or 13% increase while the SouthWest Collegiate School for the Deaf saw a slight increase with the addition of 4 students representing a 4% increase over the Fall 08 census. The Lamesa campus also showed an increase of 18 students or 17% for the semester.

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