VCSU sets all-time enrollment record

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Valley City State University set an all-time record for final fall semester enrollment with a headcount of 1,384 students, surpassing last year’s final count of 1,285 by 7.7 percent and the previous record of 1,369 set over 40 years ago. With this accomplishment, enrollment at VCSU has grown by 40 percent over the past four years.

“VCSU faculty, staff, students, alumni and supporters should all take great pride in this tremendous accomplishment,” said VCSU president Steve Shirley. “This kind of growth can only be achieved with a concerted effort from all corners of the University.”

Wednesday Shirley said, “The big areas (for growth) are in science, undergraduates, fisheries and wildlife, health sciences, and the master’s program in education.”

Growth has taken place in a number of areas at VCSU.

“We have our biggest back-to-back freshman classes in almost a quarter century and the most students in residence halls that we’ve had in a decade. Our transfer numbers are also up. It’s really across the board,” Shirley said.

Shirley said VCSU has started several key strategic initiatives that have contributed to this growth. “New and innovative initiatives in the VCSU 2015 strategic plan are making significant contributions to the enrollment growth. For example, our online Master of Education, which is only in its seventh year, now serves 157 students, an increase of 6.8 percent over last year. Emerging undergraduate
programs in the sciences, as well as growing programs in teacher education and fine arts along with new intercollegiate athletics offerings are all contributing to campus growth. This year, we are continuing to introduce new programs such as a major in medical laboratory science and a concentration in criminal justice.”

Scholarships also played a pivotal role in achieving this enrollment record. Last year, the level of scholarship commitments reached a new all-time high of over $757,000, largely made possible by support of alumni and the VCSU community.

The enrollment increase has produced a corresponding increase in population on campus. For example, 347 students are living in residence halls this year, up from the final figure of 326 last year and the most on-campus students at VCSU in over 10 years.

Last week VCSU was named the top public regional college in the 12-state Midwest region by U.S.News. This is the 14th year in a row VCSU has been recognized by U.S.News, and the first year that VCSU has been recognized with a first place ranking in its category. The campus is preparing to start building a $10.3 million expansion and renovation of the Rhoades Science Center.