Universities post record minority enrollments

By GRACE HOBNON
The Kansas City Star

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — When Kameron Mack was choosing a college, he considered two: predominantly black Clark Atlanta University and the predominantly white University of Kansas.

The University of Kansas won out.

After a recruiter visited a college fair at Mack's church and he considered the education he would get as a journalism major, Mack set aside his trepidations about life as a black person on a mostly white campus.

"I thought maybe I'd get a more comfortable education at Clark," Mack said. "But for what I want to do, KU was a better school. I can't let race or fear come in the way of that."

This fall, Mack joined the second-largest group of black freshmen in University of Kansas history. In fact, the university's black freshman class grew by 28 percent this year, and the number of freshman Latino students increased by 23 percent.

Overall, the university this year has the most racially diverse student body in school history.

Universities in Kansas and Missouri — and nationwide — posted record minority enrollments this year, thanks in part to the diverse freshmen classes they were able to attract.

• At the University of Missouri, minorities in the freshman class increased by 27 percent, with black and Latino freshmen groups each growing by 27 percent — record highs.

• At Kansas State University, a 40 percent increase in Latino freshmen and record high numbers of black freshmen helped push the school's total minority enrollment to its highest levels ever.

• The University of Missouri-Kansas City posted a 6.1 percent gain in its total minority enrollment and a 17 percent increase in Hispanic freshmen.

The gains this year are impressive, but recruiters acknowledge they have more work to do. For example, blacks make up just 5.6 percent of the University of Missouri's student body and only 3.5 percent of the University of Kansas'.

As a proportion of all students, the University of Missouri's multicultural enrollment actually has stayed flat in the past 10 years.

And that 17 percent increase in Hispanic freshmen at the University of Missouri-Kansas City? It was a jump from 35 Latino students to 41 — out of a class of 1,007 students.

"We have a long way to go," said Lee Furbeck, who is in charge of multicultural recruitment at the University of Kansas.

Universities have long embraced the need for diverse student bodies. They want to reflect society for their students. They see a responsibility to give all students the benefit of a college degree. And the more diverse the campus is, the more likely they are to keep the minorities they recruit.

The efforts have paid off nationwide. The number of minority students grew by 50 percent from 1993 to 2005, according to a recently released study of minorities in higher education.

"It's encouraging news, but hardly surprising," said Mkyung Ryu, the study's author, explaining that demographic shifts have made high schools more diverse. Also, more students understand the need for a college degree.

In recent years, universities have hired more recruiters and focused some recruiters on targeting minorities. They've conducted more events geared toward minorities and sent recruiters to talk to younger and younger students.

Kansas State University sponsors events to teach first-time college families about financial aid and scholarship and housing applications, said Pat Bosco, vice president of student life.

Its most powerful tool is students and alumni, including multicultural ambassadors, who spread the word about how well students are treated at Kansas State, said Bosco, who gives his home phone number to freshmen parents.

One of the University of Kansas' recruiters is in charge of reaching students as young as sixth grade to help them ready for college, said Furbeck, associate director of admissions and scholarships.

Recruiters offer students of color the same bragging points they tell others, said Chuck May, senior associate director of admissions at the University of Missouri. They urge them to visit campus.

And they specifically sell minorities on the scholarship benefits, the opportunities at the University of Missouri and how friendly the campus is, May said.

The university has recruiters who live in Chicago, Dallas, St. Louis and Kansas City, May said.

A Chicago recruiter reached out to Lauren Foreman, now a junior, and won over her and about 10 of her Morgan Park High School classmates. All but one was black, Foreman
Even before the recruiter visited, Foreman knew she wanted to go to the University of Missouri's journalism school. But it helped that she had a built-in support system coming with her.

The low numbers of minorities at the University of Missouri — about one in 10 students — can be disheartening, Foreman said. The silver lining is that the black community is small and tight-knit.

"I feel really close with the black community here," Foreman said.

Not all minority students feel so welcome on campus. A University of Missouri-Kansas City audit released in 2006 described the school's racial climate as poor for black and Hispanic students.

LaKeshia Moore came to the university from St. Louis. Many of the black freshmen in her class have since left the school, she said. But she has made the most of her college experience, getting involved in student government, a sorority and the African-American Student Union.

"If I was the only black student, I knew I wanted to come to school to get an education," said Moore, a junior. "I looked around and (thought), ‘These are my peers. They’re coming to school for the same thing.’"

The University of Missouri-Kansas City has worked to make its student body and faculty more diverse and friendlier to minorities.

Last year, it hired Alex Lopez as coordinator of multicultural recruitment. Lopez spends time in urban schools on both sides of the state line to persuade inner-city students to further their education, whether at the University of Missouri-Kansas City or elsewhere.

The university has events for black and Hispanic high school sophomores, the population most at risk for dropping out, Lopez said. He also has a conference for black males, who are especially scarce on college campuses.
Butler volunteers in Chicago

LAWRENCE — Sixty-three University of Kansas students will spend a week during winter break volunteering at sites across the United States.


KU’s student-run Alternative Breaks program centers on service-learning trips that provide opportunities to include volunteer efforts in a student’s educational experience. Following their selection for the program, students attend two-hour weekly class sessions to prepare for their trip. They may participate in weeklong winter or spring breaks or in shorter weekend breaks.

Students in Alternative Winter Breaks will work Jan. 5-9 with agencies in Arizona, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina and Texas that focus on human rights, health care, environmental preservation and rehabilitation, education and help for people with disabilities.

Caitlin Marie Butler of Parsons, a sophomore majoring in human biology, will be helping at Misericordia/Heart of Mercy in Chicago.

Butler is the daughter of Keith and Brenda Butler.

KU students have volunteered at six of the locations in previous years.
Kansas pharmacist numbers are ailing

WICHITA (AP) — Thirty-one of Kansas' 105 counties have only one pharmacy, while six others have none.

Experts say those numbers could get even worse if state budget cuts delay a $60 million expansion of the University of Kansas' School of Pharmacy.

The pharmacy project — which includes a new building on the Lawrence campus and expansion of a building at the university's Wichita campus — has been approved this year for $20 million in bonds from the state. Lawmakers also planned to spend $15 million of expected gambling revenues in each of 2010 and 2011 on the project.

The University of Kansas is raising the other $10 million. Of that, $5 million would pay for a second floor to the university's School of Medicine campus in Wichita to train 40 pharmacists.

The new building in Lawrence would add space for about 45 more students on top of the 105 already enrolled.

But Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' budget office has asked the Board of Regents to cut $15 million from its budget, a cut the regents have voted to appeal.

"The budget is so bad for 2010, if they only cut $15 million, they're going to be lucky," said state Sen. Jean Schodorf, a Wichita Republican.

Also, prospects aren't as clear that the gambling revenues will be there to pay for later phases of the expansion project.

University spokeswoman Lynn Bretz said the university needs the bulk of the pharmacy school money before construction starts and the bonds it will receive this year are only enough for the initial design phase.

She said if the money for the later phases isn't there, it brings up the question of whether plans for the expansion should continue.

Merlin McFarland, who owns Kingman County's only drug store, said he almost had to close last year because he couldn't find anyone to fill two open pharmacist positions.

"If I hadn't put the staff together, maybe we would have looked at closing the store down," said McFarland, who has owned Kingman Drug Store for 34 years.

He filled the positions with a University of Kansas pharmacy student he had recruited for a few years and a former pharmacist at the store whom he rehired.

Pharmacy staffing problems could shrink access to quality health care and even lead to mistakes that can harm customers, experts say.

Debra Billingsley, executive secretary for the Kansas State Board of Pharmacists, said the number of complaints to the state board this year is about twice as high as in recent years. Most of those involve customers who received the wrong medicine or dosage, she said.

Some of that increase, though, she attributed to people becoming aware they can report problems to the board.

Billingsley said the pharmacist problem in Kansas could grow worse as pharmacists, especially in western Kansas, reach retirement age and their positions become harder to fill.

"There are people out there who would like to retire but feel like they can't," she said.
Lierz works to build hyper-efficient car with KU

A class of mechanical engineering students at the University of Kansas School of Engineering who dubbed themselves the Eco-Hawks are creating a vehicle that can get 500 miles per gallon of gas. Senior Ryan Lierz, a graduate of B & B High School, is a member of the class.

The project is part of a class called Design Project Option E, taught by Chris Depck, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, who previously worked with Detroit’s auto industry at the University of Michigan. He said the goal of the project is to answer some of the big energy and transportation questions of the day in a way that gives students real-world experience beyond mechanical engineering.

“There is a whole car culture out there with vehicles that are not going to be produced as hybrids or as biofuel vehicles,” Depck said. “When this project is a few years down the road, we want to be able to give people a handbook on how to turn their classic car into an efficient machine.

“Detroit has figured out performance, so efficiency is the big issue now. And with the work these students are doing on this fun, unique kind of project, they will be ready to go into the workforce with a lot of skills they won’t get from sitting in a class with me.”

The EcoHawks have taken on a 1974 Super Beetle donated by Dave Bach, owner of Das Autohaus repair shop in Lawrence, who also has provided a workspace for the team. The project also has major backing from KU’s Transportation Research Institute.

“We’re just in the first year of this,” said Lou McKown, a senior from Lawrence. “We hope that the work we do this year will provide the basis for the next year and so on. Our long-term goal is to make a car that can get efficient fuel anywhere in the country, whether it be electric, ethanol, biodiesel, whatever.”

The plan, Depck said, is for each class to build on the previous class’s results.

“This isn’t a project that you want to start from scratch each year because the students are going to learn tips, pitfalls and problems from the last group,” he said. “There are cars now that are running at 60 and 70 miles per gallon. We should be shooting for two or three times that. And I think we’ll get there.”

And eventually, the class hopes to get all the way to 500 mpg.
KU honors top senior high school students

Students from 10 Kansas high schools were honored Monday, Nov. 3, by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and KU Endowment.

A total of 87 seniors from high schools in Clay, Pottawatomie and Riley counties were recognized for their academic achievements and named Kansas Honor Scholars at a dinner program at the Manhattan Country Club.

The Kansas Honors Program began in 1971. Scholars rank in the top 10 percent of their high school senior classes and are selected regardless of curricula, majors, occupational plans or higher-education goals.

The Kansas Honors Program is made possible through KU Endowment and proceeds from the Jayhawk license plate program.

Area honorees are Logan Erickson and Ryan Lund, Blue Valley Randolph-Olsburg High School; Robin Helget and Courtney Mabe, Onaga High School; Hannah Hutley, Christelle Karnowski, Laura Kinderknecht and Morgan Plummer, St. Marys High School.
Students launch pumpkin, hit target

Matthew Flerlage, Jacob Garner, and Riley White, freshman students at St. Marys High School competed in the annual pumpkin chuckin’ contest, held Tuesday, Oct. 28.

The competition was held at the University of Kansas School of Engineering for grades nine through 12. Teams were required to build a trebuchet (catapult) and launch a pumpkin pillow. The object was to use as many recycled products as possible. The St. Marys Team used several water bottles for counter weights, an empty nail box and an empty pop can.

Teams competed in several categories: Land the pillow as close as possible to a point of the teams choosing; land the pillow as close as possible to a point choosing by KU and send the pillow the farthest distance.

Seventy-five teams participated in the event ranging from 2A-6A schools.

The St. Marys team hit the target of their choosing successfully, but lacked the distance to qualify in the top three. Overall the St. Marys Team had a great time and learned a lot.

Riley White, Freshman
St. Marys High School
Rossville High School Kansas Honors Scholars pictured from left are Chelsea Amack, Lakota McCune, Skylar Flinn, Rhiannon Flinn and Angeliique Flinn. Not pictured is Morgan Cooper.

Seniors attend honors program reception

The Kansas Honors Program, sponsored by KU Alumni, recognizes and awards high-school seniors for their academic achievements. Each year the alumni gather in more than 40 locations across the state for an awards ceremony and reception. The events are made possible by more than 130 alumni volunteers who coordinate and support the Kansas Honors Programs. All high school seniors in the top 10 percent of their graduating class are recognized and presented a certificate and a special edition of the American Heritage Dictionary. The scholars are selected based on academic records through the end of their junior year.

Rossville High School recognized six seniors at the Kansas Honors Program held on Nov. 13, at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Topeka. The seniors recognized were Chelsea Lyn Amack, daughter of Jeff and Carrie Purney; Morgan Sharee Cooper, daughter of Nancy Jonak and Jack Cooper; Lakota Lee McCune, daughter of Jim and Phyllis McCune; and Angeliique Elaine Flinn, Rhiannon Rae Flinn, and Skylar Suzanne Flinn, daughters of Raymond and Susan Flinn.
Former B&B student works with EcoHawks at KU

Engineering class’ goal is to create a 500-mile-per-gallon vehicle

A class of mechanical engineering students at the University of Kansas School of Engineering who dubbed themselves the EcoHawks is creating a vehicle that can get 500 miles per gallon of gas.

Among those students is Ryan Lierz, Seneca, a graduate of B&B High School. He is a senior in mechanical engineering and is the son of Melanie Lierz.

The project is part of a class called Design Project Option E, taught by Chris Depcik, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, who previously worked with Detroit’s auto industry at the University of Michigan.

He said the goal of the project is to answer some of the big energy and transportation questions of the day in a way that gives students real-world experience beyond mechanical engineering.

“There is a whole car culture out there with vehicles that are not going to be produced as hybrids or as biofuel vehicles,” Depcik said. “When this project is a few years down the road, we want to be able to give people a handbook on how to turn their classic car into an efficient machine.

“Detroit has figured out performance, so efficiency is the big issue now. And with the work these students are doing on this fun, unique kind of project, they will be ready to go into the workforce with a lot of skills they won’t get from sitting in a class with me.”

The EcoHawks have taken on a 1974 Super Beetle donated by Dave Bach, owner of Das Autohaus repair shop in Lawrence, who also has provided a workspace for the team. The project also has major backing from KU’s Transportation Research Institute.

“We’re just in the first year of this,” said Lou McKown, a senior from Lawrence. “We hope that the work we do this year will provide the basis for the next year and so on.

“Our long-term goal is to make a car that can get efficient fuel anywhere in the country, whether it be electric, ethanol, biodiesel, whatever.”

The course also builds students’ entrepreneurial and interpersonal skills.

“It’s really different to have to learn about raising money or finding a part or talking about the project,” said Sunny Sanwar, a senior from Lawrence. “But those are the kinds of things that are only going to help me after I graduate.”

The plan, Depcik said, is for each class to build on the previous class’s results.

“This isn’t a project that you want to start from scratch each year, because the students are going to learn tips, pitfalls and problems from the last group,” he said.

“There are cars now that are running at 60 and 70 miles per gallon. We should be shooting for two or three times that, and I think we’ll get there.”

Eventually, the class hopes to get all the way to 500 mpg.

Student Ambassadors program honors its top volunteers for 2007-08

LAWRENCE — Two students at the University of Kansas were honored recently for their service in the Student Ambassadors program during the 2007-08 academic year. Student ambassadors work closely with the Office of Admissions and Scholarships, volunteering their time to give campus tours, serve on information- al panels in Lawrence and elsewhere and correspond with prospective students.

Andy Stein, a junior from Dodge City, was honored as 2007-08 Student Ambassador of the Year for his record of outstanding volunteer efforts in representing KU to recruit prospective students. Stein was the ambassador of the month in February.

Michael Rockford, a sophomore from Gladstone, Mo., was honored as New Student Ambassador of the Year in his first participating year.

Stein and Rockford were among 70 Student Ambassadors in 2007-08.

"This is an outstanding group of students," said Summer Eglinski, a master's student in higher education administration from Lawrence and Student Ambassadors adviser. "They volunteer their time throughout the year in order to give tours to prospective students and guests who are visiting our campus. They are ambassadors in the truest sense of the word because they proudly represent the University of Kansas both on and off our campus and because they make the university proud by their excellent example, knowledge and citizenship."

In the Office of Admissions and Scholarships, Student Ambassadors activities are coordinated by Eglinski; Sara Gillham, assistant director of on-campus programming; and Jenny Hout, visitor coordinator.

Student Ambassadors receiving special recognition for their service in 2007-08 are listed below by hometown, level in school or degree received, major, parents' names, high school information and recognition. All 2007-08 Student Ambassadors are listed below.

Andy Stein, junior in Germanic languages and literatures preparing to study law, son of Michael and Coleen Stein; Dodge City Senior High School; February Student Ambassador of the Month and 2007-08 KU Student Ambassador of the Year.
ACCIDENT 231-155
SEMI REAR-ENDS
ANOTHER SEMI IN EDWARDS
COUNTY

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Two Great Bend men were taken to the Edwards County Hospital Wednesday afternoon after being involved in a car accident on U.S. Highway 50.

Tanner Guesnier, 22, was driving a semi-truck towing a trailer while eastbound on U.S. 50. Timothy Seybert, 26, was also in the vehicle.

Guesnier’s vehicle rear-ended another semi-truck about two miles east of the U.S. Highway 183-U.S. 50 junction in Edwards County. This vehicle was driven by 34-year-old Justin Bailey of Olmitz. Neither Bailey or his passenger Jason Von Feldt of Great Bend were hurt.

Guesnier and Seybert were taken to the Edwards County Hospital where they were treated and released.