Area universities enjoy record enrollments

Ottawa, Baker, KU, K-State all report highest number of students ever in fall 2008 semester

BY ASHLEE KIELER
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University registrars throughout the area were busy in the fall semester as record enrollments were posted at Ottawa University, Baker University, Kansas University and Kansas State University in Manhattan.

Enrollment at Ottawa will continue to grow, if university president Kevin Eichner has a say. His plan for the college is detailed in the university’s annual report this year. In the report Eichner set definite goals for the university’s growth.

By 2020, Eichner would like to see enrollment at all the university’s campuses to 25,000 students, 1,500 at the Ottawa campus.

Fall enrollment for the Ottawa campus totaled 554 students, 245 of which were new degree seeking students.

Paula Paine, spokeswoman for the university, said the increase in enrollment could partially be attributed to better communication.

Eichner’s first phase of the Vision 2020 plan also seeks significantly improve the university’s recruiting and retention.

The university recently brought on a new team to take on recruiting.

Paine said new publication materials and stronger relationships were catching the eyes of prospective students.

New marketing and admissions teams have attributed to the getting word out about the university.

Paine said the university strives to attract underserved populations. The university focuses on recruiting students from rural areas and the St. Louis area.

The Kansas City campus of the university is growing as well.

Paine said enrollment for the campus was up 28 percent.

The downturn in the economy may be a good thing for universities, as many people are choosing to go back to school.

Beginning this year Ottawa is offering a Leadership Matters Workshop. The workshop, free to students and the public, offers insight to improve businesses.

Eichner leads each session using real world examples from his six years as CEO at Enterpirse Financial Services Corporation in St. Louis, a position he held before coming to the university.

Baker reported a record enrollment of 4,112 students with increased numbers in the fall semester at all four of its schools - College of Arts and Sciences, School of Professional and Graduate Studies, School of Nursing and School of Education.

"Reaching an enrollment of 4,000 students for the first time in our history is a significant milestone for Baker University," Baker President Pat Long said of the fall 2008 enrollment.

“Our excellent academic programs continue to attract quality students pursuing degrees ranging from associate to doctoral.”

The Baldwin City campus, which serves College of Arts and Science students and School of Education undergraduates, reported an enrollment of 998 students, the highest figure for that location in at least 30 years. The enrollment figure includes non-degree-seeking students. The on-campus population totaled 947 students.

The School of Professional and Graduate Studies, which serves working adults at locations in Kansas and Missouri, recorded an enrollment of 1,885 students. That figure consisted of 992 undergraduates and 893 graduate students.

Operating at maximum capacity, Baker’s School of Nursing at Stormont-Vail HealthCare in Topeka had 159 students enrolled.

Baker’s School of Education
Numbers up at universities

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graduate programs reported 1,070 students in the fall semester.

KU hit its high-water mark with 30,102 students enrolled in fall 2008. Overall enrollment at KU was a 2.9 percent increase over fall 2007. Enrollment at the KU Medical Center in Kansas City, Kan., increased by 6.3 percent to a record 3,103. Multicultural enrollment at KUMC rose by 6.1 percent.

A KU official said the increase wasn’t spurred by the school’s successes in football and a basketball national championship.

“These students were motivated by KU’s strong academic rankings and overall reputation and were eager to attend KU before the athletic victories. KU is a great place to be,” said admissions director Lisa Kress.

At Kansas State in Manhattan, enrollment increased in the fall semester to 23,520, up from the fall 2007 record of 23,332 students.
College students feeling pressure of economic times

By Melissa Treolo  
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It is an unstable world in which we live, say university administrators, but it might be too soon to determine how a weakening economy will affect incoming college students and those graduating this year.

"Everything's just come to a head recently (with the economy), so it's really too early to tell," said Megan Hill, associate director for career networks at Kansas University. "However, we do get the sense that students are feeling the pressure of the economy."

One certainty is KU isn't seeing a drop in the amount of interest from prospective students.

"We are actually flat," said Lisa Pinamonti Kress, director of undergraduate admissions and scholarships. "We're receiving the same amount of applications this year as we were last year."

The same is true at Baker University's School of Professional and Graduate Studies.

"Our enrollment's about the same," said Kelly Belk, director of enrollment management. "This January (enrollment) will be higher than last January."

Belk said she hadn't seen any widespread panic among students yet, but she does believe that, as she said, "people are worried for the future." This may explain why, with rising tuition rates, colleges aren't seeing a decline in enrollment.

But what direction are students choosing to go after graduation?

An increasingly unpromising job market would suggest college graduates are much more inclined to delay their entrance into a profession and head to graduate school instead. But Kerri Day Keller, director of career and employment services at Kansas State University, says this may not necessarily be the case.

"Students are usually leaving any campus with some debt accrued, so they are seeking employment," she said. "A lot of our students can't afford to go on to another grad school."

Jack Hunter, director of the career center at Missouri State University, said jumping into the job market after graduation shouldn't be such a scary concept - at least, not for those students with some experience under their belt.

"Students who have had internships during college get 50 percent more offers and 50 percent more interviews," said Hunter.

For those who don't have an internship during college, Hunter said, the outlook can be quite different.

"We have seniors come in who haven't done much for four years except, regrettably, study, asking, 'What can I do?' Well, we pray for them," he said.

Keller said the job search, while intimidating, shouldn't be considered impossible, even for those students without internships.

"There are still jobs out there," she said.

But in a world where layoffs are becoming a common occurrence, some students may choose to keep the option of going to grad school open for a later time. In this case, Kress has some advice.

"I definitely recommend they make sure they check with the college or university for the deadlines," said Kress. "Any planning ahead you can do is still important in difficult economic times."
Ark City native named Kansan of the Year

By ALEX GAMBILL
Traveler Staff Writer

Former U.S. Ambassador and Arkansas City native Delano E. Lewis will be recognized as Kansan of the Year Jan. 30 at the 91st annual Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas banquet.

The banquet will be held at Kansas ExpoCentre’s Maner Conference Center in Topeka.

In a phone interview, Lewis said he’s very honored to be recognized.

For one with many accomplishments, he said, “I don’t really know how I stood out. I just hope that my dedicated work was exemplary.”

Lewis was born in 1938 in Arkansas City to Raymond E. Lewis and Enna Wordlow Lewis. The family moved to Kansas City in 1942.

After graduating from Sumner High School, Lewis attended the University of Kansas in 1956. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and History in 1960 and in 1963 earned a Juris Doctorate degree from Washburn University School of Law.

Lewis said he credits a lot of his accomplishments to Kansas’ educational system.

“I’m quite grateful for my education in Kansas and the University of Kansas.”

In 1963, he was appointed as a staff attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice and went on to join the Office of Analysis and Advice of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, two years later.

He served in the U.S. Peace Corps in Africa from 1966 to 1969. He held positions of associate director in Nigeria and country director in Uganda.

From 1969 to 1971, Lewis was legislative assistant to Sen. Edward Brooke, of Massachusetts. In 1971, he was administrative assistant to Congressman Walter E. Fauntroy, of the District of Columbia.

In 1973, he went to work for C&P Telephone Company as public affairs manager. In 1986, Lewis was named president of the Washington, D.C., company of Bell Atlantic. In 1990, he was named chief executive officer.

In 1994, Lewis became president and chief executive officer of National Public Radio (NPR). In the same year, Vice President Al Gore appointed him a two-year term as co-chairman of the National Information Infrastructure Advisory Council.

In 1999, Pres. Bill Clinton nominated Lewis to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, which he served through 2001.

He became a senior fellow at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces.

Lewis was presented the Distinguished Leadership and USA Media Spotlight awards by Amnesty International 10 years after his work in 1987. He is a recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Citation from the University of Kansas and a Distinguished Service Award and honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Washburn University.

Lewis and his wife, Gayle, live in Mesilla, N.M., and have four sons and 11 grandchildren.

The banquet will begin at 5:30 p.m. and tickets for the event may be ordered by calling (785) 235-6245 or online at: ksnativessonsanddaughters.org.

Bill Self, University of Kansas men’s basketball coach, will also be honored as Distinguished Kansan of the Year at the banquet.
Kansas State University will help the University of Kansas in its quest to get National Cancer Institute designation for the KU cancer center.

The partnership, formally cemented Tuesday, “sends a message that it (national designation) is about the entire state, and the entire region,” Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson said at the announcement.

Leaders from both universities said the agreement would allow administrators and cancer researchers at both schools to collaborate and increase the KU Center’s chances of winning NCI designation when it applies in 2011.

The designation is seen as a way to improve cancer care in Kansas, attract top-flight researchers and bolster efforts to make Kansas a bioscience hub.

| David Klepper, dklepper@kcstar.com |
Halstead Students Graduate From KU

FOR THE INDEPENDENT

LAWRENCE – The names of more than 1,600 candidates for degrees for the fall 2008 semester at the University of Kansas have been announced by the Office of the Registrar. Graduate and undergraduate degrees are conferred in December based on work completed during the fall semester. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many students graduating in the fall or summer terms will return for the traditional walk down the hill and into Memorial Stadium on Sunday, May 17.

Halstead students graduating included: Brittany Nicole Ashley, daughter of Rick and Kim Ashley, Biology, B.S. Senior Bachelor of Science in Biology; Brandt Kevin Pyle, son of Kevin and Mary Jo Pyle, Architectural Engineering, BS Senior Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering, Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering; Crystal Lynn Leming, daughter of Ron and Kelli Arrowsmith, Psychology, BGS DECL, Senior Bachelor of General Studies/Psychology.