



News Release

Contact:
Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 760-1101
jparent@nmcc.edu

September 23, 2010
NR10087

Fall enrollment at NMCC reflective of targeted measures to address budget constraints

Aroostook County - Budget constraints and subsequent planned reductions at Northern Maine Community College are impacting the number of students the institution can serve at a time when demand is high following a period of record enrollment.

The Presque Isle campus experienced a significant (18 percent) increase in enrollment last fall when the student body topped 1,100; numbers not seen since the mid-1990's around the time of the closure of Loring Air Force Base. The cumulative two-year growth in student headcount at NMCC is projected at nearly 13 percent.

“The resources of the College are stretched thin given the record number of students we are serving,” said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. “Our goal, first and foremost, is to provide a high quality education. We could just not sustain additional growth given the existing campus fiscal and human resource constraints. As a result, we initiated targeted enrollment management measures to ensure that quality to our students moving forward.”

Among the changes instituted by College officials during the 2009-2010 academic year impacting enrollment this fall was a planned reduction in the number of students admitted into the incoming class of two popular programs. After welcoming 36 students into the inaugural class of its popular wind power technology program in 2009, budget constraints forced college officials to limit the number of students entering this fall to 18. The first-of-its-kind associate degree program in New England has attracted more than 60 qualified applicants from throughout the state each of the past two years.

The number of students accepted into the associate degree nursing program was also reduced. The program, which is delivered on NMCC's Presque Isle campus as well as to distant sites in southern Aroostook and the St. John Valley, saw the number of student slots in the newest cohort at its off-campus center in Houlton decreased from the 16 who graduated in May, to the eight accepted at that site this fall.

Although preliminary figures taken 14 days after the start of the semester show a slight decrease in enrollment from this year to last, College officials expect student numbers will be relatively flat compared to last year when final headcount is tabulated on October 15. NMCC's enrollment, which includes students taking courses for dual credit at area high schools and regional technology centers, sees a boost in early to mid-October after the potato harvest recess when the secondary schools resume and submit their numbers.

"Despite these planned programmatic reductions we made due to limited resources, we have essentially maintained about the same number of students," said William Egeler, NMCC dean of students. "Moreover, our current figures in terms of the number of the total credit hours students are taking altogether is up one percent compared to the final count on October 15 of last year, and that excludes the dual credit numbers that are yet to come. There is also clear indication of the high interest in the College and our programs. We received a record number of applications for admission to the College for the entering class of 2010...a more than double-digit increase over the previous year."

NMCC's enrollment gains in recent years are credited to a combination of growth in both the traditional college age student population and the non-traditional age group, including many displaced workers turning to the institution for re-training. Part of the College's growth in enrollment in fall 2009 was attributed to a special semester introduced in March of the previous academic year to accommodate more than 40 laid-off employees from the forest products industry in the region.

The community college has been successful in attracting better than 1 of every 8 Aroostook County high school graduates over the past several years. These students are seeking traditional associate degree and certificate programs to enter the workforce upon graduation, as well as turning to NMCC's liberal studies two-year degree as an affordable start to a baccalaureate degree.

"Our outreach to the Aroostook County community and our ability to serve more students despite these budget constraints is to the great credit of our faculty and staff," said Crowley. "Their willingness to go above and beyond to ensure as many students as possible attain their educational and career dreams, coupled with the strong support we receive from the business community, organizations and individuals, is the reason we have been so successful in our efforts to deliver the highest quality education possible."

#####