



News Release

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NMCC opening enrollment up six percent; College attracts nearly 1 of 7 2008 County high school graduates

Aroostook County - Preliminary figures released by Northern Maine Community College after the first week of classes show an enrollment increase of six percent over the same time last fall.

Among the leading areas of growth has been realized in NMCC's liberal studies program. The associate degree offering, which mirrors the first two years of general education course offerings at most four-year colleges and universities, saw an increase of 17 percent.

"As an institution, we are committed to educating and training a workforce to meet the needs of employers in our region and state and to serving students who are beginning their journey in higher education," said NMCC President Timothy Crowley. "We are pleased that increasing numbers of students are turning to us as a gateway to higher education. In these challenging economic times it is more important than ever that Maine people and Aroostook County residents have the opportunity to earn post-secondary degrees. The word is out there that we offer an affordable, high quality start to a baccalaureate education."

Growth has also been realized in a number of the trade and technical occupations programs. Demand in the electrical construction and maintenance program prompted college officials to add an additional cohort of freshmen students. Enrollment in that associate degree program has risen by 18 percent over last fall.

An increase has also been realized at NMCC's two off-campus centers in Houlton and the St. John Valley, where combined enrollment is up 12 percent over fall 2007.

"Individuals are coming to our off-campus centers, in part, because they recognize the value of having a post-secondary credential. The barriers of distance, time and, now, the high cost of transportation, are able to be overcome at the off-campus centers and have positively been reflected in our enrollment growth," said Dr. William Egeler, NMCC dean of students and acting director of admissions.

In addition to growth in the incoming class, the results of retention efforts at the College are evident in the higher number of returning NMCC students this fall. Students classified as “second year” are up 23 percent over last year.

“The College has focused on student persistence for many years and that effort continues. Last year noted the completion of a major initiative where the Academic Success Center was redesigned to better meet the current needs of our students. Concurrently, the College’s major gifts campaign helped increase the number of scholarships available to students. By better meeting the needs of our students, we are better able to help more of them meet their goal of graduating,” said Egeler.

The community college continues to do well attracting students graduating from secondary schools in the region. Nearly one out of every seven seniors attending Aroostook County high schools last year is a member of the entering class at Northern Maine Community College, according to the preliminary enrollment figures.

The numbers for this year’s freshman class at NMCC show that of the students entering the College directly from high school, 106 come from high schools in the County. Aroostook County’s 16 high schools graduated 756 students this spring.

“Many of the students attending our College from the County directly out of high school will be the future employees of companies throughout our area. They will start and operate businesses of their own and become leaders in this community,” said Crowley.

Recent graduate surveys conducted by the College support that assessment. The numbers indicate an average of 65 percent of NMCC alumni find employment in Aroostook County. The number of NMCC graduates who remain in Maine to work is 87 percent.

Although the College enrolls students from all 16 Maine counties, from out of state and from Canada, 85 percent of those enrolled at NMCC this fall are residents of Aroostook County.

Final fall enrollment figures for NMCC and the other campuses of the Maine Community College System will be tallied and released on October 15.

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