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UMKC's Enrollment Management: The Present and the Future

By Mel Tyler, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Several national and regional studies show that Kansas City's demographics, as well as those of the Midwest and the nation, are rapidly changing. Consequently, in order to remain the metropolitan area's premier four-year, graduate and research-intensive institution, UMKC will be initiating strategies and programs that reflect the changing needs of our community.

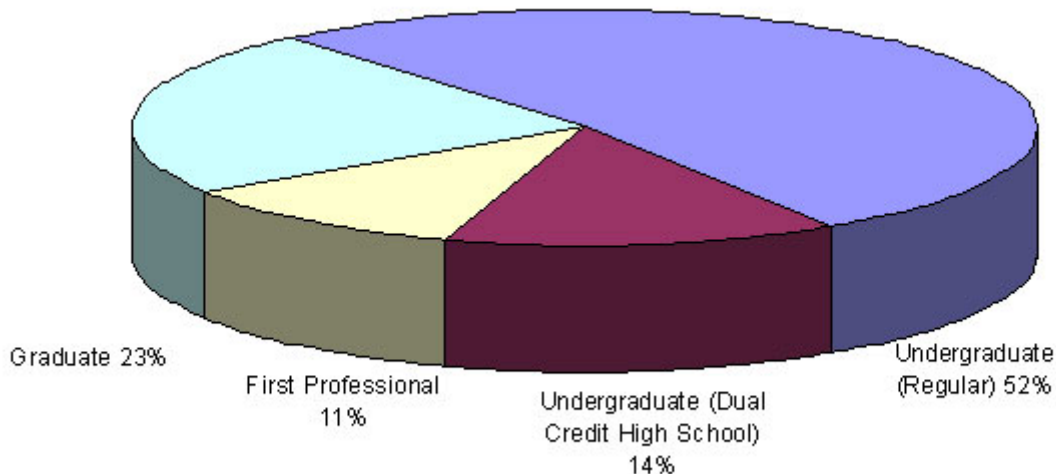
Population changes:

The Missouri Department of Higher Education reported that between 2002-2006, white-student enrollment decreased 2%. During those same years, enrollment of black students increased by 5% and enrollment of Hispanic students increased by 57%.

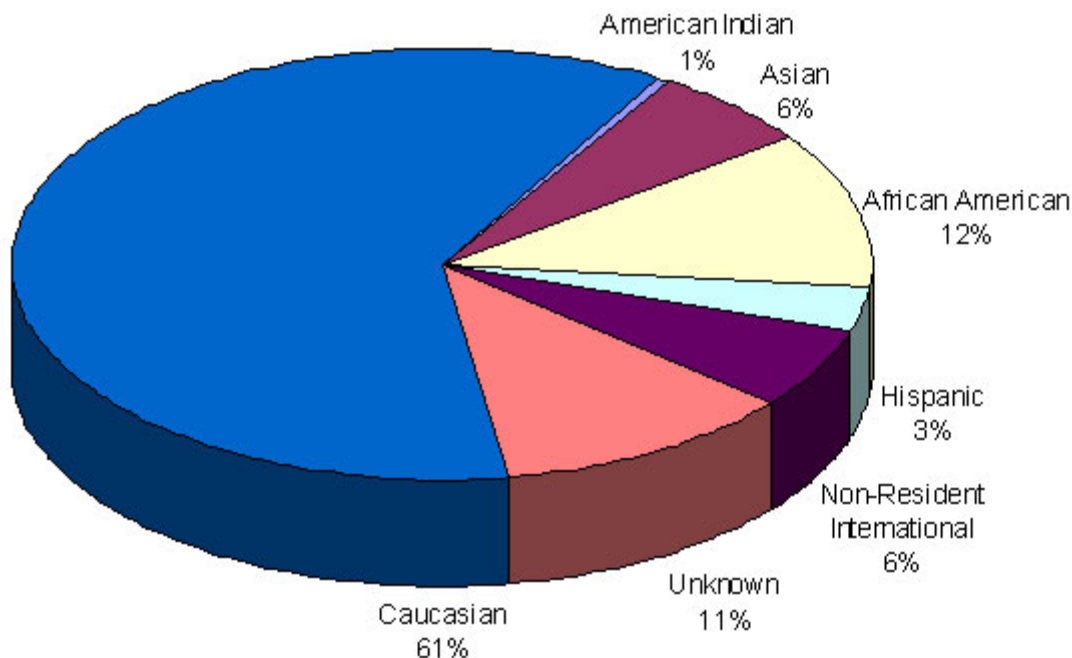
(<http://dese.mo.gov/schooldata/four/000000/demonone.html>) Looking ahead to the years between 2007-2015, the National Center for Education Statistics predicts a 7.6% drop in Missouri high school graduates and a 9.2% drop in Kansas high school graduates (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/tables/table_25CT.asp?referrer=table).

In Fall 2006, UMKC enrolled more than 14,200 students.

By Level



By Ethnicity



To meet the needs of anticipated population shifts, UMKC's enrollment management strategy will focus on three areas: 1) increasing student success, retention, and graduation; 2) expanding the educational pipeline in our community; and 3) diversifying the student body, faculty, and student services.

Student success, retention, and graduation:

UMKC's Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and the Division of Academic Affairs are partners in the establishment of a university-wide Undergraduate Retention Committee, consisting of faculty members, academic advisers, institutional researchers, and student services staff. The committee will develop strategies to achieve a freshman-to-sophomore retention rate of at least 80% and a six-year graduation rate of at least 50.1% by 2011.

To enhance student life on campus, UMKC is in the early stages of planning a new Student Union that will be attached to the projected library expansion. The Student Government Association has approved a campus-wide referendum for students to vote in April on a new fee to build the Union. In addition, new residential facilities will be built, adding almost 1,000 more beds to our residential population.

Educational pipeline:

To increase the education pipeline, UMKC annually works with area churches, community centers, school districts, and a local radio station to present early college awareness programs and financial aid workshops for middle and high school students and their families. Other pipeline initiatives include UMKC's Ivanhoe Project, the Institute for Urban Education and the Kauffman Scholars Program. In addition, UMKC, the Kansas City, Missouri School District and the Metropolitan Community Colleges are working together to develop early college initiatives.

Diversity:

A recent racial climate audit, commissioned by UMKC, revealed several areas of concern: academic advising, student-faculty interactions, a perceived culture of low-expectations for minority students, and the lack of cross-racial engagement or opportunities to learn from other cultures.

In addition, data from Fall 2005 show that, of the 499 full-time tenure and tenure-track faculty at UMKC, only 22 were African American and only seven were Hispanic. During that same semester, 22% of all of our first-time students were African American and Hispanic freshmen. This was a significant gap between students of color and faculty of color.

These statistics, the audit and the region's changing demographics have led us to examine faculty and student diversity, curricular diversity, academic advising, student programming, and the classroom environment in order to address concerns expressed by students in the focus groups and in the survey. The racial climate audit was an important initiative that will guide UMKC in developing specific actions to increase cultural and diversity awareness. For example, as part of our University-Wide Recruitment Plan, we are revising strategies to improve recruiting of underrepresented ethnic minority students (African American, Hispanic American and Native American students), non-traditional students, international students, graduate and dual credit high school students.

Clearly, UMKC's goals for student success, expanding the educational pipeline and increasing diversity on campus are central to solidifying our position as Kansas City's premier institution of higher education.

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