RCC among fast growing colleges in the nation

Community college enrollment has sky rocketed nationwide, and Rogue Community College is among the fastest growing public two-year colleges in the U.S.

In the Nov. 29, 2010 edition of Community College Week, RCC ranked 46th out of 50 in 2009 among the nation's fastest growing colleges with enrollments of 5,000 to 9,999.

The report was based on data from the U.S. Department of Education (IPEDS), which counts only those students enrolled in courses that lead to a postsecondary degree or other award. It does not include students who take professional and personal development classes such as basic skills instruction, English language classes, or most community education classes, which usually are not offered for credit.

RCC was one of only two Oregon colleges on the list; Central Oregon Community College ranked 23rd. RCC posted a 16 percent headcount increase between fall 2008 and fall 2009; COCC had a 20 percent increase.

RCC’s fall term enrollment grew from 4,610 to 5,335 during that period. But the boom didn’t stop in 2009. In the 2010 fall term, recently completed, Rogue served 6,045 credit students, a 13.3 percent increase. Add another 1,800 non-credit students who took classes at Rogue, and RCC’s total headcount was 7,925.

Growth has been fueled by the economic recession, by individuals looking to upgrade skills or learn new skills because their jobs no longer exist. Lower tuition and fees, which average $2,544 annually, also drive community college enrollment. The average annual cost to attend a four-year public college is $7,020, according to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

“As our faculty and staff are doing a tremendous job meeting the needs of our growing student population, we estimate RCC is producing between $5-10 million each year in new and upgraded wages as our students are trained and enter the job market,” said RCC President Peter Angstadt.

Nationwide, enrollment at two-year public colleges jumped 8.3 percent between 2008 and 2009, according to Community College Week analysis. The increase continued a 10-year upward trend. Between fall 2007 and 2009 enrollment was up 16.9 percent, according to the AACC.
As of December 2009, community college students constituted 43 percent of the nation’s undergraduates, according to AACC figures. For more community college statistics, visit www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/fastfacts.aspx.


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