

WCU fall enrollment breaks all-time record

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (Special) – Baptist-affiliated William Carey University (WCU) in Hattiesburg has posted a 3.3% increase over last year's fall enrollment – an all-time record of 5,260 students.

“In spite of the uncertainty that surrounds the COVID-19 pandemic, William Carey continues to offer strong programs that attract increasing numbers of students,” said WCU President Tommy King.

Three WCU departments posted individual enrollment records:

- The School of Education's overall enrollment increased 35% over fall 2019, to 1,700 students. This included a 50% increase in undergraduate students.

- The Winters School of Music opened the fall trimester with 185 students, marking its highest enrollment in school history.

- The College of Health Sciences surpassed its record two weeks before the start of fall classes. The final number of nursing, physical therapy, pharmacy, health information management, and health administration and education students is 1,052.

In addition, the College of Osteopathic Medicine increased the size of its first-year class from 100 students to 160, part of a three-year expansion plan authorized by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation. The plan will ultimately result in the medical school's enrollment doubling from 400 students to 800 students.

“We are extremely grateful to our students for trusting us to

take care of their safety and to join us on campus this fall. It is exciting to see our students pursue their calling by completing degrees that will serve their communities,” said Ben Burnett, WCU’s acting executive vice president.

The precedent-setting fall enrollment increases come after WCU posted the highest summer enrollment in school history – 2,595 students – surpassing the previous summer record set in 2011.

‘Hidden Gem’

WCU has again been selected as a “Southeast Hidden Gem” by College Raptor, a leading college planning platform that helps families locate the best colleges at the best prices. The award is based on a combination of factors, including number of applications received, graduation and retention rates, endowment per student, campus diversity, student-faculty ratio, and other key metrics as reported to the National Center for Education Statistics.

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College Raptor’s 2021 rankings include a focus on changes in higher education due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The media is full of stories about how students and schools are adapting to the pandemic. The spirit of the Hidden Gems rankings is all about considering schools from a new perspective. This year, that mindset is more important than

ever,” said College Raptor CEO Bill Staib.

WCU transitioned to all-online instruction in mid-March. The school welcomed students back to campus Aug. 24 for the start of the fall trimester, offering online, in-person, and hybrid classes with strict COVID-19 safety protocol.

For more information on WCU, visit wmcarey.edu/.