



SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY at NEW ORLEANS
COMMUNITY OUTREACH/UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT
PUBLIC RELATIONS

6400 Press Drive • New Orleans, Louisiana 70126
Direct (504) 286-5343 • Fax (504) 284-5525

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Contact: Eddie Francis
(504) 286-5343 or (504) 236-1009
efrancis@suno.edu

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SUNO's enrollment at 93% of pre-Katrina level, its highest since the storm

NEW ORLEANS, LA - Southern University at New Orleans' (SUNO) enrollment has increased to 93% of its pre-Hurricane Katrina enrollment of 3,647 students, according to preliminary Spring 2010 figures. Currently, 3,391 students have enrolled this semester, representing the institution's highest enrollment since Hurricane Katrina.

This preliminary figure also includes 160 first-time/fulltime freshmen and 176 transfer students. Twenty-two-percent (22%) of the transfer students joined SUNO from Delgado Community College, thanks in part to the articulation and 2+2 agreements signed last year between the institutions which allow Delgado's students to seamlessly transfer to SUNO in order to pursue specific academic programs.

Additional preliminary figures indicate that the University has retained 86% of its first-time/fulltime freshmen who had enrolled in Fall 2009. This represents the highest fall-to-spring retention percentage for SUNO since 2003. The Louisiana Board of Regents officially calculates retention percentages from fall-to-fall. However, the 86% retention rate this semester gives SUNO tremendous momentum for improvement in this area heading toward the next school year. Official enrollment and retention figures will be available on January 29th. Students who are currently enrolled must meet their financial obligations for the semester by that date.

"These preliminary enrollment and retention figures are very encouraging. They mean that more individuals are continuing to make SUNO their first choice for pursuing higher educational opportunities, and that more of our faculty and staff are working hard to retain our current students. This bodes well for the immediate and long term future of this institution," said Victor Ukpolo, Ph.D., SUNO's chancellor. "Our new student housing is a great addition, and we look forward to experiencing the increased pool of students from around the state, nation and world that this amenity promises to bring."

Chancellor Ukpolo credits the improvement to an aggressive all-hands-on-deck approach to communicating with students, including using faculty and staff members who hadn't previously worked directly with retention to call students, visit their homes and classrooms to address academic and, occasionally, personal issues which may adversely affect school performance, and work directly with their academic advisors.

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