Chicago State increasing academic rigor, raising standards

University restructures admissions model to make the institution stronger

March 9, 2012 — As the nation takes stock of the impact higher education has on long-term prosperity, Chicago State is making strategic moves to cultivate high-quality, marketable graduates by raising admissions standards and reinforcing academic rigor, officials say.

Chicago State is strategically managing enrollment and targeting students in its undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, professional and certificate programs. In doing so, CSU aims to be more competitive, increase demographic diversity and systematically influence the characteristics and number of new students in its programs.

“We are managing enrollment instead of enrollment managing us,” says Vice President of Enrollment Management, Angela Henderson. “We may have a few tough semesters, but our goal is to make the university stronger with increased academic rigor.”

With a new student payment plan process, an updated academic standing policy and revamped admissions standards, CSU is shaping the enrollment of the institution that will lead to increased retention and degree completion, and a diversified student population.

“We’ve taken a very close look at our recruitment and admission policies and deconstructed them to identify how they align with our mission, impact retention and graduation, and serve the CSU population,” Henderson says. “The changes we’ve implemented help us better model our incoming class composition and focus our recruitment activities. Last fall, the average ACT score of our admitted freshman population was nearly two points higher than in years past.”

The net effect, says Dr. David Kanis, interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, is little change in the makeup of upper-level classes and less remediation needed in lower-level classes that are more likely to include conditionally admitted and struggling students.

“We’ve needed to do this for years,” said Kanis, who has been at CSU for nearly 18 years. “Now we will have a stronger distribution of students capable of doing college-level work.”

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Enrollment, continued:

These tough decisions, according to school officials, reflect the university's commitment to its mission and core values, which include intellectual development; personal and academic excellence; and personal, professional and academic integrity.”

“By raising admissions criteria, sticking to policies and raising academic standards, students feel like their degree will be stronger in the job market,” said Roderika Ballard, president of the Chicago State Student Government Association.

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