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### Freshmen set enrollment record

The University of Southern Indiana welcomed its largest-ever freshman class this fall, enrolling 2,079 first-time freshmen to lift total enrollment to a record 9,899 students.

Those freshmen indicate that more high-achieving high-school students are making USI their college of choice. The freshman class has 55 entering freshmen who are high-school valedictorians, and the average SAT score of the Presidential Scholars, USI's premier scholarship recipients, is 1356. The class also includes three National Merit Finalists and three Lilly Endowment Community Scholars.

Among the total enrollment number are 200 students enrolled in the engineering program. In 2002 in its request for the engineering program to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, USI projected that 84 students would be enrolled in the program.

Dr. H. Ray Hoops, USI president, said, "The demand for the engineering program is reflected in this year's student enrollment in the program. The severe shortage of engineers in the region was a finding of the 2000 President's Task Force on Economic and Workforce Development that led to the proposal for changing the engineering technology curriculum to a general engineering program. Clearly, there was a need to offer the engineering curriculum and widen the range of occupations that could be filled by engineering graduates."

Other enrollment-related information shows full-time students, those taking 12 credit hours or more, increased by 256 students. Full-time students now make up 75 percent of the student population at USI, compared to 57 percent 10 years ago. Vice President for Student Affairs Rob Parrent noted that this year's figure is "an all-time high", citing the figure as further evidence that USI "is evolving to a more traditional, residential, comprehensive university." Dr. Parrent also noted that there are nearly 2,800 students living in USI residence halls and apartment complexes this fall.

The number of credit hours taken by students also established a record of 118,949, a three percent increase from fall 2002.

Retention of students is also a goal of USI, and this fall, there were 107 more "returning" students this fall over the preceding fall.

The majority of USI students, or 5,143, come from Vanderburgh County and the surrounding counties of Posey, Warrick, and Gibson. Another 1,162 students come from other counties in southwestern Indiana. All 92 Indiana counties are represented among the students.

Students from 36 other states and 39 other nations attend USI. Growing the diversity of the student body has been a USI goal and improvements are shown this year. Minority and international students now represent six percent of the students. Black students represent four percent of the students, making them the largest minority population with 400 students.

Female students continue to outnumber male students on campus. This year's enrollment includes 6,028 women and 3,871 men, about a 60/40 ratio.

There are 2,300 students at USI who are 25 years of age or older.

Enrollment growth over the last five years is shown here:

2003	9,899
2002	9,675
2001	9,362
2000	9,012
1999	8,695