

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Nurturing Growth

FALL
2009

From the desk of Dr. Angelo Armenti, Jr.,
president of California University of Pennsylvania



Cal U is making news.

At a time when many colleges across the country are scrambling for students, Cal U is celebrating another year of record enrollment.

It's proof positive that our University is offering the academic and campus-life experience that prospective students are seeking.

News reports have focused on Cal U's steady expansion, but they have missed "the story behind the story" — the strategic thinking that has led to 12 consecutive years of growth.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

That is the story I'd like to share in this edition of the President's Perspective.

Our Office of Admissions has led the recruitment drive, but every corner of the University has been involved in making Cal U more appealing to prospective students. Academic excellence, a highly skilled faculty, even winning sports teams, and beautiful buildings and grounds all play a part in bringing newcomers to our campus.

Cal U's Global Online program has been another key element in our progress. Offering courses 100 percent online is cost-effective for the University and a boon to working adults, military personnel and other highly motivated students. More master's and bachelor's candidates are choosing to earn their Cal U degrees online every year.

Word of mouth has helped to raise our profile, too. Current students and alumni are some of our best ambassadors. Their enthusiasm is contagious, and they spread the good news about Cal U in a variety of ways.

Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have become part of their world, so our new website — coming this winter at <http://www.calu.edu> — will incorporate these 21st-century communication vehicles.

A burgeoning student population presents challenges of its own. Managing growth requires careful planning and thoughtful implementation of those plans.

I believe it is well worth the effort to see California University continuing to thrive. I hope you are pleased, as I am, with our ongoing progress.

Best regards,

Angelo Armenti, Jr.
President, California University of Pennsylvania

Strategic Steps Yield Enrollment Gains

For the 12th consecutive year, enrollment at California University has reached a new high. For the first time in this institution's 157 year history, more than 9,000 students are enrolled.

Headcount enrollment for the fall semester is 5.8 percent higher than last year. In fact, the student population is 51 percent larger than it was in 2000, making California the fastest-growing university in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

Some would have called this unlikely a decade ago, especially here in southwestern Pennsylvania, where the population is aging and the number of high school graduates is in decline.

But it is no accident that Cal U is flourishing. Since my arrival as President, increasing both the number of students and their average SAT scores have been among the University's primary goals.

Quality counts

At the same time as our enrollment has been growing, the SAT scores of incoming freshmen have risen steadily. The average has climbed by more than 100 points since 1992, reaching an all-time high of 1028.



California University of Pennsylvania is the fastest-growing university in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

What is attracting these young scholars? A growing number of accredited programs make Cal competitive even with elite universities, which are held to the same accreditation standards. The University's strategic plan for 2009 to 2012 calls for efforts to gain national accreditation for every eligible program.

A proficient faculty also attracts high-quality students. This semester Cal U hired 13 new faculty members, bringing the total to 281 full-

time and 102 adjunct faculty. Of those, nearly 80 percent hold doctorates or other terminal degrees.

Our state-of-the-art residence halls are powerful recruitment tools, as well. Admissions officers tell me that many prospective students make their decision on the spot when they see what "the suite life" at Cal U has to offer.

All six new residence halls have been fully occupied from the day they opened. Because on-campus housing costs are set at market rates, these eco-friendly buildings not only bring undergraduates to our campus, they are cost-effective to operate.

Another recruitment tool is the Cal U website, our "digital front door," which currently is being redesigned and entirely rebuilt with help from BarkelyREI, a Pittsburgh-based interactive marketing agency.

One key audience for the website is prospective students, members of the “wired generation,” who have grown up immersed in a steady stream of information from the Internet, cell phones and online social networks.

“This world of interactivity and hyper-communication has fundamentally changed how teenagers and young adults receive, process and act on information,” according to a 2009 study by the Center for Marketing Research at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. For that reason, high school students as well as current Cal U students, faculty, staff and alumni were included in user-testing groups as the new website was designed.

Cal U, like other universities, has seen the number of online admission applications increase sharply, while the number of paper-only applications has fallen. Prospective students also are using Facebook and other social media in their college search, posting questions about college life and seeking advice from current students.

Eighty-five percent of U.S. colleges and universities are using at least one form of social media in their admissions process, the Dartmouth study found. If Cal U hopes to continue growing, it must adapt to this emerging trend.



When the University’s new website is launched in January, visitors will find social media components, such as links to Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, embedded in the homepage. Interactive elements, including video clips and discussion boards, will help to engage prospective students while meeting the needs of our current learners, faculty, alumni and other audiences.

Reaching farther

California University traditionally has drawn a majority of its students from western Pennsylvania. Although that continues to be true, Cal U has begun an aggressive outreach program in eastern Pennsylvania, where the population includes a higher proportion of residents ages 18-24.

Recruitment efforts also target New Jersey, which leads the nation in “out-migration” of college students by a wide margin, and Hispanic students, one of the fastest-growing demographic groups nationwide. These efforts are aimed primarily at undergraduates ages 18-24, who mostly attend face-to-face classes.

Undergraduate enrollment has grown by 4 percent this year. Traditional undergraduates are not the fastest-growing segment of Cal U’s student body, however. That distinction belongs to our graduate students, a category that showed a remarkable 14 percent increase in enrollment this year.

Many of those students are enrolled in Global Online, Cal U’s Internet-based learning community.

Although our historic riverside campus will always remain the heart of Cal U, online education holds the greatest potential for continued growth. Not only is there a worldwide pool of potential applicants, but online students can be taught more affordably because they do not require additional classrooms, housing, dining options or parking spaces.

Online learning is perfectly aligned to serve specific populations, such as the military members who enroll at Cal U through GoArmyEd. This Web portal allows service members and their families to access Global Online programs easily and efficiently from anywhere in the world.



Working adults also fuel the demand for online programs, such as Cal U’s popular Principal Certificate for educators or the new Master of Science in Nursing Program in Nursing Administration and Leadership. Programs such as these allow mature, motivated students to complete their coursework day or night, whenever it fits best into their busy schedules.

There is a strong demand for online education, a national study has found. In *Staying the Course: Online Education in the United States 2008*, produced with a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, researchers reported that online enrollments nationwide are increasing “far in excess of the total higher education student population ... [with] no signs of slowing.”

High fuel costs, plus the continuing effects of the nation’s economic downturn, “resonate closely with increasing demand for online courses,” the study found.

At Cal U, 7 percent of undergraduate students and 62 percent of graduate students are enrolled in Global Online programs.

As it becomes more widespread, online learning is gaining credibility among academics and employers alike — and for good reason. A report delivered this summer to the U.S. Department of Education* found that “students who took all or part of their class online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction.”

Student motivation and engagement, not mode of delivery, made the clearest difference in academic outcomes, the study found.

Web-based programs offered through true bricks-and-mortar universities, such as Cal U, are especially appealing to both students and their potential employers. Many Global Online students visit campus for the first time at Commencement and report that taking part in a true graduation ceremony both celebrates and validates their degree.

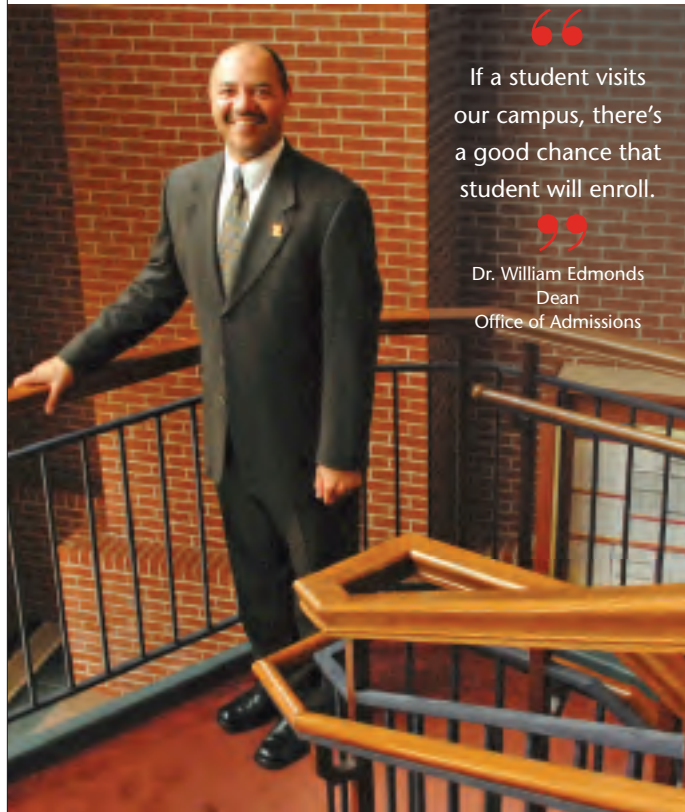
FALL '09 ENROLLMENT BY UNIVERSITY	
UNIVERSITY	ENROLLMENT
Bloomsburg	9,512*
California	9,017*
Cheyney	1,488
Clarion	7,346*
East Stroudsburg	7,576*
Edinboro	8,287*
Indiana	14,638*
Kutztown	10,634*
Lock Haven	5,329*
Mansfield	3,569*
Millersville	8,427*
Shippensburg	8,253*
Slippery Rock	8,648*
West Chester	14,211*
PASSHE Total	116,935*
*Record	

No institution can grow indefinitely, of course, but Cal U will keep its doors wide open as long as we can serve our students effectively. The University’s position at the top of the PASSHE growth chart affirms a continuing demand for the high-quality academic experience found on our campus and through our Global Online programs.

As Benjamin Franklin said, “Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning.” In that spirit, Cal U remains committed to meaningful, sustainable growth.

*Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies

You have to check out Cal U



“If a student visits our campus, there’s a good chance that student will enroll.”

Dr. William Edmonds
Dean
Office of Admissions

The outcome? Undergraduate enrollment is up by 4 percent and the undergraduate headcount exceeds 7,000.

“Our recruitment goals are aligned with our mission statement,” Edmonds says. “We are enrolling students who are well prepared for college, with better high school grades and standardized test scores than in the past.

“This translates to better retention — more students completing their degrees. And better students improve the University’s reputation, so more high-caliber students apply to Cal U.”

Increasingly, recruitment efforts are reaching beyond western Pennsylvania. Cal U is recruiting at college fairs in eastern Pennsylvania and in New Jersey, the nation’s largest “exporter” of college students.

These days, the college search process relies heavily on Web surfing, virtual tours and Facebook pages. But it’s the face-to-face meeting that moves students off the “inquiry” list, into the applicant pool and onto the undergraduate roster.

“If a student visits our campus, there’s a good chance that student will enroll,” says Dr. William Edmonds, dean of admissions. “When students and their parents visit Cal U, they like what they see.”

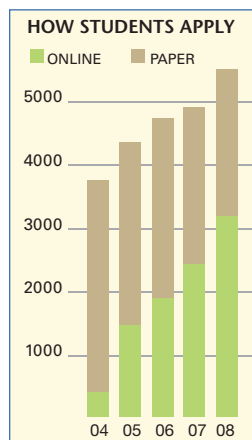
Twelve consecutive years of record-setting enrollment attest to Cal U’s appeal — and to the efforts of the Office of Admissions.

Online applications have added a year-round stream of e-mail to the seasonal ebb-and-flow of paperwork. Edmonds’ staff processed more than 5,600 hard-copy and electronic applications from prospective freshmen and transfer students for the fall 2009 semester alone.

To strengthen diversity on campus, a staff member fluent in Spanish is meeting with Hispanic students.

A stepped-up marketing campaign has raised the University’s profile and made it easier for students anywhere to explore Cal U online.

“They recruit themselves,” Edmonds says, by clicking through to www.calu.edu from various Internet sites. Social media, including Edmonds’ own Facebook page, opens other avenues for engagement.



The number of online applications to Cal U has been growing each year since 2004. It now exceeds the number of traditional paper applications.

The Admissions Office adds a personal touch to this digital outreach. Eight out of 10 prospects receive a phone call from a current student who answers questions and extends an invitation to visit campus.

More than 12,000 calls were made last year, with follow-up by Admissions Office staff.

Discovery Day events for high school juniors and seniors, plus open houses for pre-seniors and honor students, bring teens and their families to California University. During the visits, parents are invited to sit in on student interviews and to learn more about academic programs, college life, student services and financial aid.

“Our facilities compete with any campus in the United States,” Edmonds says, “and our state-of-the-art residence halls are the icing on the cake.

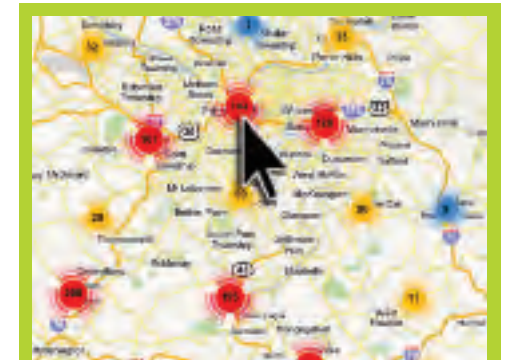
“Word of mouth also works for us. Our current students love it here, and they are our best recruiters. They tell their friends, ‘You have to check out Cal U.’”

A lack of scholarship opportunities can make it challenging to attract the best young scholars, Edmonds admits.

“Typically, these students have many options,” he says, and declining state

support for public higher education has transferred much of the financial burden to students and their families. Finding scholarship dollars remains a priority.

Nevertheless, enrollment figures make it clear that Cal U is meeting students’ needs. “Look at our website,” Edmonds advises. “Call and schedule an appointment for a tour. We welcome guests. Cal U is a place that you need to see.”



CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDENTS

For an interactive map showing where our applicants and enrolled students call home, visit www.calu.edu/prospective/maps/applied.jsp and www.calu.edu/prospective/maps/enrolled.jsp.



Quality is driving growth

Online learning is a key component of Cal U's enrollment growth, now and in the future, says Dr. John Cencich, interim dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

Housed in the Graduate School, Cal U's Global Online program began in 2005 with just 554 graduate and undergraduate students in 13 Web-based programs.

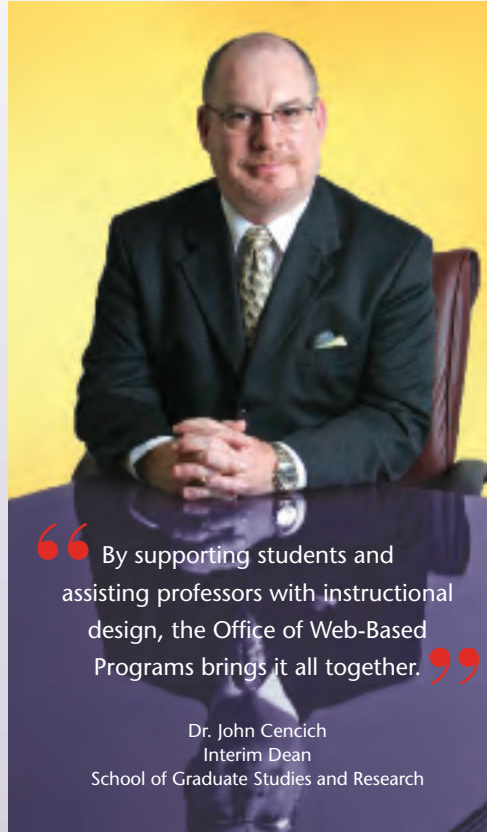
This fall, Global Online enrollment stands at 1,635, and the number of programs has doubled.

"Quality is driving growth — the quality of our professors and the quality of our programs," Cencich says. "Our marketing efforts are making a big difference, too."

"By supporting students and assisting professors with instructional design, the Office of Web-Based Programs brings it all together. You need all these elements if you're going to have success."

Students choose Global Online for a variety of reasons. Some are moving directly from an undergraduate program to a graduate degree. Many others find the courses applicable to their jobs, whether they are preparing for advancement or anticipating a career change.

The Wellness/Fitness and Exercise Science programs are especially popular, along with courses that lead to a K-12



"By supporting students and assisting professors with instructional design, the Office of Web-Based Programs brings it all together."

Dr. John Cencich
Interim Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

principal's certification. Among other programs are those focusing on law and public policy, homeland security, technology education, athletic administration, and both elementary and secondary education.

"This is a good business model for Cal U. Overhead is low, and the programs generate revenue that is important for the University," Cencich says. "It's working for students, too. Enrollments continue to rise despite a wavering economy."

Compared to 2008-2009, undergraduate enrollment in Global Online increased 11 percent this year and graduate enrollment is 21 percent higher.



All Global Online programs are asynchronous, so students can complete their coursework at any time, day or night, from anywhere in the world. Participants come from all 50 states and 34 countries.

"These programs are rigorous," Cencich says. "Students have to be engaged."

"You can be a passive learner who sits in the back of a classroom, but we know that active learning has the best educational results. In online classes, everyone is an active learner."

Discussion boards and chat rooms facilitate teamwork, and members of the online "cohort" get to know one another as the course progresses. A surprising number of students come to California to pick up their diploma at Commencement.

"They want to say they've been here, they've seen the campus," explains Cencich. "They want the credibility of that degree."

The University is fully accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. In addition, individual programs are accredited by various professional organizations.

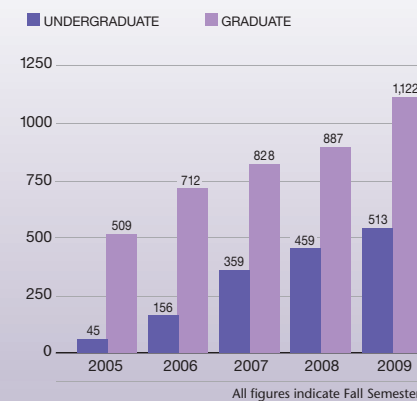
The seven program coordinators and 70 professors teaching Global Online courses this semester are not only experts in their subject areas, but "entrepreneurial, forward-thinking educators" who have embraced this new style of teaching and learning, he adds.

Enrollment growth means more work for Global Online program coordinators, who must make decisions about admissions and develop additional courses to meet the needs of a growing student population. Balancing class size and program quality is an ongoing challenge, too.

"But our biggest challenge is simply keeping up," Cencich says. "I foresee continuing growth. And I believe our efforts now will pay off for years to come."

LEARNING ONLINE

Enrollment for Cal U's Global Online program continues to rise.



A time of great opportunity

Enrollment growth at Pennsylvania's state-owned universities is being driven by two factors, says Karen Ball, PASSHE's vice chancellor for external relations.

"Quality and affordability," she says. "That is what students need, and that's what our schools provide."

Enrollment is up for the 13th straight year in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. This fall also marks the eighth consecutive year of record enrollment for PASSHE, the commonwealth's largest provider of post-secondary education.

About 117,000 students are attending the 14 PASSHE universities this year, up dramatically from last year's enrollment of 112,500.

Across the commonwealth, campuses are seeing an increase in both freshmen and transfer students. Not only is enrollment up, but so are first-time students' SAT scores and their high school grade-point averages.

Professional development, job training and continuing education courses also are fueling growth. Last year the PASSHE universities had 80,000 enrollments in non-credit courses.

"The State System universities are striving to serve all students," Ball says, "from the typical 18- and 19-year-olds right out of high school to the older, non-traditional students who are in need of specialized training to enable them to re-enter the workforce or to advance their careers."

PASSHE universities have earned a reputation for providing quality education



Karen Ball joined the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education in January as vice chancellor of external relations. Prior to joining the Chancellor's Office staff, she served as an advocate in both the public and private sectors, focusing her efforts in Harrisburg. In her current role, she serves as a liaison between PASSHE leadership and the commonwealth's Executive Branch agencies, the members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the state's Congressional delegation, as well as with key constituencies such as the university trustees, student government leaders and State System alumni.

at every level. The vast majority of the universities' academic programs are accredited by professional organizations, and the number of accredited programs continues to increase.

"Schools also are being creative about how they offer courses and how they respond to regional demands," Ball adds.

PASSHE universities are continually adapting their programs to meet the

Close to home

- Nearly nine out of 10 PASSHE students come from Pennsylvania, most within 50 miles of the campus where they enroll.
- Seven of 10 PASSHE university graduates either take their first job or continue their education by enrolling in graduate school in Pennsylvania.
- PASSHE universities have more than 652,000 alumni; about 454,000 live and work in Pennsylvania.
- The state-owned universities are Bloomsburg, California, Cheyney, Clarion, East Stroudsburg, Edinboro, Indiana, Kutztown, Lock Haven, Mansfield, Millersville, Shippensburg, Slippery Rock and West Chester.

emerging needs of students and employers. In recent years new programs have been introduced in areas including pharmaceutical product development, computer security and a broad range of allied health and health care-related fields.

"The western Pennsylvania schools, in particular, are exceeding market share despite declining population," she says. "They are obviously doing a good job of offering courses that people want."

PASSHE is committed to keeping higher education affordable. Full-time undergraduate tuition is \$5,554 for in-state residents — the lowest rate among Pennsylvania's four-year colleges and universities. Over the past five years PASSHE's tuition and fee increases have been the lowest in the nation among all public college and university systems.

The average total cost of attendance — tuition, required fees, room and board — is below the national average, and significantly below other four-year public colleges and universities in the mid-Atlantic region.

"The greatest challenge we face is the combination of growing enrollment and static funding," Ball says. "We have to be conscientious about maintaining affordability."

Over the past 10 years, PASSHE has reduced recurring expenses by \$200 million by aggressively monitoring and improving energy use, purchasing of a wide range of products and services jointly, and revising its employee health care plans.

Universities are being encouraged to explore collaborative efforts and innovative delivery systems, such as online learning or iTV, that might help to hold down costs further.

"Everything we are doing is student-driven," Ball says. "We need to remain relevant. We must provide what students need for their education and their careers."

Ball says she hopes to further that effort by working closely with lawmakers, university trustees, student government leaders and PASSHE alumni.

"This is a time of great change and a time of great opportunity," she says. "There is an enormous demand for the education that PASSHE provides."

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