

Student numbers remain on the rise for Okanagan College

Morning Star Staff

Okanagan College continues to experience growing enrolments at each of its campuses and in many of its program areas.

January enrolment statistics show approximately 5.7 per cent more students – 5,504 – attending the college's campuses than in January 2009. That represents an increase of 298 more students than the 5,206 registered in 2009.

The students are also taking more courses this semester than they did last year; course registrations are up 10.8 per cent overall from the previous year.

"The reasons are many for these increases, and the numbers suggest we are offering the education and training opportunities that citizens of this region need," said president Jim Hamilton.

"Over the past five years, we have seen a growing number of students who start at the college in January."

The largest headcount growth in absolute terms occurred at the Kelowna campus – 140 more students than last January, while the largest percentage growth occurred at the Kalamalka campus: 15.6 per cent more students (717 compared to 620 last year).

In terms of course registrations, though, Penticton and Salmon Arm recorded the largest growth: 19.1 per cent and 17.4 per cent respectively.

"Okanagan College has experienced remarkable growth in the last four years – we have grown by 48 per cent overall," said Hamilton.

"We're on track to exceed our own and the government's enrolment targets for a fifth year in a row. But the numbers themselves aren't the important piece of news here. What's important is that we're able to provide a growing number of individuals with the training and education they want and need."

Hamilton cautions that the enrolment reports produced in September and January present just a snapshot of the college's activity.

"They don't capture enrolments for programs that may start later in the semester, for instance, and don't capture all the enrolments

in Continuing Studies programs," he said.

"A complete look at

our data last year, for example, showed that more than 19,000 people

took courses from the college.

"That is almost one

out of every 20 people in the region the college serves."