



"Committed to Academic Excellence"

NEWSLETTER

November 13, 2001

RECORD ENROLLMENTS FOR SIXTH YEAR IN A ROW; ACADEMIC PROFILE UP SLIGHTLY

This fall's total enrollment of 1,649 is the highest ever, surpassing last year's record of 1,600. Wartburg has now experienced six consecutive years of record enrollments.

Class rank and ACT scores have also risen slightly after last year's nine-year low of 23.7. The ACT composite average for this year's freshman class is 24.1, four-tenths above last year's mark and one-tenth below the ACT composite average of the incoming class of 1999. Class rank is up to the highest level since 1997. Thirty-six percent of this year's freshman class graduated in the top 10% of their class, as compared to 31% of last year's freshman class.

<u>FALL</u>	<u>% in top 10% of grad class</u>	<u>Wartburg ACT composite avg.</u>	<u>National composite avg.</u>	<u>Iowa composite avg.</u>
1991	32%	23.6		
1992	33%	24.2		
1993	34%	24.2		
1994	42%	24.6	20.8	21.9
1995	35%	24.3	20.8	21.8
1996	33%	23.6	20.9	21.9
1997	38%	24.3	21.0	22.1
1998	29%	24.1	21.0	22.1
1999	35%	24.2	21.0	22.0
2000	31%	23.7	21.0	21.4
2001	36%	24.1	21.0	22.0

FIRST-YEAR RETENTION WORST IN TEN YEARS. IS THERE A CONNECTION TO PROFILE?

The class that entered Wartburg in the fall of 2000 experienced the worst level of first-year retention since the class that entered in the fall of 1990. Both these classes had relatively weak academic profiles. The class with the best retention rate was the class that entered in the fall of 1994, whose academic profile was the strongest in the last eleven years.

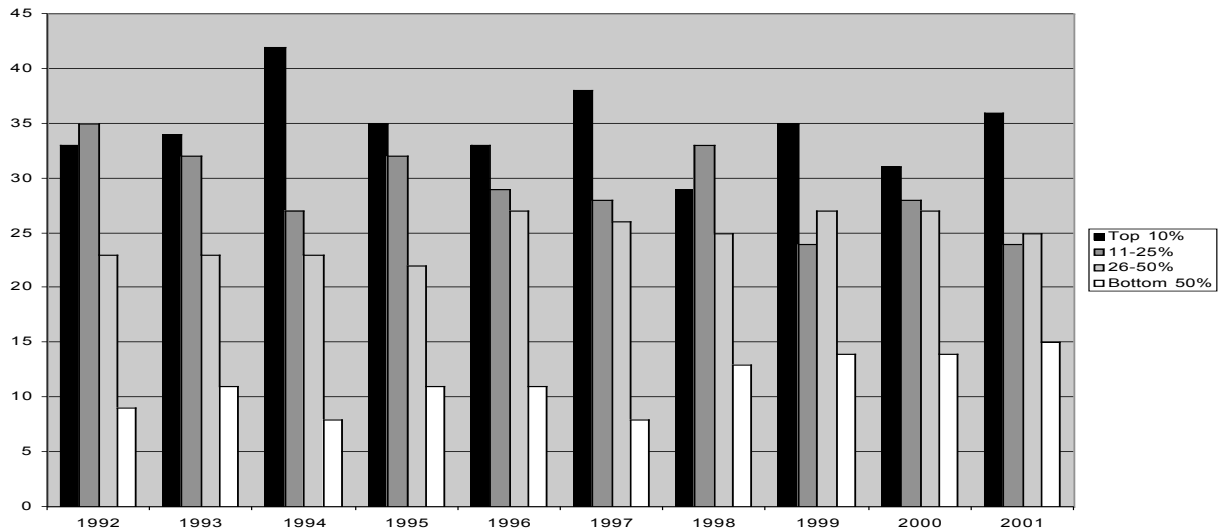
<u>FALL</u>	<u>Mean ACT Comp</u>	<u>Percent in Top 10%</u>	<u>1st Yr Retention</u>	<u>4th Yr Graduation</u>	<u>5th Yr Graduation</u>
1990	22.9	36%	71%	49%	54%
1991	23.6	32%	78%	54%	61%
1992	24.2	33%	77%	53%	62%
1993	24.2	34%	80%	59%	65%
1994	24.6	42%	88%	67%	73%
1995	24.3	35%	82%	65%	70%
1996	23.6	33%	81%	65%	70%
1997	24.3	38%	85%	67%	—
1998	24.1	29%	77%	—	—
1999	24.2	35%	80%	—	—
2000	23.7	31%	75%	—	—

STRICKERT: BOTTOM END OF ACADEMIC PROFILE IS SPREADING

Numerous faculty members (among them Wartburg AAUP executive committee members) have asked me for copies of the statistics I shared at the October faculty meeting. The *AAUP Newsletter* therefore seems an appropriate vehicle for circulating this information.

I want to stress that these figures are neither confidential nor secret. They have been published every year in the enrollment reports. They appear in their complete form in the September 19 report released by the Office of Enrollment Management. I just happened to notice a pattern and have laid this information out in a slightly different format. You can judge for yourself whether this presentation is valid and/or helpful. As faculty, we need to make difficult decisions. I am of the opinion that the more information made available to us, the better.

The chart compares the 2001 incoming class with those of the past ten years on the basis of a single criterion: high-school class rank. There are certainly other factors employed for evaluating incoming students (ACT scores, high school GPA, etc.). Class rank in and of itself can be deceptive: some in the lower 50% may be very good students; some in the upper 50% may be poor students.



What I see as significant in the chart are the following trends:

- Bottom half of HS class: we are **increasing** in this category.
from 1992-1997 we were in 8-11% range.
from 1998-2001 we were in 13-15% range.
- Top 26% to 50% of HS class: we are **increasing** in this category.
from 1992-1995 we were in 22-23% range.
from 1996-2001 we were in 25-27% range. (note we started increasing already in 1996)
- Top 11% to 25% of HS class: we are **decreasing** in this category.
from 1992-1996 we were mostly in the 29-35% range (1994 we fell to 27%)
from 1997-2001 we were mostly in the 24-28% range (1998 we rose to 33%)
- Top 10% of HS class: the numbers here are erratic, though a case can be made that we are **slipping** here as well.
from 1992-1997 we were in 33 to 42% range.
in 1999 we hit 35% and in 2001 we hit 36%
however, in 1998 we fell to 29% and in 2001 we fell to 31%.

So basically we are recruiting more students in the lower 75% of their class and fewer in the top 11-25% range. Some years we have been successful in the top 10% category, though recently we have not generally been doing so well.

—Fred Strickert

REUTER: VIEWS ON CAP PLAN AND A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING RETENTION

The following opinion piece by Professor Ted Reuter represents the views of the author and not necessarily those of Wartburg AAUP. The AAUP Newsletter and the author invite responses from faculty and staff.

These ideas occurred to me as I listened to the discussion about a proposed “Conditional Admissions Program” (CAP) that took place at the last faculty meeting. To judge by the many and varied comments that were made during the discussion, a large number of faculty are concerned about the trend toward increases at the lower end of our academic profile [see Strickert article, above].

If we are going to formalize our programs for at-risk students (i.e., students who do not meet our admissions standards), we should do so at little or no increased expense and with little or no increased work for faculty. But even more important is to take immediate steps—while enrollments are strong—to improve retention by raising the academic profile.

Wartburg faculty already expend much time and effort advising students on a wide range of issues, not just academics, and the weaker students often require the most time. The creation of a special class of faculty advisors dedicated to committee or at-risk students would require an increased amount of time from faculty who have other significant responsibilities (teaching, scholarship, et cetera). Over the last several years, we have expanded the Pathways Center in order to provide academic advising and help to a broad spectrum of students. So Pathways is the logical place to house any kind of formalized advising/special program for at-risk students, and Pathways personnel should do most of the special advising these students will need. Faculty should confine their efforts to providing academic advising to these students. We should not create a class of students who require special advising treatment from teaching faculty.

Further, if we are to embark on a project (CAP) with significant long-term ramifications for resources and our academic profile, then such a program must be carefully managed. I realize that CAP is designed as a retention program, not a recruitment tool. Nonetheless, as several faculty members pointed out at the October meeting, having such a program would in itself say something about who we are as a college and might also provide a rationale for those who would like to admit more marginal students (i.e., “we can admit more at-risk students because we now have a program in place to assist them”).

Therefore, I propose that we place a limit not only on the number of committee cases admitted with a class rank below the 50th percentile but also on the total number of at-risk students. The limit I propose is 15% of at-risk students in the incoming class, of which no more than 5% could be students who graduated in the bottom half of their high-school class. Thus, in a first-year class of 500, the total number of at-risk students would be limited to 75; of these 75, no more than 25 could have graduated below the 50th percentile.

Such a policy would return us to truth-in-advertising (on page 225 of the college catalog we claim that 90% of entering first-year students rank in the top half of their high school class) and halt the five-year trend in growth at the bottom of the incoming class’s profile. A recruitment strategy could be developed that would gradually decrease the number of at-risk students from 18.1% of the incoming class (this year) to 10%, lessening the bimodal distribution of academic preparedness and significantly increasing our retention.

Why would we want to take such a step? There are several answers to this question.

First, our current bipolarity of gifted and at-risk students seriously affects the retention at both ends of the academic spectrum. If we continue to expand at the bottom end (18.1% committee/at risk students this year) while doing effective recruiting at the top (36% in the top 10% this year), we will widen the gap that already exists, to the detriment of students in both categories.

Second, faculty are aware that at-risk students are often more time/resource intensive. With faculty workloads currently at such high levels, the extra time and energy required for advising and instructing larger numbers of at-risk students would further discourage faculty from making scholarly/professional activities a high priority.

Finally, improving our academic profile is the best kind of investment in the future, but we need to get started now, while the enrollment boom is still peaking.

Some may suggest that such a step is risky, that we could have an enrollment shortage in a given year as a result of limiting any aspect of the admissions process. However, if we allow for a maximum of 15% of an incoming class to be committee, at-risk, or CAP cases, we have not seriously limited recruiting at that end of the academic profile. Rather, we will have provided at least the potential for growth in the middle and at the top, where we most need it. If this strategy is then followed by efforts to reduce gradually the number of students at the bottom end, retention will improve. Other institutions that have taken this path, such as Illinois Wesleyan, have reaped immense benefits in terms of profile and retention. This, in turn, leads to more overall resources and less busywork for faculty and staff.

I believe that changes in the academic profile must be undertaken gradually. In the current competitive market for students, rapid, wholesale changes in student recruitment and retention policies would be too speculative. Nonetheless, if we would like to improve our academic profile and reputation while increasing retention and decreasing workload, then this is a step we must take now. At the last faculty meeting, Dean Menzel reminded us more than once that it is the faculty's responsibility to set admissions standards. Well, let's do it—cautiously and intelligently—but *now* while demographics still operate in our favor.

—Ted Reuter

THREE NEW F-T POSITIONS ADDED, BUT PERCENT OF TENURE-LINE FACULTY AT LOW EBB

(This is a corrected version of an article printed in the September issue. We had erroneously given the number of ranked faculty as 75 for this year, when it is actually 74.)

The list of faculty published by the academic dean's office reveals that the college added a total of three new full-time teaching appointments for the 2001-2002 academic year, bringing the total number of instructional faculty¹ to 88, the highest ever. However, the total number of tenure-line ("ranked") appointments (74) has dropped by one from last year, and the number of non-tenure-track ("titled") full-time teaching appointments increased from 10 to 14. As a result, the percentage of tenure-line appointments—84%—is the lowest in the last nine years (we lack data for the years prior to AY93-94).

Number of "Instructional Faculty" at Wartburg 1993-2002

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Enrollment</u>	<u>Total Titled Faculty</u>	<u>Instructional¹ Titled Faculty</u>	<u>Ranked Faculty²</u>	<u>Total Instructional¹ Faculty</u>
93-94	1400	21	7	73 (91%)	80
94-95	1405	20	7	70 (91%)	77
95-96	1433	19	3	73 (96%)	76
96-97	1467	24	10	67 (87%)	77
97-98	1528	25	11	68 (86%)	79
98-99	1541	23	8	70 (90%)	78
99-00	1546	21	7	73 (91%)	80
00-01	1600	25	10	75 (88%)	85
01-02	1649	24	14	74 (84%)	88

¹In its annual salary survey, the AAUP counts as full-time faculty only what it calls "instructional faculty," defined as "those members of the instructional-research staff who are employed on a full-time basis and whose major regular assignment is instruction...." This category excludes those "with titles such as dean of students, librarian, registrar, coach, and the like, even though they may devote part of their time to classroom instruction and may have faculty status." Hence, some titled faculty appointments are not "instructional faculty." E.g., in AY 93-94, only 7 of the 21 titled faculty fit the criteria for instructional faculty.

²In parentheses is ranked (i.e., tenure-line) faculty as a percentage of instructional faculty.

WARTBURG AAUP MEMBERSHIP REACHES NEW HIGH

As a result of the Wartburg chapter's fall membership drive, the American Association of University Professors now has thirty-six members on campus, a number that represents 41% of the teaching faculty. Forty-six percent of ranked faculty are members. Wartburg AAUP is the largest AAUP chapter, per capita, in the state, and the fourth largest in total numbers—behind the University of Iowa, Iowa State, and the University of Northern Iowa. Chapter membership has grown steadily since its revival in the fall of 1992.