



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

CORNELIUS KERWIN
PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

June 19, 2008

TO: AU Faculty & Staff
FROM: Neil Kerwin, President
SUBJECT: Record First Year Class and Anticipated Impact

American University's entering Class of 2012 is on track to be the largest in university history. A total of 1,550 first-year students is projected to enroll in fall 2008, 18 percent more students than in fall 2007. The class is as academically talented as ever, with a 3.8 GPA and an SAT average of 1266. We also expect record retention for returning students and slightly more deposits from new master's students.

The entire community can take pride in this news of AU's increasing prominence and growing popularity. We should also anticipate the impact of increased demand on university services and support systems and commit to delivering the highest quality experience for all of our students.

The dramatic increase in talented students choosing American University is the result of several factors. The work of our Office of Enrollment Services, under the supervision of the Office of the Provost, is clearly a major factor, as are the related conversion efforts of our schools and colleges. Part of the attraction is certainly the combination of our academic strengths and Washington location in an historic election year. The excitement of engagement with this great city, as a new national administration takes shape is a powerful draw. Our hard work to enhance first-year and interdisciplinary programs undoubtedly has had an impact. We should be pleased that new enrollment marketing initiatives, including increased personal engagement with prospective students, more emphasis on campus visits, and enhanced financial aid offers have had the desired effect. And to be sure, momentous events in the spring—including Senator Barack Obama's news-making visit, our first appearance in the NCAA men's basketball tournament, and other events—gave us tremendous opportunities for national visibility. In the months to come we will continue to study the influence of these factors and others in our record number of enrolled students and growth.

As we celebrate and welcome this class, we must anticipate the impact of increased demand and respond proactively. We will invest significant resources in new faculty appointments to address the demand, especially for courses taken by first-year students. We have identified additional off-campus housing alternatives and offered incentives to returning students to choose these options, making more

room for new students on campus. We will increase the number of triple rooms, and we will procure additional furniture so that every student is properly equipped to study and rest comfortably. We will make optimal use of the Tenley Campus, with Washington Mentorship Program students likely remaining there through the spring. We have increased advising resources and are anticipating the additional load on other student services, such as the shuttle service and dining. These steps are just the beginning.

To maintain and strengthen our growing reputation, we must meet the high expectations of all our new and returning students. I urge every member of the community to anticipate the impact of increased demand in your part of the campus. I ask all of us to be creative and responsive, flexible and nimble.

Finally, I want to assure the entire AU community that our new strategic plan will deliberately consider and identify ideal future enrollment targets, consistent with our master plan and enhanced reputation, so that we can replicate our success in future years, ensuring the health of our institution and the satisfaction of students.

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