

WPCC spring enrollment hits all-time high

By LINDA PHILLIPS
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Spring quarter enrollment at Western Piedmont Community College has hit an all-time record with a grand total of 2047 students registered for college transfer and occupational degree programs.

This is the first time the college has reached a registration of 2,000 or more students since it began its full-time programs in 1966.

The total figure for this quarter represents a 10 percent jump over the enrollment for the spring of 1982 and 2.5 percent increase over winter quarter 1983.

Although the sluggish economy has a direct effect on the rise or fall of enrollments in community colleges, George

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Fouts

Fouts, vice president for academic affairs, believes the Western Piedmont increase is not entirely related to the availability of jobs.

"I don't feel that much of the increase was connected

with the economy," said Fouts. "I think that much of the response is a result of our strong occupational curricula. People are interested in getting new occupational skills whether it's to enhance the job they already have or to give them more more skills and thus more job mobility," he said.

Some of the increase, however, does seem related to the economy.

"We have seen an effect from the economy more in our learning lab than in our curricula," said Fouts. "A lot of people who are laid off have decided that this is the time to go back and get that high school diploma. So we've seen a tremendous increase in our G.E.D. program.

Fouts also contributed the rising numbers of students enrolled this quarter to a recent trend of East Burke,

Freedom and McDowell high school graduates who had planned to go on to a senior college but have opted instead to attend community college and save money both on tuition and living expenses by staying at home.

Despite a six percent reversion of state monies originally allocated to the college for fiscal year 1982-83, Western Piedmont has been able to continue offering a full complement of curriculum and vocational-technical courses, said Fouts.

The reversion of funding was required system-wide of community colleges in order to help balance this year's state budget.

"We have been able to offer more day and evening

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courses this year— even with a six percent budget cut— than we did last year," said Fouts. "That's because we started early planning for the cutback."

For example, during the fall quarter of 1981, 88 evening curriculum courses were offered. In the fall of 1982, 125 courses were offered. There were 125 offered again in the winter quarter and now, 133 spring quarter evening courses have been scheduled.

"We have been trying to schedule frugally this year since we learned of the possibility of the cutback and we have made some staffing changes. But much of the credit

has to go to the faculty and division directors who have coordinated their efforts and doubled-up on teaching loads and so forth, in order for us to continue to run a full schedule of courses," he said.

Western Piedmont is also running a full schedule of spring quarter continuing education courses and plans are to offer a full curriculum and continuing education schedule for the summer quarter as well.

The most significant single curricula increase was in the Special Credit area which rose from 590 students in spring of 1982 to 779 students this quarter.

This curriculum is for students who want to major in a college transfer program but are not sure yet which one. The special credit concentration allows students to take curriculum course work while they decide on a major.