



## Arkansas State University breaks all-time student enrollment record with 14,903 students

JERRY DON BURTON  
STAFF WRITER

Arkansas State University set a new enrollment record, reporting 14,903 students after the 11th day of class.

In an A-State press release, A-State reported an increase of over 1,000 students in the fall 2023 semester. A-State enrollment grew 6% compared to the 14,107 students enrolled in fall 2022.

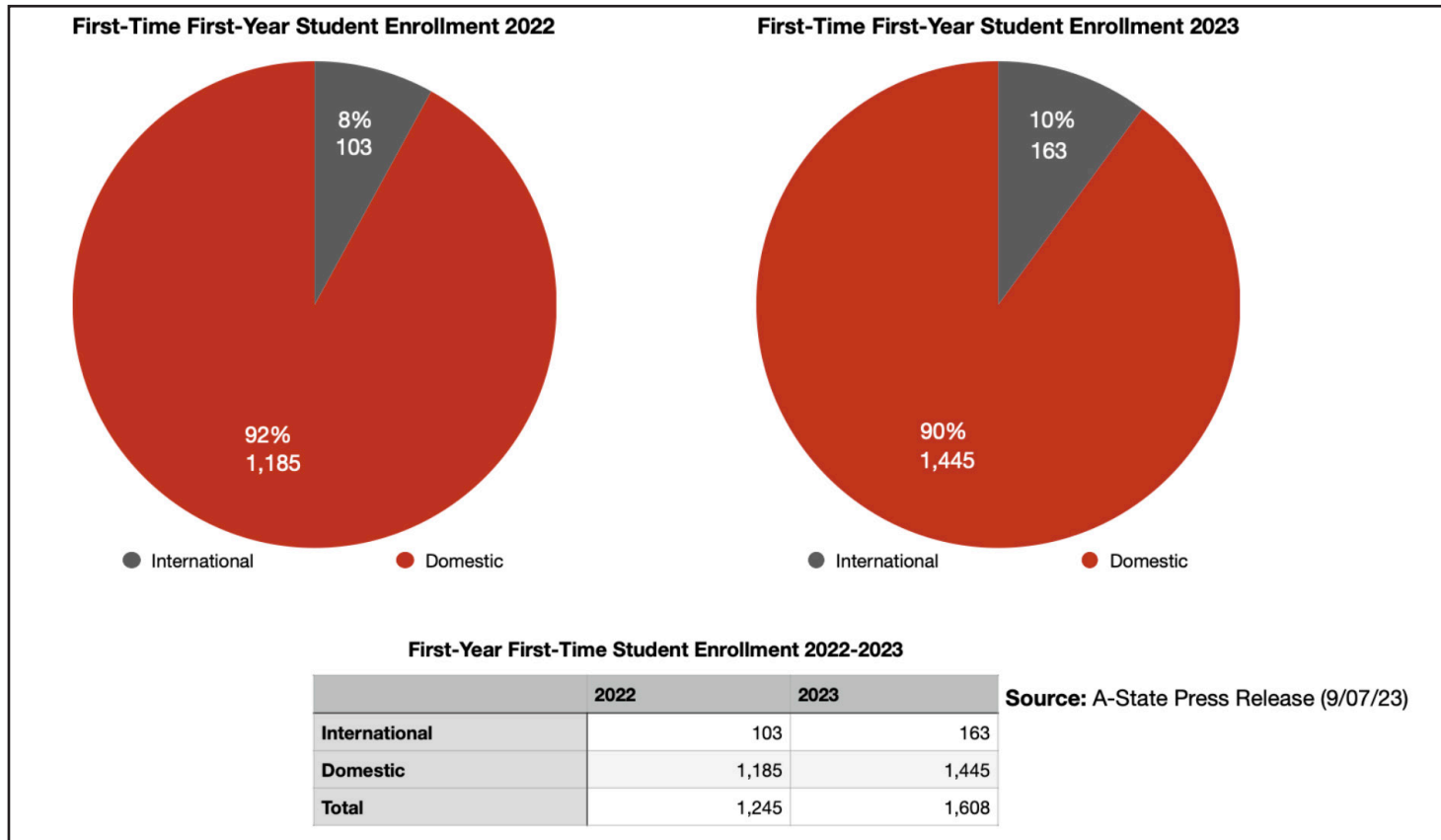
"We are the outstanding value for cost of attendance and the cost of living, but that's not why more and more students are selecting A-State," chancellor Todd Shields said in a press release. "I've been here just over a year, and I can tell you there isn't any place like A-State."

Shields said enrollment is up at A-State for many reasons, including A-State's medical school, upcoming veterinary school, international campus, Biosciences Institute and small class sizes.

He said A-State offers these resources simultaneously, making it the only college in Arkansas to do so.

A-State saw enrollment growth in first-time first-year international and domestic students. This semester, 163 new international students and 1,445 domestic students enrolled at A-State, totaling 1,608. Compared to fall 2022, first-time student enrollment grew 20%.

"I know that A-State has a long tradition of international students and what impacted enrollment the most was COVID," Shields said. "It closed embassies and consulates around the world and now students from other countries are able to get the appropriate documents."



A graphic comparing first-year enrollment numbers from fall 2022 to fall 2023. Enrollment numbers are up 6% from fall 2022.

Shields said further data on international student demographics will be released in the following weeks.

According to an A-State press release, A-State reached 2,933 students living on campus, the highest occupancy since the COVID-19 pandemic. Shields said despite the recent uptick in COVID cases, he expects campus enrollment to continue to rise.

Students enrolled in concurrent high school courses with A-State across northeast Arkansas totaled 700, rising 5% compared to fall 2022. Shields said while students can transfer their A-State concurrent credits to other universities, he sees it as a positive way to

connect high school students to A-State faculty early.

While enrollment increased in almost every category, Shields said enrollment dropped slightly at the Queretaro campus by about 40 students. Shields said returning student enrollment also decreased.

Lloyd Thomas, an A-State computer science graduate, said he observed a change in student enrollment this semester. He said while he doesn't actively follow enrollment, he did take note of enrollment patterns on campus.

Thomas said classes in the computer science department looked packed and, compared to previous semesters, he noticed more student activity on campus.

"At least in our department,

it felt like we were in quite a bit of a downturn, at least definitely from when I was an undergrad," Thomas said. "Although, now it seems like we're in an upturn again."

Thomas said he noticed the upturn in student enrollment within the past year at A-State.

To continue the positive trend in enrollment, Shields said new enrollment consultant Joel Wincowski recommended a change in recruiting techniques. Shields said he is excited to see an increase in students already since A-State is just starting to develop strategic recruitment plans.

Shields said he finds the increase in activity on campus and in classes energizing.

He said with more students and liveliness, A-State and the community will see more positive changes.

Shields said in following semesters, he wants every family in Arkansas to know A-State is a university large enough to be a Research 2 institution but small enough that professors will know students by name and take a personal interest in their success. He said instead of focusing on increasing enrollment in a specific demographic, A-State seeks to educate everyone.

"We have a saying here that 'every Red Wolf counts' and we live by that pact with our students," Shields said. "We certainly want to maintain the momentum we have now."

Graphic by Jerry Don Burton | Staff Writer

### Volunteer A-State blood drive scheduled for next week

Volunteer A-State will host a blood drive Sept. 20-21 in the Reng Student Union's Centennial Hall and the American Red Cross has set a goal of 200 units, which would be an all-time high for the A-State campus. Donation hours are from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. both days, and appointments can be made in advance to minimize waiting. All donors will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card and be entered to win an additional gift card prize package from Volunteer A-State.

### Fowler Center to host U.S. Air Force Band and Singing Sergeants

The United States Air Force Band and the Singing Sergeants on Tour will perform a free concert at Fowler Center on Wednesday, Oct. 18, at 7:30 p.m. While tickets to the event are free, they are required for general admission. More details are online.

### Swipe Out Hunger is this week

Swipe Out Hunger is happening this week. Donate up to five blocks or the Flex equivalent of five meals. For more information, email Jameson Archer.

BRIEFS COURTESY OF A-STATE DAILY DIGEST

### THIS WEEK IN THE HERALD:

#### OPINION, 2A

- The case against A.I. in the classroom
- The changing opinions on higher education

#### NEWS, 3A

- Campus weighs in on the transition to Canvas
- New interim director of bands

#### NEWS, 4A

- The experience of a lifetime

#### SPORTS, 1B

- Red Wolves look for their first win
- A-State golf tournaments come to an end

#### ARTS & E, 2B

- Pop Pick
- Local Fest returns to downtown Jonesboro

#### LIFE, 3B

- Student Speak
- How to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month at A-State

## Campus construction from summer ongoing into fall semester

RACHEL RUDD  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Various construction projects from the summer have continued into the fall semester, with plans for completion by the end of the term.

Projects include demolition of the pool at the Health, Physical Education and Sport Sciences (HPES) Building and remodeling of the student lounge on the second floor of the Education/Communication Building.

The decision to tear down the pool at the HPES Building was made due to issues with mold.

"Repairs on the pool became very expensive," said Amanda Wheeler Gryffin, chair of HPES. "It was deemed that it was probably best to go ahead and close it down, rather than spend the money for all the repairs that it would need."

Interior work on the pool, such as shutting down piping and gas lines, began at the start of summer. Wheeler Gryffin said the building came down

closer to the end of summer.

Once demolition is complete, the space will be used as a green area.

"We're really excited about that, because the green space there, with it not being a parking lot, not being turned into a new building or anything like that, gives us an opportunity to utilize that space for our department."

The entire project is to be completed in November.

The HPES Building is also receiving some cosmetic updates, as well as getting new outdoor seating. The seating will replace the berms, which are raised barriers made of compacted soil used to vertically separate slopes, that surround the building.

These updates are projected to be completed by the end of the semester.

Wheeler Gryffin added that students had not been affected much by the construction, as repair crews were scheduled based on when classes were in session.

"There may have been a few times where they started up



Photo by Rachel Rudd | Editor-in-Chief

A construction worker standing where the HPES pool building once was. The space will be turned into a green area after demolition is complete.

before classes were complete for the day or something like that. We've been very fortunate that they've worked with us to try and

make sure we're not disrupting classes," Wheeler Gryffin said.

CONTINUED:  
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