

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods welcomes Class of 2028

Total campus enrollment at 623, second-largest in Catholic school's 184 years

FOR THE TRIBUNE-STAR

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College leadership, faculty and staff Friday welcomed the Class of 2028, with 240 new students, one of the largest classes in school history.

The incoming class brings an average grade-point average of 3.27, the college said in a news release.

President Brennan J. Randolph helped welcome incoming students and families as they pulled through the front gates; he greeted them with words of encouragement.

"We always tout the fact that the institution is a family-friendly community, and The Avenue Welcome on move-in day really kicks that off," Randolph said.

"I think it can be a difficult moment for parents to send their child on to college, so hopefully this welcome and energy that we provide helps them see that their student will have the support and wrap-around services that they no doubt are looking for in a college."



RANDOLPH

The campus enrollment for the fall will be an estimated 623, becoming the second largest in the college's 184-year history. This year's campus population represents 24 states, 10 foreign countries and one United States Territory, with 60% being student-athletes.

For freshman Gabrielle Flath, a supply chain management and business double major from Linton, move-in day brought a lot of enthusiasm for the academic year.

"I'm really excited to get all moved in and settled. I'm looking forward to meeting new people and just making friends. The Avenue welcome was sweet, and it really made me feel at home," she said.

'A LOT OF MIXED EMOTIONS'

Brandon Flath, father of Gabrielle, shared how bittersweet the day was. "Today brings a lot of mixed emotions. Obviously, as a parent, you hate to see your kid go, but I'm so excited for her.

She's the first of three of my children to go to college, so it's a big step, and I'm so excited for her and this next chapter," he said.

As a parent, Brandon Flath shared what a positive experience it was to see SMWC students, faculty and staff cheering on all the new students that drove down The Avenue.

"It was really neat, seeing the Pomeroy's through the gates cheering - I got into it. I really loved seeing the small community



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Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College sophomore Marques Reese, center, of Indianapolis helps welcome a new student to campus with his classmates on Friday on the SMWC campus.

that this college has come together," he said.

For freshman sport management major Nick Cherry of Terre Haute, he's thrilled to be on campus and is looking forward to the year.

"I'm excited for this golf season and to be rooming with one of my teammates. I love the atmosphere and the buildings. I love how historic the campus is, and I just love being here," Cherry said.

Cherry's roommate, Grant Schlue, a sophomore sport management major from Akron, Ohio, shared that he's looking forward to getting this year started.

"Freshman year was a lot to take in, but everything seems easy now. It's going to be fun to get to know Nick more and to meet the rest of the guys," Schlue said.

In addition to the campus program, the Woods Online program enrollment has reached 338 students, with graduate programs having a total enrollment of 205. The college's overall enrollment for fall is projected at 1,166 students.

Student-athletes began moving in July 30, and returning campus students will move in Saturday and Sunday. Classes will begin Tuesday.

- This article was provided to the Tribune-Star by Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College freshman Kadin Bell of Terre Haute moves his belongings into Le Fer Hall on Friday on the SMWC campus.