

Students' return lifts area economy

Higher education brings \$3.3 billion impact to region.

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Staff Writers

At colleges and universities across southwest Ohio, students are returning to class, and the impact is more than scholarly.

Higher education has a \$3.3 billion economic impact on the region, according to the Southwestern Ohio Council of Higher Education's (SOCHE) economic impact study in 2012. With ever-increasing enrollments, that impact is likely to grow, said Sean Creighton, SOCHE executive director.

About 11,000 students are returning to the University of Dayton for the new academic year. About half of UD's undergraduates are coming to Dayton from outside Ohio, a UD spokeswoman said.

At Wright State University in Fairborn, 17,930 students are enrolled for the 2012 fall semester. Of those, 1,728 are from out of state, a WSU spokesman said.

Sinclair Community College's enrollment is ongoing and that college won't have a final registration number until mid-September. But for the fall 2012 semester, Sinclair had 23,563 students.

Miami University in Butler County has about 16,500 undergraduate students.

Several thousand more students will return to Central State, Cedarville, Antioch, Wilberforce and Wittenberg



The return of college students for the fall semester creates an upturn in local economies such as on Brown Street near the University of Dayton. About 11,000 students are back on campus at UD. TY GREENLEES / STAFF

BY THE NUMBERS

Impact of higher education in southwest Ohio

\$3.3 billion Total economic impact

\$1.56 billion New money brought to the region

\$1.13 billion Paid to 36,700 employees

120,316 students 2012 enrollment, up 24 percent compared to previous five years.

SOURCE: SOUTHWESTERN OHIO COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION 2012 STUDY

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See a photo gallery of returning students at myDaytonDailyNews.com.

Students' return aids economy

Colleges

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universities in Greene and Clark counties.

All of those students and their families pay tuition, which drives employee pay, sponsored research, alumni giving and much more, Creighton said. SOCHE's 2012 study found \$1.13 billion being paid to 36,700 employees, with \$1.56 billion in new money coming to the region.

Of course, students also eat, drink and buy books, clothes, music and more.

"Those students definitely have an impact," Creighton said.

Having 28,000 students just at WSU and UD "is a tremendous enrollment and is a direct result of the high caliber of public and private colleges we have in this region,"

said Chris Kershner, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce vice president of public policy and economic development.

The Dayton region has more than 31 higher education institutions with around 100,000 students, according to a chamber "informal analysis" a few years back, Kershner said.

"We are seeing college enrollment in the Dayton area continuing to do well," he said. "We believe a contributing factor to these positive enrollment figures is that the Dayton area has job opportunities in high-demand fields."

Depending on a host community's size, a campus' financial impact can be huge. In Oxford, which has roughly 22,000 residents, Miami University's 16,500 undergraduate students have a typical income of \$4,000 to \$8,000 a year, said Alan Kyger, Oxford development director.

"One of the very frustrating things about Oxford is when you pull it up on any website or do any kind of demographic re-

search, Oxford looks like it's very poor," Kyger said. In reality, a study commissioned by the city found that 86 percent of Miami's students come from the most affluent neighborhoods in the country.

Student families are part of that impact.

"When moms and dads come into town, what do they want to do? They want to eat, they want to shop when they visit their sons and daughters," Kyger said. "Oxford has six hotels. That just tells you and reinforces the impact Miami students have the guests they pull in."

In another way, the impact of universities may be more enduring. Education is about "human advancement," Creighton said. Educators hope that students are staying in the area and stepping into productive careers.

"This money is about advancing people's lives through education," Creighton said. "That definitely has a positive impact."

Jane Dockery, associate director of the WSU Center for Urban and Public

Affairs, said a draft study shows that over 30 years, graduates from WSU's College of Liberal Arts have had an impact on the Dayton area of half a billion dollars. For students who have studied business and engineering, for example, the impact may well be greater because those graduates tend to have higher earning power, she said.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has found that with higher educational attainment, median earnings rise while the unemployment rate falls. The jobless rate for those with master's degrees was 4 percent in 2010, compared to 10.3 percent among those who have gone no further than high school graduation.

"The impact of universities is not just a single point in time," Dockery said. "It's multi-dimensional."

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