

## **Alfred University enrollment holds steady in face of slumping U.S. economy**

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ALFRED Much has changed in the last 12 months, most notably a national economy that went from one of the best in U.S. history to one some forecasters say is on the brink of recession. Still, Alfred University has maintained its level of new student enrollment, continues to attract a growing number of quality students and is poised for growth in the years to come."The world looks considerably more ominous than it did at this time a year ago," President Charles M. Edmondson said in his annual "State of the University" address to AU employees Tuesday morning."The stock market is down, the economy is less robust. But in spite of that, we have reason to be optimistic."Edmondson noted the University's endowment has held its position over the last year, and has the potential to increase significantly, thanks in large part to a \$1 million gift offered by new Board of Trustees Chairman Robert McComsey.The University also received an anonymous \$2.1 million gift aimed at improving Herrick Memorial Library. "I'm committing this University to more than doubling that amount" through a fundraising campaign, Edmondson said.Improvements to the physical plant are ongoing, Edmondson noted."This year we welcome back two of the University's most storied buildings," he said, referring to the completion of extensive renovations of Binns-Merrill Hall and the Coll Center at Kanakedea (formerly Kanakadea Hall). Binns-Merrill Hall houses classrooms, laboratories and faculty offices in the School of Art and Design and School of Ceramic Engineering and Materials Science; the Coll Center at Kanakadea houses faculty offices and classrooms for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Division of Human Studies. Enrollment is solid. The incoming freshman class is up slightly, from 509 students in 2000-01 to 511 this year, while transfer students are down slightly, from 92 in 2000-01 to 84 this year. An anticipated 595 new students are expected to arrive on campus Thursday for a four-day orientation session. Returning students will arrive Saturday, with classes scheduled to begin Monday, Aug. 27.The quality of new students is noteworthy. They include eight National Merit finalists and 43 percent of incoming freshmen ranked in the top 20 percent of their high school graduating classes, a "significant" improvement over last year's class, Edmondson said.The number of minority students enrolling at AU is on the rise as well. Despite being located in a predominantly white region of New York State, 12 percent of incoming freshmen are non-white, Edmondson noted. The freshman class includes 11 international students from nine foreign countries.