

Alfred University welcomes near-record freshman class

8/30/04

Alfred University welcomed a near-record number of freshmen and transfer students to campus today (Aug. 25) for the start of orientation. Most returning students come back to campus over the weekend for the start of classes Monday. The 532 freshmen and 95 transfer students are a near-record," President Charles M. Edmondson told faculty and staff gathered Tuesday for the annual breakfast that marks the beginning of each academic year. The freshman class is 10.8 percent higher than last year's and the number of transfer students is 20 percent more than last year. The influx of new students puts some pressure on Residence Life to provide accommodations for all the students, "but it's a good problem to have," said Kathleen Woughter, acting vice president for Student Affairs. Brenda Porter, director of Residence Life, noted that freshmen will be accommodated by converting computer rooms and lounges in each residence hall into temporary quarters; many of the computer rooms were originally built as bedrooms, she said, and can be easily changed back to handle higher-than-anticipated demand for rooms. Remodeling of two former Greek organization houses has freed up space in the residence halls for some of the additional students, said Porter. The former Sigma Alpha Mu house on Pine Hill, to be known as Joel's House in honor of Trustee Joel Moskowitz, a 1961 alumnus of AU, and his wife, Ann, whose gift paid for the renovations, will now accommodate 22 students, including a resident assistant, said Porter. "We wanted to create special interest housing for students interested in service to the community, and Joel's House provided us with a way to do that," said Porter. Members of WALF radio station staff, the Alfred University Rescue Squad, Habitant for Humanity and Alpha Phi Omega, a co-educational service fraternity, will live in Joel's House. The former Sigma Chi Nu sorority house is being leased by the University for the 2004-05 academic year to provide housing for 13 students, including one resident assistant. Most of the students living at Nine Sayles Street are international students who range in age from 22-35, and are therefore older than traditional college-age students. The former Sigma Alpha Mu and Sigma Chi Nu houses are two of 11 houses belonging to Greek organizations that have closed since the AU Board of Trustees decided two years ago to phase out fraternities and sororities. The orderly transition from a campus with Greek organizations to one without is also a cause for celebration, Edmondson told the faculty and staff. He said he is not aware of any other college or university that has made the change with as little disruption and as few problems as AU has. Another cause for celebration, the AU president said, is re-accreditation by the Middle States Association. In its final report, Edmondson said, the MSA visiting team made a number of recommendations that the University will be implementing over the next two years. He also cited the University's fund-raising successes over the past year. Among the highlights was the announcement of the University's largest gift to date, an estimated \$10 million from Trustee Marlin Miller Jr., a 1954 alumnus, to build a 500-seat proscenium theater adjacent to the Miller Performing Arts Center. Another highlight was a donation from the Bromeley-Daggett family to build a new equestrian center, to be located about a mile from campus, which Edmondson said will help the University attract prospective students. The facility is scheduled to open in the fall of 2005.