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FRESHMEN

continued from page 1

"As the demographics of the state change, we've worked really hard to bring students of color at a younger age and in smaller groups," Pitts said.

Pitts said the University has outreach programs for high school students of color aimed at introducing them to the campus and explaining the application process. She added that there are many students enrolling from different countries, including Finland, Canada and Kenya.

This year's newcomers also faced an increased GPA and academic unit requirement for guaranteed admission. The minimum GPA requirement rose from 3.0 to 3.25 this year while the academic unit requirement rose from 14 to 16.

"What we're looking for is students who have gone above the minimum level of courses," said Pitts, adding that the admissions office is seeking students who took one or two extra years of high school math or language classes, for example.

The average GPA of this year's freshman class is between 3.53 and

3.55, a rise from 3.47 last year and 3.39 four years ago. The average SAT score for this year's incoming freshmen is around 1,100, although Pitts said no student has ever been rejected because of an SAT score. Students who don't meet the requirement for guaranteed admission are reviewed and other aspects of their applications are examined more carefully, such as their application essays, Pitts said.

Freshman Crystal Hawkins from Roseburg said she wasn't nervous about her acceptance into the University with her 3.75 GPA, adding that she is planning to get more involved on campus than she did in high school.

"I'm excited to get involved with classes I've chosen, to learn things I really care about," she said.

Pitts said she doesn't expect the smaller number of freshman to have an impact on class sizes but said that depends more on the distribution of all students and their interests as well as funding.

"I expect my interests are pretty unique enough; my classes won't be too big," said freshman Marc Rowland from Las Vegas. "If they are too big, I don't think it'll be a problem."

With fewer freshmen enrolling this year, the residence halls have plenty of space, unlike last year when 150 students in search of housing were turned away. The number of students living in the residence halls this year is down to 3,000 from 3,300 last year, according to Mike Eyster, University Housing director and assistant vice president for Student Affairs.

"It's going to be a little roomier than it's been in the past," Eyster said.

The dorms are still accepting walk-in applications and probably will be able to throughout the year, Eyster said.

"I don't expect that we'll get so full that we can't accept walk-ins," he said.

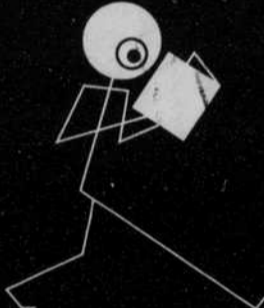
This means there are more single rooms available as well as fewer people using shared space such as bathrooms, lounges and study rooms, Eyster added.

"I thought (my room) was going to be really small but my stuff actually fit," freshman Amy DuFour of California said. "I was really surprised."

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at chelseaduncan@dailyemerald.com.

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