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Rogue Community College Experiences Enrollment Surge, Boosting Local Economy

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RCC

Rogue Community College (RCC) is celebrating a significant increase in student enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year, reporting a nearly 19% growth in full-

time equivalent (FTE) students. This marks a strong continuation of RCC's upward trend, as the college had already experienced substantial growth in the previous year.

RCC's enrollment increase of 18.9% from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 far exceeds the statewide average of 5.7% among Oregon community colleges. Over the past two years, RCC has seen an impressive 24.7% enrollment boost, positioning it as one of the top-performing community colleges in the state.

RCC's total student population grew from 8,366 in 2022-2023 to 9,280 in 2023-2024. College officials attribute this success to a combination of strategic recruitment efforts, strong community partnerships, and a commitment to providing high-quality education. "This achievement highlights RCC's collective efforts and the unwavering support of our community," said RCC President Dr. Randy Weber.

On-campus enrollment has been particularly notable, increasing by 50% over the last two years, reflecting a renewed interest in in-person learning. While online enrollment has remained steady, the shift towards on-campus courses points to changing student preferences and scheduling needs.

RCC is also committed to aligning its growth with local industry demands, particularly in fields such as Science, Allied Health, Welding, and Automotive Technology. These programs reflect the labor market trends in Southern Oregon, and the college's focus on workforce development continues to attract students looking for direct pathways to employment.

RCC's efforts to serve high school students and strengthen partnerships with local schools have also contributed to its enrollment growth. The college provided 16 training cohorts for high school students in credit and non-credit programs during the 2023-2024 academic year.

In addition to educational advancements, RCC's economic contributions to the local community are substantial. A study by Lightcast, an independent labor market analytics firm, found that RCC adds \$306.5 million annually to the regional economy through operations spending, student spending, and the higher earnings of its alumni.

"We are seeing a strong comeback from the pandemic, with enrollment numbers approaching pre-pandemic levels," said Weber. "Our career and workforce program enrollments are at an all-time high, and we're excited about the positive impact RCC continues to have on both education and the local economy."

RCC's partnership with Southern Oregon University also remains strong, with both institutions working together to further enhance their impact in the region.

A study by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce highlights the economic benefits of postsecondary education. The study found that individuals with some college education, even without earning a degree, can increase their lifetime earnings by nearly a quarter of a million dollars. Those with an Associate's degree can see lifetime earnings increase by an additional \$200,000, further underscoring the value of RCC's educational programs.

As RCC looks to the future, its focus on student success and workforce readiness continues to drive its mission, benefiting both students and the broader community.



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