The Pueblo Chieftain

Largest incoming class in recent history

By Zach Hillstrom

Colorado State University Pueblo has implemented a slew of new initiatives in recent years to boost enrollment, and its efforts seem to be working.

On Nov. 13, the university announced that 731 freshmen were welcomed to CSU Pueblo this fall, a 21% increase over 2024 and the "largest incoming class in recent history."



Kristyn White Davis

"It is exciting to see CSU Pueblo's momentum, particularly among our first year and nonresident students," Kristyn White Davis, CSU Pueblo's vice president of enrollment management, said in the release. "We are building sustainable enrollment growth while staying true to our mission of access and support for the people of Pueblo and Southern Colorado."

Some 2025 enrollment highlights from the CSU System Board of Governors included that overall new undergraduate enrollment, including transfers, grew by 9%; that nonresident freshmen nearly doubled from 2024, expanding the university's geographic reach; and that rural enrollment rose by 8%, with 382 rural students this fall.

CSU Pueblo Online enrollment also increased by 2%, continuing a period of steady growth that began in 2017, and students enrolled in 3+2 Programs - degree programs that allow students to earn a bachelor's and a master's degree in about five years - increased by 8% to 71.

The improved enrollment comes after several CSU Pueblo initiatives to bolster its student body, including the first direct admissions program for high school students in Colorado.

In June 2024, the university announced a partnership with both Pueblo school districts that allows qualifying seniors to be directly accepted into the university without having to apply. Other school districts participating in the partnership include the Cañon City School District, Crowley County School District, Harrison School District 2, Hanover School District 28, Huerfano School District Re-1, Vilas School District RE-5, and Fountain Fort Carson School District 8.

A similar partnership with Denver Public Schools was announced earlier this month, as Denver high school seniors with grade point averages above 2.3 can now receive direct admission to CSU Pueblo.

"We know that many students do not apply to college at all, whether that is out of fear of rejection, perceived cost, or to enter the workforce directly," Lee Saunders, executive director of admissions at CSU Pueblo, said in a news release. "Direct admission squashes the fear, demonstrates financial aid and scholarships to offset costs, and puts the power of higher career earnings right into students' hands."



Lee Saunders

Of the 2025 freshmen class, 143 students came to campus through the direct admission program.

The direct admission program operates as a no-cost, no-commitment opportunity for students. Participants can still apply to other colleges and universities after receiving automatic acceptance from CSU Pueblo, giving them expanded options.

The university's initiatives to eliminate barriers to pursuing a college education, like creating and submitting college applications, are just one piece of the puzzle.

CSU Pueblo is also seeking to boost enrollment by making college more affordable for students outside of the Centennial State.

In December 2024, the university announced an initiative to provide in-state tuition rates for students in 10 states - California, Texas, Nevada, Arizona, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming - as well as international students from five countries - China, Italy, Mexico, Slovenia, and South Korea - where Pueblo has sister city partnerships.

CSU Pueblo's current estimated cost of tuition and general fees for the 2025-26 school year is $12,556 for Colorado residents. Out-of-state students currently pay an average of $23,186 for tuition and fees.