

# Northwest surpasses 9,000 mark for second consecutive year

Northwest Missouri State University's total headcount is 9,152 students this fall, maintaining the threshold it crossed for the first time last year, according to the University's fall census count.

After achieving a record headcount of 9,664 students a year ago, Northwest's fall 2024 total represents a 5.3 percent decrease and breaks six consecutive years of growth at the University, which included record enrollments during the past four years. The unprecedented period of growth at Northwest led to its headcount rising by 40.9 percent between 2018 and last fall's census, propelled by increases in dual credit students, graduate students and international students.

Northwest's census count, which the University conducts annually 20 days after the start of the fall semester, recorded an undergraduate headcount of 5,241, and its graduate headcount is 3,911. Northwest enrolled 783 students in dual credit coursework this fall, and 716 of the University's students are classified as international.

The census count this fall recorded enrollment increases among first-time education spe-

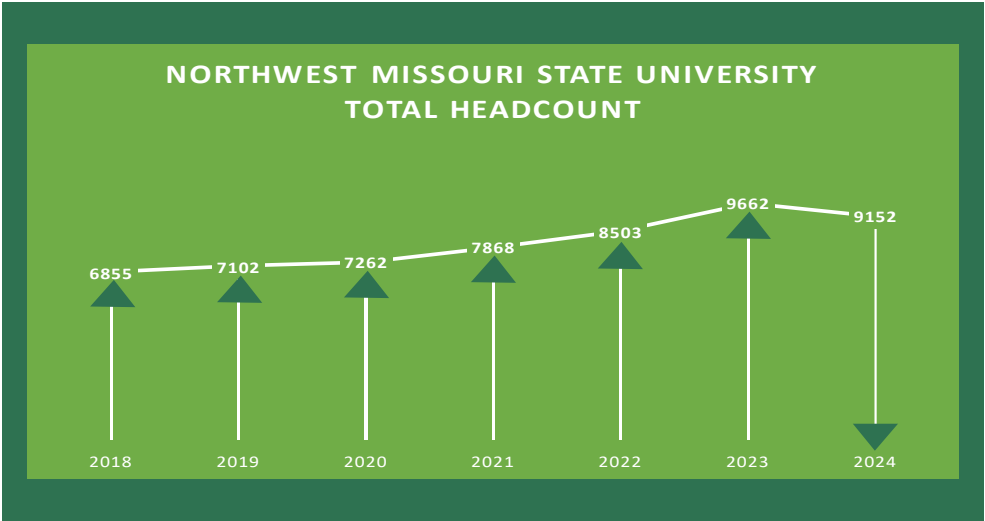
cialist degree seekers, which increased by 6.7 percent, and online graduate students, which increased by 7 percent.

Additionally, Northwest reports its student population

identifying with underrepresented groups increased by 10.6 percent to 1,245 students. First-time freshmen identifying as underrepresented students increased by 54.9 percent.

While the University's in-state student population is 6,095, Northwest students hail from a total of 49 states this fall as the institution continues to draw well from Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska. Vermont is the only state not represented by a Northwest student this fall.

The University's international student population represents 8 percent of the student body and hails from 47 other countries with most of those students coming from India, Nepal, Nigeria, Morocco South Africa.



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Enrollment remains a key priority at Northwest as we celebrate passing 9,000 students for a second consecutive year and continue our focus on maintaining a balanced enrollment portfolio.

While our online enrollment segments continue to grow steadily, we remain laser-focused on our on-ground recruitment efforts to ensure Northwest continues to offer a vibrant collegiate experience.

DR. ALLISON HOFFMAN

## Campus reports show six cases of assault and harassment since Sept. 25, said not to be campuswide concern

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Since Sept. 25, there have been six cases of assault and harassment on campus. Three of these were sexual in nature.

There was a report of forcible fondling and rape in Millikan Hall Sept. 25. University Police Department Chief Amanda Cullin said both incidents were reported at the same time, but there are two different victims and two different suspects. The suspects are known by UPD and are not Northwest students. The incidents were not reported at the time they occurred. Both of the victims were given resources to utilize.

“As always, we connect everyone with all the resources and get them what they could use, as far as advocacy, Title IX, all of that,” Cullin said.

Another two reports were made Sept. 29 — sexual assault in Forest Village Apartments-Willow, and harassment in Millikan. The harassment was not sexual in nature and the sexual assault is still under review. The next incident of harassment was Oct. 6, which Cullin said was not sexual in nature.

Cullin said there is no safety concern above or beyond what the UPD normally puts out for incidents.

“I think what we’re seeing now more closely aligns with what our reports looked like pre-COVID,” Cullin said.

On Oct. 8, a Northwest student was walking back to their residence hall. While walking back, they were followed and grabbed. This was classified as an assault in the fourth degree by UPD.

“I got to the library and I realized that there was somebody behind me,” Anonymous said. “I had headphones on and was listening to music, and I could hear someone talking and I was like, ‘Oh, maybe he’s talking to me.’ I removed one side of my headphones and he said something along the lines of, ‘Why are you ignoring me?’”

Anonymous said they did not know this person, so they decided not to engage with them and keep walking.

“Then I felt him grab me,” Anonymous said. “He grabbed my arm and tried to pull me towards him. I then took my water bottle and hit him. He then said some lovely, vulgar words and took off running.”

Anonymous then returned to their residential hall and called the police and has been in contact with them since the incident. They said the UPD is actively working with them to help. They said it has changed their perspective on campus safety, but they know people are working to resolve this issue.

“I’ve always been like, ‘It’s fine,’” Anonymous said. “I’ve never run into anything. Then this incident happened and it’s rocked it a little bit.”

Cullin said there are different ways to inform students about safety concerns, including timely warnings and emergency notifications. Notifications for students typically go through the Bearcat Alert system.

Timely warnings are typically for on-campus situations, while emergency notifications usually affect the entire community.

“The statement we received from this particular incident (the assault) did not indicate that it was anything to be concerned about as far as a safety issue for the entire campus,” Cullin said.

She said there are a lot of factors to consider when deciding whether or not to put out a campuswide warning.

“We consider what is best for the community, as far as information versus the impact of that information, or maybe not even versus what is best for our community considering all the information and the impact of the information,” Cullin said.

She said a lot of the crime on campus is targeted, which doesn’t impact a large number of students. Cullin said the UPD is quick to make contact with those accused or the suspects, and said it isn’t always considered public information, especially if they are going through the criminal justice system. She said protecting the victim or reporting party is always at the top of their list and if there is a campus wide risk, the UPD would notify students.

Cullin said the UPD does crime mapping. She said when there are incidents that may not impact a lot of the campus, the UPD will make focused preventive efforts in the areas or with the demographics experiencing the incidents.

“We’ve done this in the past when it comes (to) specific organizations, who have had some concerns, or employees that have had some concerns,” Cullin said.

The UPD has many resources available to keep students safe on campus, including a student security team, the Safe Ride Home program and the police station. The University Police Department’s phone number is 660-562-1254. If students experience sexual assault, they can make a report with the Title IX office.

Cullin said students can also call the UPD as they are walking if they feel unsafe. Officers will stay on the phone with them until they arrive at their location. She said it is important for students to keep their senses up and be aware of their surroundings.

“It’s all our responsibility to make sure campus is safe,” Cullin said. “We’ve increased patrols because of things like this that have happened and we will continue to be a resource as needed.”

The victim of the assault will remain anonymous as the case is still being investigated, and to provide safety to them.

## Bearcat Alert reports possible gas leak forcing evacuation, issue has been resolved

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Northwest students, faculty and staff all received the same message around 2:30 p.m. Nov. 13. There was a reported gas leak in the Lamkin Activity Center area, according to a Bearcat Alert.

Everyone in the area had to evacuate immediately from Lamkin Activity Center, Martindale Hall, the Student Recreation Center and Robert and Virginia Foster Fitness Center.

University Police Chief Amanda Cullin said there was a report of a natural gas odor.

“Protocol is we’re going to evacuate until we can identify the location and actually identify the smell,” Cullin said. “We bring in the natural gas company, and, of course, our facilities teams, and our UP (University Police) team respond.”

Freshman Adra Stretch was on the scene when the report came in working out in the Foster Fitness Center. She said she was on the indoor track in the Student Recreation Center when she started to smell something similar to rotten eggs.

“I got told by one of the staff members that there was a possible natural gas leak, but they couldn’t technically kick me out,” Stretch said.

She finished her workout in the Foster Fitness Center, but was told everyone had to evacuate around 30 to 40 minutes later. She said she had never experienced anything like this before, which made it nerve-racking, but she has not had any negative symptoms at this time.

“It was kind of scary when I got told the last time, they were like, ‘It was for sure a gas leak,’” Stretch said.

A little after 3 p.m., the Maryville Fire Department arrived on the scene. Several firefighters went into the Lamkin Activity Center with members of UPD.

“Hopefully we’ll come to find out it isn’t anything, but we always like to remain on the safe side,” Cullin said.

If there was a gas leak, Cullin said the next step is to keep the location offline or closed until the UPD can verify and air out the building. Another Bearcat Alert would then be sent out to inform the campus the building is open again.

Around 4:10 p.m., a Bearcat Alert confirmed the gas leak report had been resolved and reopened all of the previously closed buildings.

“This is operational day-to-day stuff,” Cullin said. “Just takes a lot of people working together...We just get it all figured out.”

### IN THE NEWS A2 Young Life

Religious organization rebrands after recognition, takes new name and focuses on fellowship of members.

### IN THE NEWS A3 Smooch a Pooch

Advocates for Animal Awareness partnered with the New Nodaway Humane Society to raise money for the local shelter.

### IN A&E

The bee population, both on Northwest’s campus and across the country, is on the decline.

### A7 B-R-Bee

### IN SPORTS

Northwest women’s basketball is on the verge of its first postseason appearance in the Austin Meyer era.

### A3 On the cusp



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