

Freshmen class: quality over quantity

By **Kylie Stamper**
Social Media Editor

Builder Camp is over, classes have started, and the freshmen class has officially spent three and a half weeks as Builders.

There's just one thing that sets this class apart from others: there are only 81 freshmen.

An average freshmen class at Southwestern ranges from 130-150 students.

Rodney Worsham, Director of Admissions, said in his 22 years of working at Southwestern he has seen a high of approximately 170 students and the lowest at around 100 students but never as low as 81.

Although numbers are low this year, spirits are still high. Anjaih Clemons, Director of Campus Life, said, "I think everybody has

been focusing on the number this year just because it is so much less than what we're used to. Initially it was kind of shocking; it was a change for us.

However, after seeing all the freshmen and being at Builder Camp, it wasn't about the quantity but the quality. I noticed that a majority of the students just had a positive aura about them and they just brought positivity to the campus.

The focus on the number was down because of the fact that we had a good quality group of students that still made it a positive experience."

There are several factors that play into whether a student will enroll at a specific college or if they have other plans for their life.

Nobody knows the exact reason

why the 2015 freshmen class is so small, but nobody is complaining too loud.

Worshamsaid, "Obviously we're disappointed that the freshman class is not larger considering the amount of contacts and the visits and emails we sent and getting them accepted and admitted but I think the quality of the student is really good.

I heard this was the best Builder Camp that there ever was. Orientation, move in day, and everything else has gone really smooth."

The low enrollment numbers are hitting colleges around the state, including community colleges, state colleges, and other KCAC schools.

He said, "There are just lots of factors. It was a tough year, but we have a new Vice President of

Enrollment Management—Dean Clark, who worked with President Andrews at Carthage College. [Clarke] will start Oct. 1 and we are hoping and believing that he will give us a new strategy and point us in the right direction."

The admissions office sees a rough estimate of 200 to 300 visits during the school year, which includes Saturday visits, Explore More Days, and Scholarship Days.

Micah Mitchell, Campus Visit Coordinator, said, "A majority of the students we brought in [for visits] were very set on coming here, they were ready to go and I guess it was just some final factor just wasn't going to allow them to be here and they were pretty disappointed but it's just kind of how it rolls around here.

We've been doing everything

we can to get the numbers we want but sometimes they just don't swing our way."

The smaller class size has its pros and cons but most of the focus remains on the good things. Clemons said, "This group of students seems to have meshed very well, not only within their class of freshmen but also with the upperclassmen and the orientation leaders. We did incorporate transfer students and it seemed like the transfer students were integrated very well with the freshman and upperclassmen. So I would say that is definitely a pro: the relationship aspect seems more genuine, it's very noticeable."

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What made YOU come to Southwestern?

"I came to get out of Texas."
-David Mathews,
biology freshmen.



"Friendly atmosphere,
the coaches were
really nice through the
recruiting proces."
-Josh Johnson, business
freshmen.



"It was close to home."
-Matt Tate,
sports management freshmen

(Deborah Martin/courtesy photo)