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College's National Rankings On The Rise

Posted on December 26, 2013 by tribune in Special Section

BY TRISHA SAKHUJA

Staff Writer

Faculty and staff credit Dr. James Muyskens with raising the level of academics at Queens College, through increased scholarships and diversified faculty.

According to the 2014 edition of the U.S. News & World Report – America's Best Colleges, Queens College ranks among the top 10 public universities in its category, "Best Universities–Master's (North)."

Recently, Washington Monthly ranked Queens College number one in New York and number two in the nation for giving students an education that is known as the "Best Bang for the Buck."

Elizabeth Hendrey, Queens College's acting provost and vice president of academic affairs, said the president's leadership in terms of the direction the college is taking is extremely important.

"Admission standards have risen significantly and the college ranking has increased," she said.

Muyskens said the College has seen a drop in individuals pursuing a Master's, but "we have been rapidly diversifying our offerings at the graduate level, developing really spectacular programs like a Master of Fine Arts or another Master's in Business, risk management."

Aside from diversifying the graduate level programs, Hendrey said, "The president has really helped us put through new system of general education."

"It was his vision that the college should have a really strong foundation in liberal arts for all students," she said.

As for expanding the Honors Program, Hendrey said that has been one of the

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president's priorities.

Hendrey said Queens College is the only CUNY institution in the Borough to participate in the Macaulay Honors College, which supports gifted students with full tuition and other benefits. In addition, the college also offers a Freshman Honors Program and it has designed a Transfer Honors Program with scholarships exclusively for transfer students.

"[The president] is not only open to starting new programs, but he's very active and asking us to do that," Hendrey said.

Academic achievements tie very well with the new faculty Muyskens was able to add to the college.

Richard Bodnar, dean of research and graduate studies said, as for receiving grants and faculty awards, the college was modest in 2002, but by 2007, the college raised \$12 million in external grants and awards, which placed the college among the top four CUNY schools.

"In the last five years of his tenure, we have moved from \$12 million to \$28 million," he said.

"Because of Jim Muyskens' leadership, the number of faculty who receive awards is much higher now," Bodnar said. "Not only did Muyskens replace almost half of our faculty over his tenure, but also he replaced them with high-class faculty."

By raising more in external grants and faculty scholarships, Bodnar said "it allows the faculty and the students to do world class research."

"In any given semester, we have well over 600 students participating in research projects that end up in national presentations and publications," he added.

When it comes to Muyskens' legacy, Hendrey said his legacy will be the new faculty he has hired over his tenure.

"They will be here for many years to come, so they will educate students for generations and that legacy is the most important one," she said.

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