

Ouachita Baptist University

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### **Ouachita Baptist University posts highest enrollment in 55 years and other records**

Ouachita News Bureau

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For immediate release

## Ouachita Baptist University posts highest enrollment in 55 years and other records



September 9, 2021

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at [newsbureau@obu.edu](mailto:newsbureau@obu.edu) or 870-245-5208

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University has set several enrollment records for the Fall 2021 semester, including the school's highest total enrollment in 55 years as well as the largest freshman class, best freshman-to-sophomore retention rate and highest four-year graduation rate on record.

"Students are coming to, staying at and graduating from Ouachita in record numbers – all in the midst of a pandemic," said Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita president. "This reflects the great care that our faculty and staff take to create a transformational college experience, the unique campus culture students help create and the generous support of alumni, friends and churches."

Welcoming 486 first-time freshmen to campus this fall, Ouachita marks not only its largest class on record but also a 25 percent gain over the previous year's class. This year's freshman class also is distinctive in its diversity and academic strength. Thirty-eight percent earned a 4.0 or higher high school grade point average (GPA), 25 percent are the first in their families to pursue higher education and 26 freshmen are Arkansas Governor's Distinguished Scholars. Twenty percent of the class are students of color, making it the most diverse cohort in the university's history.



**RECORD**  
**ENROLLMENT**  
1,764

**RECORD**  
**FRESHMAN-TO-SOPHOMORE**  
**RETENTION RATE**  
84.3%

**RECORD**  
**4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE**  
63.5%  
vs. state avg. 32%

FALL 2021 REPORT

Last year's freshmen returned to Ouachita as sophomores in record numbers, as well. More than 84 percent returned, the highest freshman-to-sophomore retention rate on record for the university.

The record freshman class and record retention rate resulted in total undergraduate residential student enrollment of 1,547. Total enrollment for the university is 1,764, which includes residential, online and graduate students, as well as high school students taking Ouachita courses for concurrent credit. The previous high was 1,881 in 1966.

Additionally, the graduating class of 2021 posted a 63.5 percent four-year graduation rate, another university record and positive indicator for student satisfaction and success. By comparison, the average four-year graduation rate among all colleges and universities in Arkansas was 32 percent for the most recent data available from the National Center for Education Statistics.

"These enrollment records coupled with record giving and a record endowment illustrate our multi-year institutional momentum," Sells said. "They reflect the increasing value families place on Ouachita's distinctive approach to Christian higher education.

"While we celebrate record results, we know that every student has a name and a story," he added, "and we at Ouachita have the privilege to help each become the person God intends."

Ouachita Baptist University, a private liberal arts university in Arkadelphia, Ark., is entering its 136<sup>th</sup> year as a Christ-centered learning community and is ranked the No. 2 "Regional College in the South" by *U.S. News & World Report*. Learn more about the university's highly personal approach, reflected in a student/faculty ratio of 13:1, at [www.obu.edu](http://www.obu.edu).

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