GRADUATION RATES 11/09/2016 M.Clark

High school graduation rates within the U.S. have reached an all-time high. Wisconsin and Minnesota both posted strong numbers, but officials at UW-River Falls say higher rates doesn’t necessarily mean higher enrollment.

MP3 R/T: 1:05 O/C: STD

MATTHEW CLARK: DESPITE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES IN WISCONSIN AND MINNESOTA BEING HIGH, OFFICIALS AT U-W-R-F SAY THE ENROLLMENT WILL LIKELY STAY THE SAME DUE TO THE PROJECTED NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN HIGH SCHOOL. U-W-R-F ASSOCIATE DEAN OF STUDENTS GREGG HEINSELMAN SAYS ITS WRITTEN IN THE DATA.

GREGG HEINSELMAN: “BIRTH RATE THAT EQUATES TO THOSE IN PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND THE POPULATION GROWTH IS NOT THERE IN WISCONSIN OR MINNESOTA REALLY.”

MATTHEW CLARK: AT THE END OF THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR, OVER 64 THOUSAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM WISCONSIN AND JUST UNDER 60 THOUSAND FROM MINNESOTA WILL GRADUATE. OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS, THOSE NUMBERS AREN’T EXPECTED TO CHANGE MUCH. HEINSELMAN SAYS THAT’S A PROBLEM FOR THE UNIVERSITY.

GREGG HEINSELMAN: “FEWER STUDENTS TO RECRUIT TO A COLLEGE DEGREE,”

MATTHEW CLARK: OUT OF THE SMALLER POOL OF STUDENTS, THE UNIVERSITY MUST ALSO COMPETE WITH TECH SCHOOLS AND CONVINCE STUDENTS WHO ARE LOOKING TO ENTER THE WORK FORCE. RIVER FALLS HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL KIT LUEDTKE (LOO-deck-ee) SAYS HIS HIGH SCHOOL PUSHES ETHICAL CITIZENSHIP OVER A FOCUS ON COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS.

KIT LUEDTKE: I REALLY THINK WHAT WE DO AS A HIGH SCHOOL NOW HAS CHANGED AND MORPHED A LITTLE BIT WHERE WE NEED TO HAVE STUDENTS BE GOOD HUMAN BEINGS AND GREAT PEOPLE FIRST. IF YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN YOU’RE HIRING A CANDIDATE OR HIRING ANYBODY, WHETHER THEY HAVE A COLLEGE DEGREE OR A HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE -- WHATEVER IT MIGHT BE -- THEY’RE LOOKING AT THE WHOLE FIRST.”

MATTHEW CLARK: HEINSELMAN SAYS UWRF MUST FOCUS ON KEEPING THE UNIVERSITY AFFORDABLE WHILE OFFERING RELEVANT DEGREE OPTIONS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CURRENT ENROLLMENT SIZE. FOR THE FALCON NEW SERVICE, I’M MATTHEW CLARK.

The latest statistics also show Wisconsin has the widest gap in graduation rates between white and black students.

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