WKU's satellite campuses see enrollment increases

By Liz Switzer
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Western Kentucky University has seen dramatic growth during the past four years at its regional campuses at Elizabethtown-Radcliff-Fort Knox, Owensboro and Glasgow.

Enrollment at the Elizabethtown campus grew 48 percent from 2005 to 2009, with the campus now serving 2,613 students — 49 percent of whom are non-traditional, or students for whom a standard college experience is not possible.

Many of those students come from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, particularly in Owensboro and Elizabethtown, and would stop at earning an associate's degree if not for the WKU programs there, said Dennis George, dean of WKU's University College, the administration arm of the program.

The WKU Owensboro campus has seen a 42 percent increase in enrollment in the past four years, with a total of 2,350 students. WKU has a partnership with Daviess County Fiscal Court to lease its building there, with tentative plans for more construction. The second phase of building there was vetoed by then-Gov. Ernie Fletcher four years ago.

WKU and the state's community college system have been unable to get the state to put the project back on its funding list, but it continues to be a priority, WKU President Gary Ransdell said.

A greater need, Ransdell said, is expansion at the WKU-Glasgow campus, which is larger than all the private colleges in Kentucky, with an enrollment of 16,424.