

Published August 31st, 2011

WoW: Meet the SMC Class of 2015

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Last week's welcome program included painting the large "SMC" up on the hill. Photo Ohlen Alexander

freshman class has 630 members, while as many as 200 transfer students have chosen Saint Mary's as their new school.

This year has been one of the most competitive in recent memory with nearly eight applicants for each place in the freshman class.

The Class of 2015, which is 39 percent male and 61 percent female, includes students from Australia, England, Canada, the Philippines, and the People's Republic of China, as well as states such as Hawaii, Washington, Montana, New Hampshire, and Florida. Out-of-state students make up 12 percent of the freshman class.

The sense of optimism on campus is infectious, and with classes only starting Monday, the mood is not likely to die down anytime soon.

"A lot of the people here seem really excited and motivated to be here and it's cool to be a part of it," said freshman James Scolamieri. "I'm really looking forward to it."

The first weekend of college life can be an opportunity to kickstart an exciting new chapter in someone's life, but that's not to say the task isn't also daunting at an unfamiliar school. The student leaders at Saint Mary's College, however, have done their best to welcome the incoming Class of 2015 with open arms.

After moving in last Thursday, freshmen Gaels participated in a full slate of activities in the appropriately-named "Weekend of Welcome," including: a farewell dinner; a scavenger hunt; painting the SMC; "Gray zones" that focused on the struggles of college life that range from alcohol use to roommate situations; and a "Playfair" that eased the process of meeting peers through a series of icebreakers.

With an attendance of 2621 undergraduates, Saint Mary's prides itself on being a small, tight-knit community, and new students have come to embrace that aspect of the liberal arts college in Moraga.

"The best way to describe it is togetherness," said freshman Stephanie Romo. "They try to get you to stay involved."

At the start of the 2011-2012 school year, the

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