

Kent State University discovered that in a four year period nearly 1,500 senior-level students had stopped attending classes; in essence, these students dropped out. This staggering number is cause for even more concern when one considers the fact that these students not only left without a degree, but left with a great deal of debt. In addition, the state of Ohio, like many other states, has begun the process of tying state funding to institutions' graduation rates. Research shows that, on average, an adult with a bachelor's degree earns \$900,000 more during his or her full-time working life than someone with only a high school diploma ("The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings," U.S. census Bureau). Therefore, in January 2014, we started a degree completion program: a "one stop shop" to aid returning students. This program was charged with encouraging former students to return and complete their bachelor's degrees. The University Degree Completion Program focuses primarily on students who have earned 90 or more credit hours, have a 2.0 or higher grade point average, and have not attended college for two or more years. Currently, we have seen 114 senior- level, adult learners don their caps and gowns and obtain their bachelor's degree. In addition, 64 more students are expected to graduate by Spring 2018.