



Adult Learner—may be 24 years of age or older; a veteran of the armed services or active-duty; returning to school after four or more years of employment, homemaking, or other activity; a person who assumes multiple adult roles, such as parent, spouse/partner, and employee.

This issue of the Adult Learner Fact Sheet highlights a few of our typical adult learners who completed their degrees or successfully completed the semester. We are proud of their achievements.



"I needed to be challenged, and I chose Penn State because I knew my diploma would represent a world-class education. I wanted my kids to be proud of me, I wanted my husband to be proud of me, I wanted my dad to be proud of me. I wanted to be proud of myself. I wanted my kids to see it's possible—anything's possible."

Coral Gutierrez
RN to BSN
Penn State World Campus



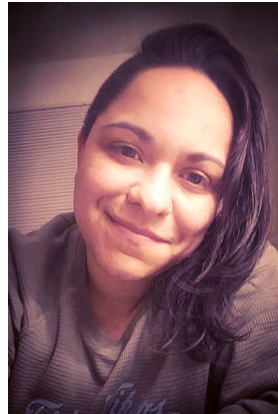
"I was ready for something different. I was deployed when I was applying to colleges. I had known for a few months that I was going to need to look for a new career path, something more suited to me and my strengths. Nursing was something that kept coming up."

Jeremy Hoffman
Nursing
University Park



"I work full-time and not just 40 hours a week. Balancing everything is a juggling act. You have challenges, but when you're driven by a goal, you see light out there and want to keep reaching. For me, it's that desire that I have to learn so that I can be more effective at what I do."

Fitzroy Lewis
Letters, Arts, and Sciences
Penn State World Campus



"The faculty, the community in general, the people in the programs, always were so supportive. It fostered the most amazing learning environment. They allowed me to make what I wanted for myself. If I wanted to go as far as I could, they were right there backing me."

Diana Forry
English and Criminal Justice
Penn State Altoona

FAST FACTS 16/17

Data Source: Penn State Office of Student Aid

32% of undergraduate adult learners have dependent children.

49% of undergraduate adult learners receive Pell grants; in the 2006–07 academic year, it was 46%.

32% of traditional students receive Pell grants; in the 2006–07 academic year, it was 29%.

73% of all undergraduate adult learners receive some form of student aid, up from 64% in the 2006–07 academic year.

FAST FACT 16/17

Data Source: Outreach Analytics and Reporting, as of March 31, 2018

17,510 – the number of undergraduate adult learners in the 2016–17 academic year, which is 20% of the total Penn State student population. In 2007–08, that number was 13,190 undergraduate adult learners, or 17% of Penn State's undergraduate students.

FAST FACT 16/17

Penn State World Campus and Continuing Education Financial Aid Office

\$1,371,000 – the amount that adult learners have received in scholarships since the 2001–02 academic year.



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF ADULT STUDENT ADVOCACY

Commission for Adult Learners 2008–18 Successes and Highlights

2008–09: Identified barriers to adult learners, and highlighted strategies for overcoming common challenges adult students face.

2009–10: Formed the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) committee; developed a questionnaire to collect information on faculty perceptions of undergraduate adult learners and to identify specific adult learner needs.

2010–11: Worked to identify courses eligible for credit by exam and credit by portfolio, to develop strategies for expanding the network of faculty who work with eligible students on these topics, and to identify ways to expand existing financial aid services available to adult learners.

2011–12: Released faculty survey data, which led to collaboration with the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence to develop workshops intended to engage faculty in best practices for working with adult students; refocused the CAL incentive grant program to support strategic initiatives that aligned with the University's mission and Core Council recommendations.

2012–13: Advised and consulted on the creation of a PLA coordinator position and an adult financial literacy position. Piloted a PLA project with campuses in the eastern part of the Commonwealth to look at credit by exam opportunities for students in BSB and IST programs.

2013–14: Created the Committee on Military Support Services.

2014–15: Changed the name of the Military Support Services Committee to the Military and Veteran Support Services Committee to reflect accurately the scope of the committee's focus and administered a University-wide student satisfaction survey to military and veteran students. Created the Access and Affordability Task Force to examine barriers to students and to develop strategies to address them; sponsored and supported the development of the Financial Literacy website.

2015–16: Submitted recommendations on short-term military absence policy to Faculty Senate for consideration; explored mentoring programs for military and veterans; reviewed options for closing the tuition differential between full- and part-time adult learners.

2016–17: Established the Adult Learner Engagement Committee to develop strategies to engage adult learners and to help them feel more connected to the University; studied time-to-degree completion data and developed strategies to decrease time-to-degree.

2017–18: Discussed new ways to use Adult Enrollment Coordinators to engage students. Celebrated twentieth anniversary.

Please visit cal.psu.edu to view milestones from the Commission's first ten years.

Today, the Commission continues to fulfill its charge to provide a visible University-wide body whose primary purpose is to contribute to a supportive climate for adult learners; monitor the recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of adult learners; advocate for adult learners' concerns by recommending changes in policy, practice, and procedures that impact adult learners; foster coordination and information exchange regarding programs and services that attract and retain adult learners to Penn State; and serve as a repository and facilitating body for adult learner-focused initiatives University-wide.