



## Fact Sheet

**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 some of our typical adult learners who completed their degree or successfully completed the semester. We are proud of their achievements.



**America Rojas** | Human Development and Family Studies, Penn State Altoona

*"I believe that as an adult student I have much to offer. I find myself improving as I strive for excellence in what I do and being motivated by the fact that this will be my opportunity to achieve my new beginning and my personal transition. I feel engaged, inspired, and prepared. I am Penn State."*



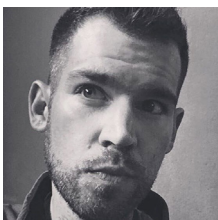
**Laura Ruane** | Human Development and Family Studies, Penn State DuBois

*"I had so many fears that came with going back to school and giving it one more try. There have definitely been some rough patches along my journey, but my grades have been a success so far. I never thought I could get A's in college. I am street smart, and now I am proving I can be book smart too."*



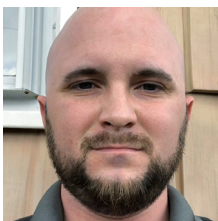
**Michelle Stroud** | Doctor of Nursing Practice, Penn State Altoona and Penn State World Campus

*"I started as an adult learner by attaining my associate degree in nursing in 1995 when I was 22, then earning a bachelor of science in nursing in 2002 when I was 30. I will graduate from the Doctor of Nursing Practice program in 2020 at 47 years old. I share that to demonstrate that it is okay to take baby steps."*



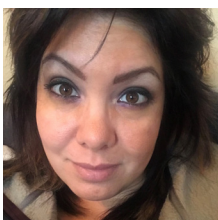
**Joshua Berkey** | Occupational Therapy Assistant, Penn State Shenango

*"I taught elementary general music in public and private schools in grades K–8. I was not happy or feeling fulfilled, so I decided to go back to school. Since returning to school, I have participated in Alternative Spring Break in Belize, have been accepted into Penn State Study Abroad, London Calling: Ordering the World, and have successfully gotten over my fear of being too old to go back to school."*



**Scott Carl Schival** | English, Penn State Wilkes-Barre

*"I have had three notable successes since returning to school—making the Dean's List for fall 2018, keeping up with school while my infant son was undergoing surgeries, and being honored at a Penn State hockey game during a military appreciation event. My goal when I graduate is to become a published author and be a sports writer covering Philadelphia teams."*



**Savannah L. McCloskey-Reigh** | Pre-vet/Animal Science, Penn State Hazleton

*"There have been some challenges returning to school, including the cost and trying to balance school and work, but my husband has been a positive influence and a source of motivation for me. There have also been some successes for me, including maintaining a high grade-point average, getting scholarships, and actually just doing this! My ultimate goal is to become a veterinarian."*



## Fast Facts 2017–18

**69%** of adult students receive financial aid.

**36%** of adult students receive Pell grants; 42% of adult learners at Commonwealth Campuses receive Pell grants, and 33% of World Campus adult learners receive them as well.

**\$37,102** is the average loan debt for undergraduate adult learners who go on to graduate, compared to \$37,036 average load debt for all undergraduate graduates.

**\$28,657** is the median income of adult students who applied for aid, compared to \$78,709 median income of all undergraduate aid recipients.

*Data Source: Penn State Office of Student Aid*



# 17,016

the number of undergraduate adult learners in the 2017–18 academic year, which is 19% of the total Penn State student population.

*Data Source: Outreach Analytics and Reporting as of April 30, 2018*

## Commission for Adult Learners 2018–19 Successes and Highlights

- › The committee, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Access, identified factors that hinder persistence and retention among adult learners and recommended the following action items:
  1. Create a centralized website tailored to adult learners and the questions they typically ask.
  2. Offer coaching for prospective and matriculating adult learners.
  3. Create a peer resource network for adult learners.
- › The committee, Charting the Course, engaged in internal and external benchmarking regarding adult learner practices. This work has resulted in the recommendation that the University create a website for adult learners where they could quickly locate the services relevant to a majority of the demographic (e.g., PLA, transfer tool, veteran services).
- › The Adult Learner Engagement Committee studied opportunities for engaging adult learners in out-of-class experiences, including undergraduate research, study abroad, and career services. The committee is in the process of developing an engagement pathway for adult learners.
- › The Hendrick Award and Conference Planning Committee facilitated efforts related to the selection of the Shirley Hendrick Award and planned the annual Hendrick Best Practices for Adult Learners conference. The event will feature remarks from Goldie Blumenstyk, senior writer for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and author of *The Adult Student: The Population Colleges—and the Nation—Can't Afford to Ignore*. The conference will also address best practices for working with adult learners and issues such as transfer credits, Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), disabilities, and retention.