

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of July 19, 2023

REIMAGINING HOW AND WHERE UC HAPPENS: UC REENGAGEMENT CONSORTIUM

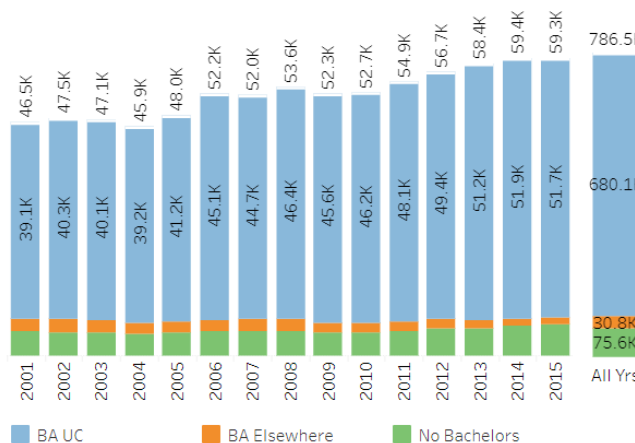
Both the UC 2030 Capacity Plan and the UC 2050 plan focus on efforts to expand access, increase degree attainment, and reimagine how and where UC happens. At the May 2023 Academic and Student Affairs Committee meeting, the item *Expanding How and Where UC Happens* included information on UC Extension. As follow up, this item provides a closer examination of the UC Reengagement Consortium (UCRC)—a multicampus, collaborative effort with four UC Extension operations that leverages one-time State funds to create a systemwide bachelor’s degree completion program.

UC Merced was the first campus to launch the degree completion program targeting UC stopouts, students who started but did not complete a degree. UC Davis, UC Riverside, and UC Santa Barbara have joined UC Merced to support this work. Collectively, these four UC Extension operations have created the UC Reengagement Consortium that span the State of California and are expanding opportunities for outreach, multiple pathways for reengagement, and support across multiple campuses to increase degree attainment. To date, they have reached out to thousands of students and provided personal advising to hundreds. In a short period, this work has resulted in almost 100 degrees conferred and filed for graduation.

BACKGROUND

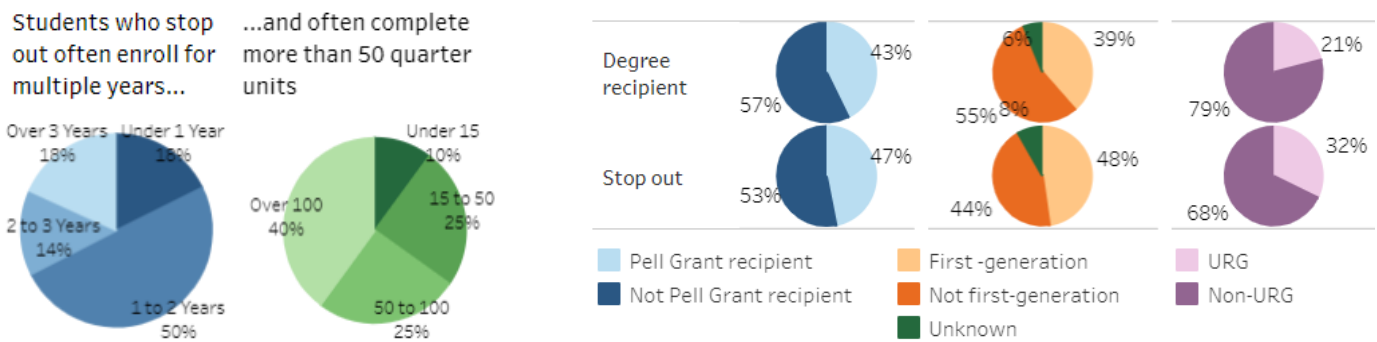
Profile of UC Stopouts

Over a 15-year period, just under ten percent—75,600 out of nearly 800,000 UC undergraduates—started but did not receive a degree from UC or any other institution.¹



¹ UC Information Center - Profile of UC undergraduate stop outs (<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/ug-stop-outs>)

UC stopouts have typically not declared their major (22 percent), but 40 percent left having completed over 100 units and 18 percent of their degree requirements remaining after three years. Just under 75 percent started as freshmen, compared to around 25 percent starting as transfers. Compared to bachelor’s degree recipients, UC stopouts are more likely new generation students, particularly first-generation and students from underrepresented groups (URG).



UC Office of the President’s (UCOP) Institutional Research & Academic Planning (IRAP) surveyed² UC stopouts and received over 3,500 responses. Detailed results of the IRAP survey of UC non-degree population are in Appendix I. Some key findings include:

- 90 percent are interested in finishing a degree, with 92 percent seeking a bachelor’s degree in a specific discipline and 62 percent indicating willingness to consider a Liberal/General Studies bachelor’s degree.
- 64 percent are working full-time and 13 percent part-time.
- Half wanted online learning (either completely or mostly) and another quarter wanted a hybrid program (online and in-person)

Financial reasons were often the top obstacles identified to finishing a degree, along with concerns of balancing work and studying. Respondents indicated accelerated courses, followed by financial aid, flexible courses and advising/guidance as the items that would make it easier to return to finish a degree.

These UC results were similar to findings by the Education Advisory Board (EAB) in its survey of 1,000 prospective degree completers (detailed results in the Education Advisory Board report on non-degree population are in Appendix II). EAB highlighted the importance of acknowledging prospective degree completer’s concerns, reducing unnecessary barriers to re-enroll, and providing flexibility, financial incentives, and support to keep students on-track.

² UC Information Center - University of California stop out survey results (<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/uc-stopouts>)

Re-entry programs

All UC campuses have programs and support for UC stopouts to become re-entry students. For example, UCLA's Bruin Readmission Program³ is a one-term intensive readmission option for students who have been academically dismissed. It is a collaboration between the Center for Academic Advising in the College, the Academic Achievement Program, and the Student Retention Center. The program is designed to help students succeed in completing their academic goals, and some students receive financial aid.

Some UC campuses use Summer Sessions to support re-entry programs. For example, UC Berkeley's Retention Grant Program has been in place for over 20 years. The program waives summer fees, except the campus fee, for re-entry students. This waiver of tuition addresses a key concern of not receiving financial aid. Students must receive a grade (i.e., they must not fail or withdraw from the course). Summer Session allocates between \$100,000 to \$120,000 a year, supporting around 60 students.

During the pandemic, some UC campuses used Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) funds to further advance re-entry efforts. UC Santa Barbara's Summer Session partnered with its Registrar and used CARES funds to reach out to late career stop-outs to encourage them to take summer courses remotely. The campus leveraged the existing Scholar Retention Program, which provides scholarships and support to academically dismissed students wanting to complete their degree. After thousands of emails and phone calls from current UC Santa Barbara students, the campus had around 120 serious inquiries.

Degree completion programs

Some University extension programs provide degree completion programs. For example, Sacramento State Degree Completion Program⁴ in its College of Continuing Education offers a variety of degree completion programs to meet the unique needs of non-traditional students, including one-on-one advising, to make returning to college a reality. Its programs seek to provide the academic quality of a traditional four-year university but are designed to balance school with personal commitments. In addition, the University of Wisconsin Flexible Option Program⁵ targets working adults and offers a self-paced, competency-based programs so participants can advance at their own pace with a flat tuition rate.

The UC Reengagement Consortium represents the University of California's first collective effort to reach out to UC stopouts in a concerted way and provide them an opportunity to return to the University and complete a bachelor's degree.

³ UCLA Bruin Readmission Program (<https://caac.ucla.edu/center-programs/bruin-readmission-program/>)

⁴ Sacramento State Degree Completion Program (<https://www.cce.csus.edu/degreecompletion>)

⁵ University Wisconsin Flexible Option Program (<https://flex.wisconsin.edu/degrees-programs/>)

UC REENGAGEMENT CONSORTIUM

As part of the 2019 State Budget Act, Governor Newsom proposed, and the University of California received, \$15 million in one-time funds from the State to leverage University Extension operations in advancing degree and certificate completion. UCOP managed a competitive proposal review and systemwide review of proposals from UC Extension Centers.

UC Merced degree completion program

Phase 1 funding was provided to the UC Merced Degree Completion Program⁶ which launched in March 2022, with an initial focus on UC Merced stopouts. UC Merced has prioritized the development of this new Degree Completion Program for UC reentry students and is seeking to create a Liberal Studies major with an emphasis on an upper division online option. UC Merced has reached out to 4,200 UC stopouts—96 percent of those who have reengaged have required online and/or flexible course accessibility options.

Some milestones include conferring degrees (24 degrees to date), hosting online webinars, and enrolling program students (e.g., 45 applied, 35 admitted, and 14 enrolled for first term; 35 more were added in spring 2023 and there are plans for another 65 in fall 2023).

Degree Completion

[Program Requirements](#) [How It Works](#) [How to Apply](#) [Academics](#) [Cost & Financial Aid](#) [Support Services](#) [Campus Life](#) [About Us](#)



UC Reengagement Consortium

Phase 2 funding expanded the work at UC Merced to include similar efforts at UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, and UC Riverside Extensions. The four campuses created the UC Reengagement Consortium (UCRC). Updated stop out lists were obtained from UC campuses and based on those, both UC Riverside and UC Davis implemented comprehensive digital marketing campaigns to outreach to their campus's stop outs. Approximately 3,405 students who left UC

⁶ UC Merced Degree Completion Program <https://degreecompletion.ucmerced.edu/>

Riverside with one unit or more to complete and 1,397 students who left UC Davis in good standing with at least 60 units received campaign outreach. Informational webinars were also held by each campus. To date, each campus's advising staff held over 150 one-on-one advising appointments. Manual degree audits, a total of 3,155 in all, have helped each campus to identify course gap areas, establish completion pathways, guide course development/planning, and aid in securing concurrent/open enrollment seats.

These efforts at UC Davis and UC Riverside have resulted in 23 students being readmitted, 48 filing to graduate, and 20 degrees conferred. Additionally, another 621 stopouts are being advised on next steps towards a degree.

The initial phase of this re-entry program implementation focused on UC stopouts in good standing. For the next phase, UC Davis and UC Riverside Extension operations are targeting outreach to students in poor standing and a secondary population of California residents with some college and no degree (transfer students). Both institutions are also leveraging regional consortia. UC Davis is collaborating with Project Attain, a multi-segmental initiative focused on degree stopouts in the greater Sacramento region. UC Riverside is collaborating with Growing Inland Achievement's Returning Adult and Professional Education Group.

Qualitative data collected in advising appointments at UC Riverside and UC Davis reinforce data found in the IRAP survey on UC stop outs indicating that UC's stopout population has a high need for online, asynchronous, or flexible course modalities. Some of the barriers to completion identified through the initial phase of work include the lack of online course offerings on campuses, lack of access to financial aid for coursework taken at Extension, lack of cross-campus articulation of courses, residency requirements, discontinued majors, catalog rights policies, and bottleneck courses.

In just under two years, UCRC has reached out to 9,000 stop outs and 45 students have already received a degree, with another 49 filed for graduation. In addition, 125 UC stop outs have applied for readmission and another 800 are undergoing active advising. These numbers are expected to grow as UC Santa Barbara scales up its program and UC Riverside and UC Davis shift outreach to other UC stopouts and other California residents with some college and no degree.

These numbers illustrate the challenge and extensive amount of personalized advising required to help UC stop outs return and complete a degree. The power of UCRC is that it provides centralized and coordinated advising teams using case management approaches. In addition, lessons learned from this work may enhance workflow between campus and Extension advising staff to better retain students before they stop out.

Other UC Extension units are looking to the success of the UC Reengagement Consortium to provide sufficient evidence to move campuses to adopt better processes for credit transfer from

Extension to departments.

Symposium on UC Reengagement

As part of the effort to grow the culture of supporting reentry students, in June 2023, the UCRC hosted the *Symposium on UC Reengagement* at UC Merced. The objective was to facilitate learning and understanding associated with shifting the culture in the system to create greater access and inclusivity for UC stopouts. The two-day symposium included:

- Representatives from all nine undergraduate campuses
- Keynote speaker Matt Bergman, Associate Professor at the University of Louisville, and author of Unfinished Business: Compelling Stories of Adult Student Persistence
- Presentations on UC 2030 Capacity Plan and non-traditional enrollment strategies, Higher Education Race & the Economy (HERE) laboratory, and reengaging UC stopouts
- Roundtable discussions on creating a vision for some college, no credential (SCNC) students; policies and barriers for reentry; data about UC stopouts; flexibility in credit; expanded support models for reentry; student reentry as a new enrollment priority; and preventing UC stop outs (what needs to stay and what needs to change)
- Panels with UCRC leadership and UC Merced reentry students
- Closing remarks from UCOP Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs Katherine Newman

The two-day symposium participants included leadership, faculty, and staff from UC campuses.

CONCLUSION

The University of California Reengagement Consortium (UCRC) is a critical component of UC efforts to support degree attainment. UCRC spans the State of California and provides a consolidated approach to provide personalized advising and other support across four UC Extension operations. It is time intensive work and emphasizes the importance of UC 2030 goals and critical emphasis on retaining UC students when first enrolled, because the barriers in completing are much greater once these students leave the university.

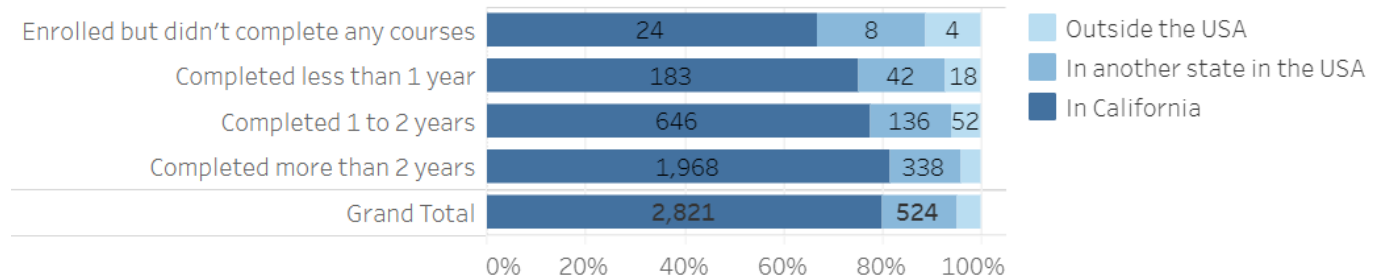
KEY TO ACRONYMS

CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
EAB	Education Advisory Board
HERE	Higher Education Race & the Economy
IRAP	Institutional Research & Academic Planning
SCNC	Some College, No Degree
UCOP	UC Office of the President
UCRC	University of California Reengagement Consortium
URG	Underrepresented groups

Appendix I

IRAP survey of UC non-degree population (fall 2021)

IRAP conducted a survey of UC recipients who started but did not complete a degree and received over 3,500 responses.⁷ UC received responses for every campus, ranging from around 175 for UC Merced to around 425 for UC Davis. The majority of respondents completed more than two years and still live in California (see display for location of respondents across the state).



Some of the key findings from this survey include:

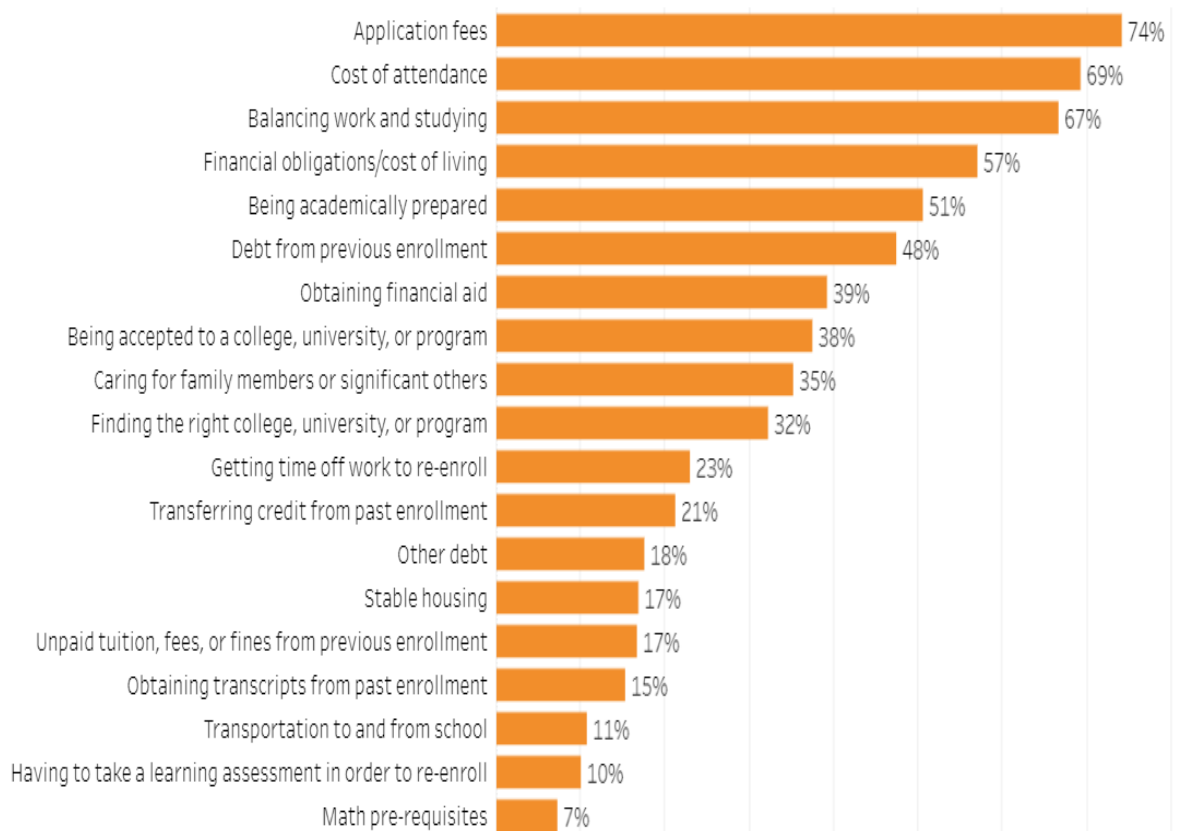
- Almost 90 percent of respondents were interested (somewhat to very) in finishing their degree or certificate—52 percent were very interested
 - 92 percent of those reporting interest said they wanted to get a bachelor’s degree in a discipline
 - 62 percent indicated they would be willing to get a General/Liberal Studies bachelor’s degree
- More than half had personal reasons to want to complete a degree (36 percent to achieve a personal goal, 15 percent for personal satisfaction and 4 percent to be a role model to

⁷ UC degree non-completion survey results
(<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/degreenoncompletion>)

others) and more than 40 percent for career reasons (21 percent to increase earning potential, 12 percent to get a better job and 7 percent to change a career)

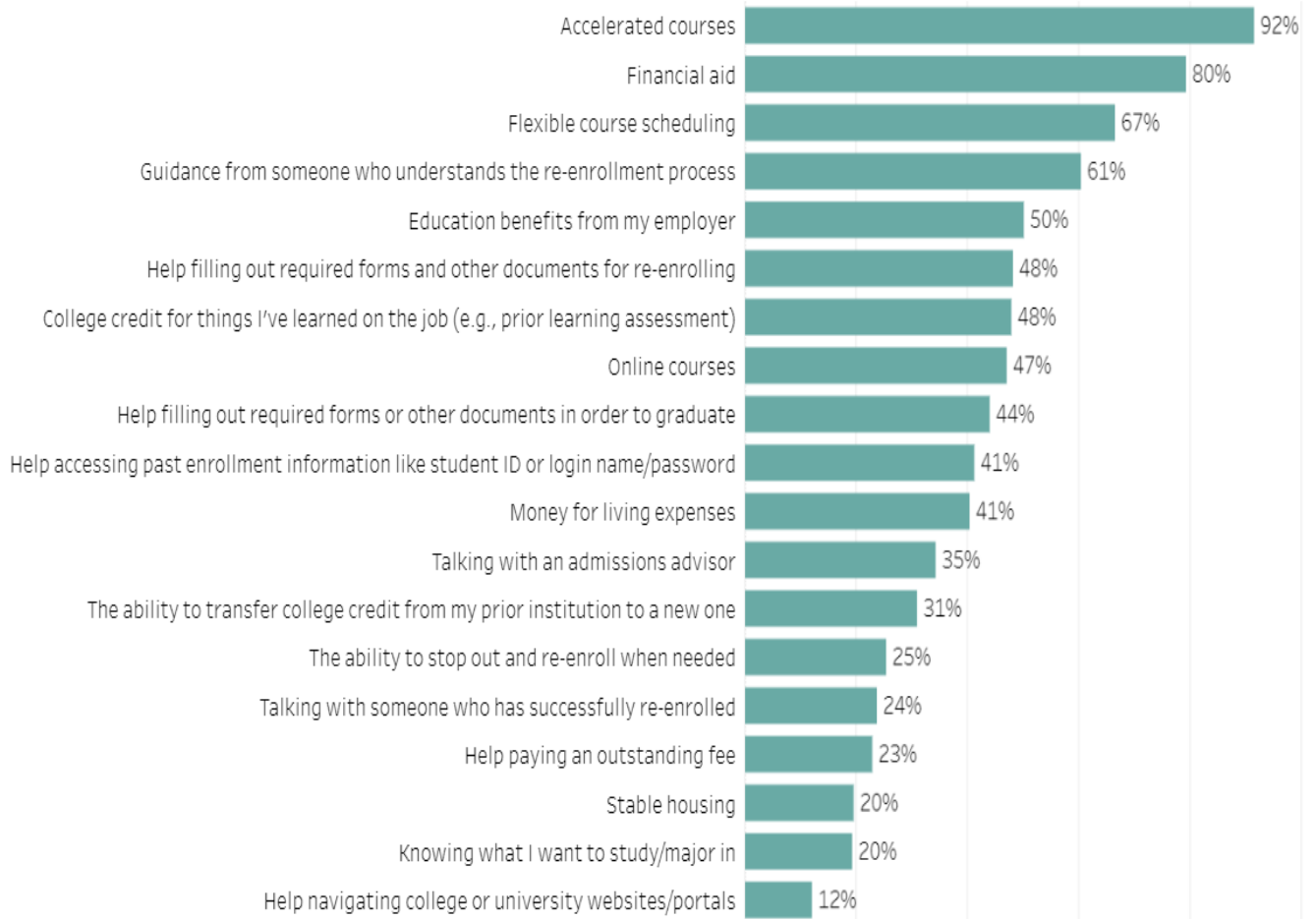
- 64 percent are working full-time, 13 percent part time and 12 percent unemployed
- Half wanted online learning (27 percent completely and 24 percent mostly), 25 percent wanted half online and half in-person, and 24 percent wanted in-person (14 percent mostly in person)
- Financial reasons were many of the top obstacles to finishing a degree (see bar chart below)

What obstacles do you face in returning to finish your degree or earn a certificate?



Accelerated courses topped the list on what would make it easier to return to finish a degree, followed by financial aid, flexible courses, and then advising/guidance support.

Responses to “what would make it easier for you to return to finish your degree?”



Appendix II

Education Advisory Board report on non-degree population

Education Advisory Board (EAB) surveyed over 1,000 prospective degree completers⁸ and found similar results to the UC survey and provided recommendations to support outreach, reduce barriers and support degree completion. The survey found:

- 49 percent seek an opportunity to better themselves and 41 percent to better their family
- 56 percent see increased earnings as a top benefit to degree completion, 40 percent a better life
- 48 percent have got a lot of things to figure out before going back to schools, compared to 34 percent who are excited about returning
- 67 percent are concerned about being able to afford it, 47 percent about having enough time, and 43 percent both concerned about the return on investment and/or being able to finish
- 67 percent want to know the program is designed for degree completers, 61 percent want help to customize a plan and 61 percent want college credit for prior experience

EAB believes an effective recruitment strategy proactively addresses degree completers' concerns about time to completion and cost, along with showcasing students with similar experiences. It is critical to audit program admission requirements to avoid unnecessary hurdles for degree completers, benchmark costs against local and regional competitors, and meet student/employer demand. A prior EAB report⁹ provided a path to persistence which included the following set of strategic interventions for adult and online learners:

- Monitor stop-out risk including financial (e.g., financial hold reconciliation, self-service financial aid counseling), academic and engagement risk
- Encourage re-enrollment (e.g., registration reminders to the next course in programs)
- Facilitate adult degree completion (e.g., expedited re-admit procedures, second opportunity financial incentives and statewide completion one-stop shop)

⁸ Understanding and Recruiting Adult Degree Completers (EAB 2020 report)

⁹ Charting a Path to Persistence – Strategic Interventions for Adult and Online Learners (2015 report)