

The Few, The Forgotten, The Stop-out Student

Moving the graduation needle one student at a time.

Florida College Access Network (FCAN) 2019
Orlando, Florida

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Brenau University

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Brenau University Overview

Georgia: Gainesville – Augusta – Norcross – Fairburn

Florida: Jacksonville

Online

A woman's college founded in 1878, Brenau has diligently adapted the educational model to offer online and blended programming while maintaining a strong sense of community. This community has grown to include coeducational studies at multiple on-ground campuses and across the globe through online learning.

Each campus has an onsite director who provides administrative leadership to support academic success. Our Online students can locate the Campus Director closest to their base location.

Be more at Brenau University



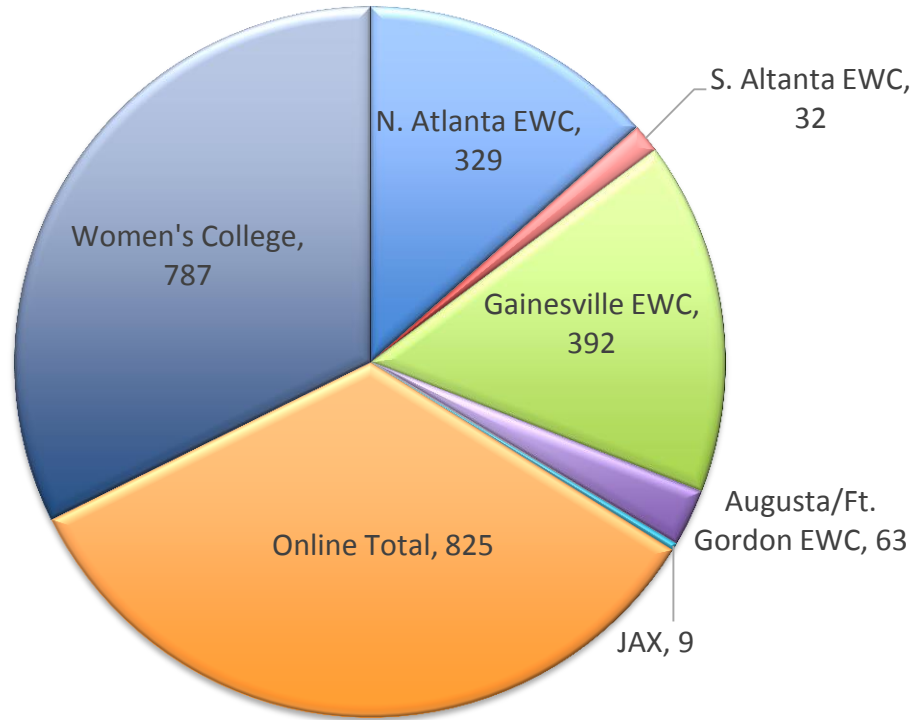


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Brenau University Locations

Georgia: Gainesville – Augusta – Norcross – Fairburn

Florida: Jacksonville
Online



Enrollment: 2851 (Fall, 2019)



Who is the Non-Traditional Student?

Choy (2002) states that the definition of Nontraditional Status The term “nontraditional student” is not a precise one, although age and part-time status (which often go together) are common defining characteristics (Bean and Metzner 1985).

Horn (1996) defined “nontraditional” on a continuum based on the number of these characteristics present. **Students are considered to be “minimally nontraditional” if they have only one nontraditional characteristic, “moderately nontraditional” if they have two or three, and “highly nontraditional” if they have four or more.” (Choy, 2002, p. 2-3)**

An NCES study examining the relationship between nontraditional status and persistence in postsecondary education identified nontraditional students using information on their enrollment patterns, financial dependency status, family situation, and high school graduation status (Horn 1996).

Specifically, in this study, a nontraditional student is one who has any of the following characteristics:

- Delays enrollment (does not enter postsecondary education in the same calendar year that he or she finished high school);
- Attends part time for at least part of the academic year;
- Works full time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled;
- Is considered financially independent for purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid;
- Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children, but sometimes others);
- Is a single parent (either not married or married but separated and has dependents); or
- Does not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate or did not finish high school).



The New Traditional Student

15% of undergrads are “traditional, first-time, full-time”

One-third of undergrads are aged 25 or older

47% of undergrads are “independent”

32% of undergrads work full-time; one-third work more than 35 hours per week

23% of undergrads are parents; one in eight are single parents

Center for Law and Social Policy, I. (2011). Yesterday's nontraditional student is today's traditional student. Retrieved from <http://www.clasp.org/adin/site/publications/files/Nontraditional-Students-Facts-2011.pdf>



Who is the Stop-out Student?

Three types of Out's

Drop-Out

Students who enroll in college but do not reenroll or do not complete their intended degree program or set of courses (Tinto, 1993).

Opt-Out

Students who choose to leave an institution after completing their educational goals without obtaining a degree (Bonham & Luckie, 1993).

Stop-Outs

Students who begin academic careers, leave for a period of time, and then reenroll to complete their degrees (Gentemann, Ahson, & Phelps, 1998)

Completion Barriers

- Cross (1992) categorized three barriers that may delay or extinguish degree completion goals for nontraditional students:
 - Situational barriers, which are issues related to individuals' personal lives (e.g., finances, work, food, family, housing, etc.)
 - Institutional barriers that hinder individuals' attendance (e.g., times of services offered, admissions requirements, etc.)
 - Dispositional barriers, which involve individuals' mindset about themselves (e.g., academic or technical aptitude, failed course)

Completion Barriers

Barriers to Degree Completion

Themes developed from barriers* mentioned by Stop-Out Students within the final year of their academic journey:

BARRIERS	PARTICIPANTS			
	Bonnie	Sharon	Tara	Yvonne
Situational barriers				
Themes				
Loss of family members	X	X		X
Issues related to time and household	X	X	X	X
Changes within work requirements	X	X		
Divorce		X	X	
Plans for graduate school	X	X	X	
Plans to complete undergraduate degree	X	X	X	X
Financial Challenges				
Pre-Commencement	X			
Post-Commencement		X	X	X
Institutional barriers				
Themes				
No post-graduation contact with institution	X	X	X	X
Misunderstanding/ Miscommunication of Requirements	X	X	X	X
Math course(s) needed to graduate	X			X
Internship needed to graduate		X	X	
Dispositional barriers				
Theme				
Failed last class	X	X	X	X

Defining Success is Key

The Hadfield Effect:

Janice Hadfield states,

“There are only **two circumstances** under which we should consider an adult learner not retained. If a student ***transfers*** to another institution to complete the course of study begun at our institution, we have lost them. ***Death*** is the only other circumstance that should remove a student from our rolls permanently. All other students we should consider retained, even if it takes them fifteen years to reach an education goal.” (2003, p. 19)

Ways to Re-Engage

- Contact the students
 - One call that's all! The Registrar should be able to pull data of students who have less than 24 credits to graduate
- More-intentional Advising
 - Help the students understand the expectations and navigate the academic calendar (The Adult Student, p. 15).
 - Schedule a meeting with students to discuss the barriers to successful completion and work with them to eliminate these barriers.

Ways to Re-Engage

- Mid-semester/session Touchpoints
 - Make contact with the student and faculty approximately half-way through the semester to check on his/her academic progress.
- Create a Return Student Orientation
 - Provide student with a resource guide for all the academic and support services available to them
- Old Debt, New Aid
 - Allow returning students to use there current financial aid to cover old debt.
- Explore Creative Course Offerings
 - If required courses are not offered, see if the course can be taken as a transient at another institution, assist the student in exploring this option.

Ways to Re-Engage

- Designate an individual responsibility for monitoring the progression of this population.
- Complete a full degree audit/program plan for all returning Stop-out students
- Assist students in registering for courses.
- Monitor the student's enrollment throughout the drop/add period.
- Use your tools
 - Offer both on-ground and online options for virtually all courses & services at the University
 - ✓ Library
 - ✓ Academic Majors & Minors
 - ✓ Learning Center
 - ✓ Smarthinking
 - ✓ Writing Center

“Improving adult enrollment and retention requires colleges to offer greater convenience, lower prices, and lower risk. For adults with unpredictable lives, being able to start and stop without financial or academic penalty makes perfect sense. However, such behavior at a college is a dropout – punishing both students and colleges.”

Burck Smith
CEO of StraighterLine, an online course provider
(The Adult Student, p. 33)



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Questions & Contact

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